

Mr. Salaman's Third Lecture
March 27th, 1991
New York City

I'd like to welcome you all here and invite you to come to rest. Mr. Salaman has told us that the Renaissance is present and if we are able to become still that presence is palpable.

Ladies and gentlemen it give me great pleasure again to be able to introduce to you a scholar, a man of learning and a man of wisdom, Mr. Clement Salaman who comes to us from the London School where he has been head of the Renaissance Studies Group for many years. The primary work of this group has been to translate the works of Marsilio Ficino, the noted Renaissance scholar and the head of the Platonic Academy in Florence. We will be hearing about Mr. Ficino and his work tonight. The translations have now encompassed four volumes of Ficino's letters and a fifth is now in progress. These letters have been acclaimed in all circles, literary, scholarly and the bookstore at 79th Street. There is enthusiastic response to these translations. So with no further ado, allow me to introduce to you, Mr. Clement Salaman.

It is very nice to see you again. Unfortunately I have lost my voice. If you can't hear I think there are means of amplifying what is left. We are going to discuss tonight what Ficino said about love principally and how this was caught by Renaissance artists, particularly Botticelli and translated into pictures and particularly the Primavera, which we will be studying. According to Ficino the very substance of the creation is made of love and it is also the cause of creation. In fact he describes it as a perpetual knot and binder of the world, immovable support and firm foundation of the creation. These words are very like his description of the soul that I gave you yesterday. We might have a look at the first picture which shows the soul in the hierarchy of creation. If you remember, the soul is in the very middle of creation and has the power both to join the divine and unite with God, or if it prefers, to become entirely engrossed in the body and lose all memory of its divine origin. It is also said that it binds the whole creation together and it is very similar to the words that were spoken about the nature of love and the inference of that is that everything else and everybody else is in movement.

Lady: I have heard that the three ladies are the three graces.

Mr.Salaman: Yes they are and we will be having a look at that in a moment. That is quite true, they are the three graces.

Lady: Does that mean they contain the three guna?

Mr. Salaman: Yes, I think there is probably a relationship there but one would need to think about that a bit.

Lady: Why are they primarily females?

Mr. Salaman: We shall talk about this in a moment, but the soul, and we will see in a moment that they stand for the human soul, is feminine in both Greek and Latin and it usually is portrayed, when it has to be personified, as a lady. When one asks why that is so, it is a very interesting question why the soul should be personified as female. It always has been so.

Perhaps it may emerge by the end of the lecture what the reason for that is.

Lady: The relationship of the hands on the right and left, even in the center?

Mr. Salaman: That is most interesting. I had never noticed that before but it does seem very significant as we shall see. We might go into a description of the first part of it and then we will go to some of the individual figures.

Lady: Also the inclination of the head of Venus seems to be one of listening and that seems to have to do with the control of the sound.

Mr. Salaman: The listening is the sound and here are the seven notes of the octave and so again we touch on the principle of music and the laws of music being the laws of creation, every part of creation, that listening being very relevant. I will just go back to all these hands being down. In fact, this is the breath of life who comes into creation and I showed you the diagram of the hierarchy of creation as Ficino portrays it. This is simply a matter of body, as it were, the lowest part of creation. This is Flora which is creation at its fullest. Botticelli in his marvelous way actually catches the movement in the stillness in a way very few artists are able to do, so that as the breath of life breathes on the barren earth it sprouts greenery which this nymph Cloris sprouts from her mouth immediately, and as it were, the very nymph turns into another nymph who is Flora which is nature at its fullest which is the next level in Ficino's system. Experts say that if you look at the picture as a whole there are no less than five hundred different species of flowers which are completely recognizable if you happen to be a botanist, which are shown in this picture.

Gentleman: I was struck by several things all at once. First the picture is divided into three and four and in the center Venus is in a pose that strikingly resembles Isis the other day.

Mr. Salaman: How very interesting that is which draws the whole thing together as was Ficino's intention: to show that it is one tradition, one teaching and there is one truth. To go back to these hands, this interesting point that was raised, here we have what Hermes Trismegistus and Ficino following him called downward tending nature. They all point downwards, and the soul may go in that direction. I had never noticed this before but surely it is significant. The striking part of the picture is the raised hands which symbolize the absolute truth from which the whole creation comes and everything is moving upwards, downwards in the first half of the picture symbolizing clearly the different directions which the soul can move. Every time one looks at this picture, as with Shakespeare, something new actually appears in it and instructs one. This is not surprising as I hope to show you in a moment. Ficino himself was said, not merely by us who are biased, but by the eminent art historian Professor Gombrich who came to the conclusion that Ficino actually prepared the program for this picture and in point of fact told Botticelli what to paint. He later qualified his opinion a bit but that is what he wrote first of all. There can't be any doubt that Botticelli was actually soaked in the Teaching. Any other points?

Lady: The breath of life has a sort of curious look of death as well, a sort of coming and going.

Mr. Salaman: This is most interesting that you should say that. Nobody has ever said that before in my hearing and I think this is true. As I said before, the whole thing is a cycle and we shall see actually this represents the final fulfillment of human life and comes in again in this figure which in a sense seems to be both death and life. Professor Vent who wrote about this picture at Oxford University said there was a subtle movement from that side to this side.

Gentleman: The third figure, Flora, seems pregnant.

Mr. Salaman: That is most interesting, too.

Gentleman: Can you explain that?

Mr. Salaman: I'm not responsible. I think she is pregnant because she is giving birth to the whole of nature and Venus herself seems to be pregnant too, as though she has the whole manifest and unmanifest universe inside her. She seems to represent the creator, in fact.

Gentleman: The Venus is very much like a Madonna and the greens behind her form a halo.

Mr. Salaman: I think that is so and if one is looking for this in this picture for that which doesn't change, which doesn't move in a circle, which is always present, which is the light of consciousness, if it is represented anywhere it is represented by that, what you call a halo.

Traditionally consciousness is represented by a halo, which never changes, is always the same.

Lady: The proportions, the geometry of the painting were the first thing that struck me: the triangle between the tree and the arm on the right which carries to the other side and the whole painting is filled with the proportion of the bodies. It seems to be perfect.

Mr. Salaman: Many people have written about this as well. Those three perfect proportions which we find in music, the octave, the square, the three over two which is the musical fifth and the four over three which is the musical fourth, the whole painting is done according to those proportions. I can't demonstrate that on the slide and I cannot quite remember how it works out but it is, in fact, so.

Lady: Is it do, re, mi across there with Venus as fa?

Mr. Salaman: I don't think Venus is in that. I think it is the seven notes and the eighth, the octave, you could say is Venus, but I had rather leave that as a question, because nobody really has a final explanation for this painting.

Lady: Does Cupid represent love on earth?

Mr. Salaman: Cupid represents divine love really. It is interesting who he is firing at. Many people have come up with different ideas. I think personally that he is firing at Chastity.

Gentleman: ...light quality...

Mr. Salaman: There is this sort of light which permeates the whole picture and doesn't seem to have a source, comes out of the figures. The halo comes from that and all these figures have this luminous quality about them which again indicates this one consciousness which doesn't move in this cycle and permeates the whole creation. I think it is quite deliberate and is only evident now that the picture has been cleaned. You couldn't really see it before.

Gentleman: There is a possible musical analogy. You have do, re, mi and then a space which represents this space in the octave between mi and fa and then it moves along to ti with the gentleman reaching up and that is very much the quality of ti in the octave.

Lady: Every figure is attending as far as visual attention.

Mr. Salaman: I think the figures have this very insubstantial quality which again I'll say something about later. I mentioned yesterday that the whole of creation is a shadow, the shadow of God. It is insubstantial. The only reality is actually this light. It seems as though Botticelli has actually illustrated that, because the figures are insubstantial. Not many of them seem to be looking at each other at all. There is a curious sort of unconnection about them which in fact

emphasizes the unreality of the whole thing. There is not a sort of relationship in that way. Can you see any exceptions to that?

Gentleman: That nimbus around the head of Venus and the ground seems to be rising up toward that light. There seems to be more space around the head. It seems like everything is leading toward that center.

Mr. Salaman: Yes, I think that is right. Now we will look through some of the details.

Lady: It is the only figure that is facing somebody.

Mr. Salaman: But he is not looking at her, so there is no relationship. It is true that she is looking at him.

Gentleman: One's eyes are cast up.

Mr. Salaman: And his are cast down which is significant, isn't it? This is the magic of Botticelli. It is the breath of life, the zephyr and here is the naked earth which is gross matter and immediately the breath of life strikes the naked earth, inanimate matter, it sprouts with life and becomes living.

Gentleman: The breath of life is so unlike the other characters, the swirls, the circular clothing.

Mr. Salaman: Remember what this spiritus, this breath of life, is. It is not the divine soul. It is not divine, yet it isn't matter either. It is something, as it were, in between. It is this entirely different nature that I think Botticelli has captured by making it seem completely different from all the other figures. It doesn't really come into the system. It is not matter; it is not nature; it is not soul; it is not the angelic world. It is an aspect, indeed, of God, but it is in a sense, outside the system.

Lady: It is interesting that the base matter is so transparent and shadowy and when you get to the Absolute it is solid.

Mr. Salaman: Yes, that is true.

Gentleman: Is there significance to the fruit?

Mr. Salaman: Yes, there is. I'll be describing that in a moment.

Gentleman: There seems to be an effort to keep the zephyr in the picture. He looks like he is going to be swept right out of the creation.

Mr. Salaman: Exactly. Well, who can hold down the wind?

Next slide detail:

This is a very full picture of Flora:

Next:

There is a comparison between Flora and Venus. This, I think, is also significant because this beauty which enters creation as love in doing so, changes its nature somewhat. Ficino had two words for the two different kinds of beauty. One is the pure beauty which is completely incorporeal and is just the beauty of the light. The other is beauty in creation which is the same beauty but it appears to be different. He calls one Venus Caelestis, the Heavenly Venus and the other he calls Venus Vulgaris, common Venus. This is clearly beauty in creation. She is very similar in many ways to Venus herself but this is infinitely purer. Everything about her is purer and this one is so similar, yet so much coarser. This is another aspect of Ficino's teaching which is illustrated so clearly in this picture.

Gentleman: With this detail you can see the eyes and the eyes of Flora look like they have a little haze over them. The posture is also curious.

Mr. Salaman: I think she is dispensing the flowers.

Gentleman: Is there a significance of her posture?

Mr. Salaman: I think so, because she dominates the whole thing. The creation is pure love and Venus is beauty from which the whole creation comes and that is why she is above. She dominates it and indeed she is not separate from it. She is the very nature of creation which is love and beauty. This is what was new about the Renaissance which I shall end the talk by saying and I did say something about it yesterday. It was an entirely different way of looking at the creation from that which was the Medieval view. The Renaissance view was that creation was something good and beautiful and essentially divine, whereas in the Medieval view it was full of snares, difficulties and obstacles and for man and woman trying to reach salvation, creation was only a stumbling block. There is something to be said for both points of view. This is a magnificent statement of the Florentine point of view.

Gentleman: About Venus first her face seems to be in contemplation and she has a jewel over or near her heart.

Mr. Salaman: It is a jewel and seems almost to look like a heart. Yes, that is interesting and I suppose it is a fitting emblem of beauty. The jewel represents pure beauty and that it should be

in the heart of Venus seems entirely appropriate. This might be the time to have a look at the next one. This is an amazing shot of Cupid. He is the power of Venus. What do you think of that fact? It is amazing isn't it? Of course the arrow is flame tipped and that is the love. Cupid is the inseparable companion of Venus and he shoots his spark of love and desire into the human heart. The whole thing is suggestive of flame and fire and desire. We might now look at the three graces who now appear. They do in fact seem to represent the human soul which is the next level up from nature. This is the firm foundation of creation. The human soul comprehends the entire creation from God down to gross matter in itself. This is represented in the three graces. If you remember the initial triangle that I showed you as a diagram. There is beauty; there is chastity at whom, I think Cupid is firing and she already becomes unchaste because no figure is static in Botticelli. They are all changing and she is already changing into desire which seems to be symbolized by her slight dishevelment. This same jewel which was noted on Venus higher up, we have jewel here on Beauty, there we have the pure desire which returns to God. Where the hands meet at the top, thanks to that observation given before, we noted that the hands are all being raised up in the second part of the picture. The whole diagram is represented in miniature by these three graces. They carry the whole diagram inside them just as the human soul carries the whole of creation inside it in exactly the same way. This is a most refined illustration of this.

Lady: The hands actually form a triangle. You have Chastity holding a hand of each of the other two and so the hands join together visually to form a triangle.

Mr. Salaman: Yes, there is a very strong geometric element in it. According to Plato, the whole is composed of triangles. That is how the whole thing is constructed, so these triangles you keep seeing are absolutely right.

Gentleman: Chastity almost looks like she is holding up her hand to shield her view from the young man, also the jewelry that starts out on love becomes much larger when it gets to desire.

Lady: I have a question about Cupid. Why is he blindfolded?

Mr. Salaman: I'm going to come onto that later after refreshments if we ever get around to having them. We will discuss that question. I have some more slides to show you on that.

That hand on the right seems to be directly related to the dance of the graces, doesn't it? As though exercising a restraint on the whole operation, a kind of restraint on the motions of the soul which this undoubtedly represents.

Gentleman: Isn't it the same as the Virgin's hand in the annunciation?

Mr. Salaman: Yes, it is the same posture, exactly the same position as in Leonardo's Annunciation.

Miss Dillingham: It is the classic gesture of the Teaching.

Mr. Salaman: It also suggests a blessing as well as a restraint, as though this beauty and love is giving a permanent blessing to creation and in particular to the human soul.

Gentleman: The two graces which have their hands raised are beauty and desire – is there some significance that they make the triangle?

Mr. Salaman: I think the significance is that where the hands join in a sense represents the Absolute from where creation starts. It begins in a sense with beauty and it ends where desire is entirely and permanently fulfilled. I think that is the significance of the clasping of the hands.

We might like to have a look at the next picture, the details. What are the qualities of that?

Reponses: Gentleness, grace. It looks like a single pair of hands.

Mr. Salaman: Absolute unity there where the hands are joined.

Gentleman: And there is the triangle, many, a few triangles. The space in the middle is a triangle.

Mr. Salaman: We hadn't had all these triangles noted before and it is right because the whole creation according to Plato is composed of triangles. This is clearly being shown in this picture.

Gentleman: Also the color is nearly black, like a void. Also it has a quality like a steeple.

Mr. Salaman: The Gothic steeple is designed to illustrate exactly the same point. It ends in a point right up above everyone and everything and represents God from where everything comes in exactly the same way.

Lady: There is consciousness in this gesture, space. It is not a grabbing onto each other. There is a lot of freedom of movement. It looks like one pair of hands praying.

Mr. Salaman: That gesture means the same thing.

Lady: Each one of the joints, the center of the midfinger, the index finger, they all join the center.

Mr. Salaman: Very good point. In fact I have never heard so much noticed about this picture.

Lady: The branch behind the finger emphasizes the direction upward. It carries the eye; the eye wants to go right up.

Gentleman: Desire seems to be surrendering...

Gentleman: I see the right arm of beauty to be masculine. It is much thicker, hairy. I see penetration as the three fingers.

Mr. Salaman: Perhaps you are right. Let's have the next slide. It is also Hermes, the God, and it is also Hermes Trismegistus of whom I have spoken before. You can see it is Hermes because he has got wings on his feet and the typical head gear that we mentioned before.

Miss Dillingham: He is grounded too.

Mr. Salaman: He is not moving. Significantly he has got his back on the rest of creation and he is only intent on looking upwards. We have got a shot of his eyes and the intensity with which he is looking, well you will see. The next slide is his feet, you can get a better view of his winged feet. The next slide is of those remarkable eyes, the intensity with which he is looking up. He is looking up, in fact, towards the golden apples. As we will see the golden apples have something to do with divine love and divine wisdom, the ultimate aim of human life. The mouth slightly parted is almost like the intensity of a trance.

Gentleman: Venus and Hermes seem to be wrapped in red.

Mr. Salaman: I think there probably is significance in the red.

Gentleman: It is one of the alchemical colors.

Mr. Salaman: It seems to suggest heat, light, fire, all these qualities and they would be entirely appropriate.

Gentleman: I wonder if the red might be a reference to Mars. He has got a helmet and sword and is very much like Donatello's David.

Mr. Salaman: He certainly often carries a sword. Could we have a look at the next one? This is his famous wand around which these snakes twine which are the symbols of wisdom knowledge and somebody mentioned the liberal arts last night. The symbol of dialectic which was the

liberal art concerned with reason is a snake and it goes right back to Egypt as the symbol of wisdom and eternity.

Gentleman: In the Old Testament Moses raises up the serpent in the desert.

Mr. Salaman: Notice this mist, this cloud which conceals the golden fruit and clearly is being dissolved by the magic wand of Hermes. This is the mist of ignorance. The highest faculty of the mind which is reason is also represented by Hermes as that faculty of the mind, pure reason, which has the capacity to unite everyone with the truth. That is also what Hermes is supposed to convey. The golden fruit, the Latin and Greek word *malum* is curiously ambivalent. It is sometimes translated as an apple and sometimes as an orange. They actually look more like oranges, but in fact the word is sometimes translated, apple, so you can take your choice, but there is only one word in Latin and Greek. We might have the next picture which shows the fruit. There are in fact the golden apples and they signify both love and knowledge. They signify love because the apple was sacred to Venus. If you remember Paris, when he was asked to bestow the golden apple upon three beauties before him, Hera, Aphrodite and Athena and he gave the apple to Aphrodite and thereby in the end brought about the famous Trojan War, which ended with the sack of Troy and the death of Paris. The apple has been particularly associated with Venus ever since. Therefore, it is a very apt representation of divine love. The apple was also a present from Hera or Juno to Zeus or Jupiter on the day they got married. This again symbolized the union of the knowledge of nature which is Juno/Hera being united with the divine knowledge, the knowledge of the all which is symbolized by Zeus, because it was the wedding gift between them. The apples were then taken off to the Hesperides where they were guarded by a dragon. Only Atlas knew how to charm the dragon into surrendering the apples. You may remember that the eleventh labor of Hercules was to get these apples and bring them back to Greece. It is a highly symbolic thing anyway to have these golden apples standing for divine knowledge and love being brought into Greece, the center of our culture. If you remember, Hercules went there and he had to sustain the world while Atlas, the giant, went and got the apples. A man of very great stature was the only man who could do that. When Atlas came back he wasn't very inclined to take the world back again and Hercules had to say, "I can't do it, my head is getting sore, hold it for a moment while I put something on my head." Once Atlas did that, he was stuck with it again. That is the significance of these apples and it is this knowledge and love which

they do signify. That is the completion of the cycle except that in some way the thing goes on and having reached this stage and having enjoyed the perfect love and knowledge, apparently there is a cycle and you have to come back again and it evolves and evolves forever. I would like to have the next slide. There is the whole picture again. Could we have the next one. This whole picture was directed by Ficino according to Professor Gombirch. He said the reason was that there was a letter that Ficino wrote to Lorenzo de Medici's tutors which described Venus in such a way that he thought it was this Venus being described. The letter was written in 1478, just about when this picture was commissioned, because it was in fact to be a gift to Lorenzo for his marriage. The dates correspond, the description corresponds and Ficino apparently had this figure in mind when he wrote this letter. We might listen to a part of this letter. He really writes this to Lorenzo's tutors. Lorenzo was a young boy who was only fifteen and he asks his tutors to make sure that Lorenzo learns this letter by heart and repeats it every day. It is as though he has got something in front of him to look at while he does so. This is what he says to Lorenzo:

Let your mind fix its gaze on Venus, herself which is humanity, by whom it is, of course, warned to remember that nothing great can be possessed by us on earth unless we men for whose benefit all earthly things were created possess ourselves.

So the humanities mean those essential qualities of a human being which in fact are unlimited. They are his unlimited nature. That is what he means by humanity and the virtues which I described last night.

And to remember that men be taken by no other bait whatsoever than humanity. Beware that you never despise it." Another translation of humanity is your own human nature. "Beware that you never despise it, perhaps thinking that humanity is born of earth. For humanity herself is a nymph with bodies surpassing. She was born of a heavenly origin and who is beloved above others by an ethereal God. For indeed her soul and spirit are love and charity.

Could we have a look at the next slide? This is what Ficino is talking about. "Her soul and spirit are love and charity. Her eyes are majesty and magnanimity."

Could we have the next slide? "Her hands are liberality and magnificence.

The next slide: "Her feet are gentleness and restraint."

The next slide: "Finally her whole is harmony and integrity, honor and radiance. O excellent form! O beautiful sight! My Lorenzo, a nymph so noble had been placed wholly in your

power.” If you yourself unite with this nymph in marriage and call her your own she will bring sweetness to all your years and make you progenitor of beautiful offspring.

I think it is time for refreshment.

Mr. Salaman: What I’d like to do is return to the Cupid. It is quite interesting that in fact Cupid changes in the Renaissance and becomes portrayed in a different way. This is an early version. These are the three graces and there is Cupid. It was customary in classical times that Cupid was not portrayed as being blindfolded. It was a Medieval custom to portray him with a blindfold over his eyes. The reason was that he seemed to strike without reason and to cause destruction with his arrows and to lead men and women to damnation rather than salvation. The force of his dart was quite unpredictable. One would never know where it might land next. Most of you would probably agree with that. That is of course taking the point of view of worldly love which clearly is the Medieval view. In fact the view did change.

In the next slide this is quite interesting because here we have “I Shall Send Many Fishes, O Holy Love, Fish My Heart, Worldly Love is Only a Deceiver.” These two different kinds of Cupids are both fishing for human souls. One is not a very attractive figure; he is blindfolded and in this particular picture he hasn’t got any fish. The other Cupid is the holy love, is divine love, the love of God, has no blindfold but has a kind of halo and he is catching lots of fish.

Finally we have a very interesting picture which I have been trying to trace here in New York and finding it impossible to do so. According to the only book which carries a print of it that I have met, it is actually in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but when I went there, they said they didn’t have it, so I don’t know where the picture is. Perhaps we could look at it. The interesting thing about it is that the Cupid himself is hovering. He isn’t standing. He is hovering on a volume of Plato and he has got wings, but interestingly he is removing his own blindfold. What it says, I suppose, is that love is the same. There isn’t actually a difference between worldly love and divine love. It is all the same love, but what is love with a blindfold on it which is a limited view. As soon as the blindfold is lifted, the view is universal. You cannot help but see the divine once the blindfold is off. Of course nobody can actually lift that blindfold except the individual themselves. Only the individual can do it. Nobody can do it for you. You have to do it yourself. The ignorance has been put there by you, by me for that matter, by

everyone and only you, finally can allow it to go. This is really what this picture is saying. Then, of course, what is actually seen is that there is no difference anywhere, that there is only one and that those things that appear to be different only are an illusion. That is the view of the Cupid without the blindfold. That is rather beautifully expressed in a letter by Ficino where he does express this unity. In a very early letter to one of his correspondents: “Dry those tears, my daughter.” Incidentally the title of this letter is a theological dialogue between God and the soul.

Dry those tears, my daughter, and look upon your father. Your father is the least of all things in size, just as he is outside everything. See, I'm here with you, both within and without, the greatest, smallest and the smallest, greatest. Behold, I say, do not see. I fill heaven and earth. I penetrate and contain them. I fill and am not filled. For I am fullness. I penetrate and am not penetrated. For I am the power of penetration itself. I contain and am not contained, for I am containing itself. I who am fullness itself and am not filled. For that would not be worthy of me. I am not penetrated, lest I cease to exist, being myself existence. I am not contained lest I cease to be God who am infinity itself. Behold, do you not see I pass into everything, unmingled so that I may surpass all, for I am excellence itself. I excel everything without being separate, so that I am able to enter and permeate at the same time, to enter completely and to make one, being unity itself through which all things are made and endure and which all things seek.

So that is the vision of a man without a blindfold. If there are any further questions I will be happy with you to see if we can find the answers.

Inaudible question.

Mr. Salaman: I am tempted to put in a bit which I took out of the lecture which is from the “Rig Veda” which is astonishingly appropriate to this picture. Is it possible to go back to the first picture of the Primavera. I could read you a little quotation which brings us back to the picture. This is a quotation from the “Rig Veda” and it does seem extraordinarily appropriate to this picture. It says, “In the beginning, self delight, love and desire.” Self delight is really beauty. “In the beginning, self delight, love and desire evolved on that and were together the first germ of mind.” Of course there is mind and the Hermes. “By the power of mind the poets penetrated the heart and found there the bond of truth in illusion.” Which are these apples that we have just been talking about and the illusion is the mist. It is rather uncanny how appropriate that is. Mr.

MacLaren, the leader of the English School, did set this to music, and you might like to hear it actually. It is very beautiful and has something of the mist, beauty and unsubstantiality of the whole picture.

TAPE OF MUSIC PLAYED

In the beginning self delight, love and desire evolved on that and were together the first germ of mind. By power of mind the poets penetrated the heart and found there the bond of truth and illusion.

I was reminded of this by that question of the **Gita**. The same truth that is so clearly here in this picture and was painted by Botticelli through the inspiration of Ficino and the Academy, and here is exactly the same truth in the **Rig Veda**. It is a remarkable and powerful instance that truth is everywhere the same.

Gentleman: Unintelligible.

Mr. Salaman: This source of abundance of richness, of unlimited possibilities that suddenly present themselves, only real by virtue of the Self which is the same in all of it.

Lady: The graces' hands are located in a meaningful place...

Mr. Salaman: yes, encompasses the whole body, that is true.

Gentleman with question.

Mr. Salaman: There are a lot, Titian, Raphael, Michelangelo, probably others as well that clearly are doing the same thing. This seems to be the source of it, others took it up. In fact I have a lot of slides at home in which we can see a great many other painters illustrating these themes.

Gentleman: Last night you mentioned that these painters were not in the Academy. Was there a particular reason?

Mr. Salaman: I said that there was no evidence that they were. They may have been but they certainly are not on the list that Ficino provides. I can't really think of any good reason except that the social position of painters was not very high and people were very socially conscious in those days. I don't know to what extent a place where the de Medici might find themselves being questioned whether they would want their painters who were not very far removed from

their cooks, listening to the exposure of their soul. I don't know, maybe there was some consideration of that kind.

Gentleman: The other evening I had asked in what conditions the translations had taken place, and you said in *satsanga*. That became very clear tonight in the opening up of the Botticelli of the meaning and richness through this room.

Mr. Salaman: Yes, this is how it works, Anything that is worthwhile in human activity seems to arise in this way. Someone quoted to me in the interval, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there." It just seems to be how it is. It is a sort of irony that this unity is only realized in practice in company, so that the true individual only emerges in someone else.

Gentleman: Could you speak about Ficino's character?

Mr. Salaman: I did speak about it. Were you there? Not a great deal more than from that short biography I quoted is known about him. What is remarkable about his letters is that he doesn't say anything about personal sorts of things. One gets a sense of a man of enormous breadth of vision, of thinking in terms of civilizations, of hundreds of years. There are many letters where he is clearly working for his fellow priests who had a hard time in late fifteenth century Florence. He is working to improve their condition in one way or another. One gets a picture of a man who was totally unselfish, working for peace, working for unity, and with great humor and patience, with enormous penetration and all this comes through the letters themselves, if they are really studied. I think that is almost all I can say, but I'll think about it.

Miss Dillingham: We would like to end by thanking you.

Mr. Salaman: It has been an extraordinary experience being here. Because it seems there is an enormous source of vitality and life here and I am quite sure that the influence of this school as it is here in New York will be very great indeed. It may take time, but there is such power here that all your really need to do is realize it. Thank you very much indeed.