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**HIDDEN TREASURES
IN THE PSALMS**

HIDDEN TREASURES IN THE PSALMS

By
RUDOLF FRIELING

(Authorized translation from the original German
by Mabel Cotterell)

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FOREWORD

DURING the last fifteen years a whole spate of new translations of the Bible, the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, have appeared. These translations are attempts to express the message of the sacred books in the living language of our time, but they are also evidence of a desire for a basically new approach. Scholars have begun to see that the conceptions of Man and the Universe which are implied in the Bible are not only vital for an understanding of the texts, but may be more factual and true than some of the scientific notions of to-day.

The author of the present volume has found vital help for a new approach to the ancient texts in Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy. In over thirty years of active work as a priest in The Christian Community he has found Rudolf Steiner's writings of immense value for all branches of priestly duties, not least for a study of the Bible, which yielded among other things some "Hidden Treasures in the Psalms". Anthroposophical terms have occasionally been employed in the text to describe exact supersensible realities.

Fifteen Psalms out of the whole 150 contained in the Bible have been chosen for illustration of this method. There is no intention of claiming these fifteen Psalms as the most important; the selection is determined more or less subjectively. It was only that a beginning had some time to be made. Nature-Psalms have been dealt with first; then those that relate to the subject of Sin and Grace and to individual Redemption; finally Psalms with an apocalyptic outlook.

The grateful thanks of the author are due to Miss Mabel Cotterell, O.B.E., for her great skill and unfailing co-operation in translating the original German manuscript.

New York, September 1954.

Rudolf Frieling

MAN UNDER THE STARS

Psalm 8

VALUABLE discoveries are made when we observe how each language has its special designation for "Man". Thus, for instance, the English *man* and the German *Mensch* are both connected with an indo-germanic word which indicates *thought, thinking*. Here man is recognized above all other beings as the bearer of the spirit.

Anthropos in Greek means "the one who looks upward"; it is felt essential that the human being is capable of looking upward to heaven, that he can lift his eyes to the stars. *Homo, humanus* in Latin is related to *humus*, hence the terrestrial, the earthen, which stands in a distinct and important connection with the earth. The Hebrew agrees here with the Latin. In the language of the Old Testament the human being is fundamentally characterized through his earthly relationship. *Adaman* is the Earth, *Adam*, the human being. Man is thus felt to be one who is unthinkable without the specially terrestrial earthly element. He is closely connected with the whole earth evolution, he is its crown and conclusion. After man has been brought forth the Godhead ceases to create (Gen. 2; 2), as though with this event the forces active in Earth's becoming have been exhausted.

This Earth-aspect of man is in fact of greatest significance. Man is the goal and the meaning of the Earth. He bears in himself the extract of its finest forces. Only under the quite special and peculiar conditions of earthly exist-

ence can man evolve to an independent personality endowed with ego-consciousness. However justifiable the Roman-Hebrew name used for man may be, it yet needs completion. It can lead to the one-sidedness of materialism if man's earth-relation alone is stressed. The other aspect is wonderfully brought into play through the Greek aspect: *Anthropos*, the one looking upward.

On the one hand it is true that no independent ego-consciousness is possible without passing through the hard sphere of the terrestrial. But it must not be forgotten that that which presses through to self-consciousness by the resistance of the earthly, is in its origin from above. Down from the heavens it has descended here. And when man looks up to the stars he lifts himself to the sublime worlds of his heavenly origin. Here too there is the danger of one-sidedness, drastically expressed in the story of the philosopher who contemplates the heavens and falls into a ditch. He has paid no attention to his earthly way.

It is only in the right harmony between Above and Below, between Heaven and Earth that the true being of man is achieved. We have this classically formulated by Goethe:

“ 'Twixt the Over, 'twixt the Under
Hover I to lively view,
I rejoice in colour-wonder,
I refresh myself in blue.
If by day blue mountain distance
Ardently attracts my sight,
Starry splendour's superfluence
Glows above my head at night.
Thus I daily, thus I nightly
Glory in the lot of man,
Strive his thoughts to shape him rightly,
Ever is he great and fine.”

“What is man?” In the 8th Psalm this question is formally posed, and in a wonderful assessment of his heavenly and earthly importance, the nature of man is set forth and extolled.

*“O Lord, our Lord, how doth the glory of thy Name
Shine forth upon all the earth!”*

The earth is a realm of divine manifestation. “How is thy name visibly inscribed in all earth-existence!” The earth is thus not only dull heavy substance, blind and deaf. It is not only anonymous matter, accidental assembly of nameless atoms. Far rather, it is filled with the divine Name. The “name” is the inner nature, the essence, lifted into consciousness, the tenor of what is known of a being. So the “Name of God” is the tenor and purport of what the Divinity gives of itself to be known. In the individual works of creation the letters of this divine name are, as it were, the open secret. Hence the Name shines forth out of earth-existence.

In the same breath the Psalm passes over from the earthly to the heavenly, and so our eyes are raised to the upper world:

*“Thou who hast set the radiance of thy
being in the heavens.”*

The Earth, weighty with the secrets of the great Name, is arched over by the spheres of heaven. The word “heaven” in Hebrew is plural. At that time they still knew of the multiplicity of the supersensible worlds ranging upward one beyond another, which turn to us their “outer side” in the firmament of stars. Paul, for instance, speaks of being “caught up” into the “third heaven” (2 Cor. 12; 2). The

reflection of the Name in the earth guides the gaze upwards to the heavens in which the Godhead reveals itself in eternal radiation of its being. This alternation, this raising and lowering of the gaze between heaven and earth, continues, as we shall see, to be characteristic of our 8th Psalm.

From the outspread radiation in the heavens, let us turn again to earth. And for the first time Man appears in the field of vision. And first in the child-stage of existence:

"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength against thine oppressors, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger."

From the modern intellectual standpoint the child is just a not yet fully-grown man. Seen from that point of view, a "not yet". In contrast to this we must realize how on the other hand the grown-up person, measured by the child, represents in many respects a "no longer"; how too, he is by no means the goal, the attainment of which cancels out the foregoing stages of growth. No; child-existence has its own intrinsic worth! If we regard man solely from the earthly standpoint, then the child, as a still young inhabitant of earth is imperfection, immaturity, just "not yet" as regards full earthly incarnation. If, however, one adds the heavenly standpoint, then child-existence is highly significant. For the child is the not yet completely incarnated human being, one who still belongs in a great measure to the higher worlds. "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 18; 10). It is fraught with meaning that in the 8th Psalm the words about children are placed between verses 2 and 4, both of which contemplate the starry heavens.

One who recognizes the heavenly in addition to the

earthly no longer sees in the child merely the still unfinished grown-up man. He is no longer tempted to "despise these little ones". Indeed, he recognizes in the child-nature something like a force, even a world force, a powerful factor in the duel which is fought around men by good and evil spirit-powers.

Infinitely much spirituality would be lost if man came into the world "at once clever and grown-up, fixed and finished", without being first a child. Few people have any idea of how much they have to thank the twilight years of childhood for those moments when they are lightly brushed by a higher world. A powerful divine inflow continuously enters earthly existence through experiencing one's own childhood, or the child-stage of others. How much light and warmth has been shed by the picture of the Christ-Child in the crib into a grown-up world which has grown cold! So we can take quite seriously the Psalmist's words that for the Godhead the human stage of childhood represents in its own right a factor of strength in the conflict with the opposing powers. These are the forces of the adversary who would tear from the heart of earthly man the presentiment of his heavenly origin and thus form him into a mere creature of earth. In the words of the Michaelmas prayer of the Act of Consecration they would like to make the Heavenly Light forgotten in the Light of Earth. Sheer terrestrial intellectualism is in its very nature unchildlike, that which in a bad sense makes one "precocious" and so plays into the hands of the powers of death.

"A strength against thine oppressors." The oppressors (this is the literal translation) are in fact the beings who drive the divine element on earth "into the corner"; they wish to deprive it of room to live in and air to breathe on earth. This passage in the Psalms also appears once on the

lips of Christ. The High Priests and Scribes take offence at the Hosanna which the children in the Temple cried to Him on His entry. The Christ answers them with the words of Psalm 8; 3 (Matt. 21; 15, 16). The lost and forgotten heaven draws once more with the child into the world of man—this is precisely the element of the child-nature, which in contrast to the inwardly deadened High Priests and Scribes, recognizes the One who is entering and hails Him with cries of joy.

The gaze of Psalm 8 passes again from the children upward:

"When I consider the heavens, the work of thy hands, the moon and the stars which thou hast established. . . ."

Here the Greek aspect of man is most beautifully shown: *Anthropos*, the one who looks upwards. Over all earthly needs and riches the adoring gaze can plunge deep into the splendour of the star-set night sky. The Psalms do not often speak of the stars. The word "star" (*Kōkāb*) is not found again till towards the end of the Book of Psalms, on the first occasion in Psalm 136; 9. In Psalm 136 the works of Creation are specified and each sentence is followed by the response: "For his mercy endureth for ever." All the separate acts of creation in Genesis are brought once more to consciousness and extolled as proofs of mercy, as communications of spiritual divine life. "Who made the great lights—for his mercy endureth for ever—the sun to rule by day—for his mercy endureth for ever—the moon and stars to rule by night—for his mercy endureth for ever."

Then in Psalm 147; 4: "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names", the numbering is not meant here as external calculation. Its purport is:

God carries them all in His consciousness, and indeed as organism of a totality, as a complete choir. But this entirety (the number) consists again of purely separate star-individualities, as Paul says in 1 Cor. 15; 41 that "one star differeth from another star in glory". So this choir is verily a symphony, a harmonious consonance of all the single individualities, all of whom He calls "by name".

And finally Psalm 148; 3, in the grand Halleluja of the universe. As in Psalm 136 the words of the eternally enduring mercy are added to each sentence, so Psalm 148 contains the ever-repeated exhortation to join in the great Choir of Praise. It begins with the heavens and the higher worlds, passes then to angels and heavenly hosts and only with the sun, moon and stars goes over from the invisible into visibility. "Praise him, sun and moon, praise him all ye stars of the light."

These three passages at the end of the Psalms supplement one another. In Psalm 136 the stars come forth from the mercy-filled self-communication and revelation of eternal Godhead. In Psalm 147 the stars appear as multiplicity and yet unity, as symphony of individualities. In Psalm 148 the stars as clear mirrors radiate back to the Creator His splendour, in that they "praise" Him. This is like a reversal of the standpoint of Psalm 136. These three passages which have in mind the relation of God to the stars and of the stars to God, contrast with our Psalm 8 where the relation is shown between the stars and man. "When I consider thy heavens . . . moon and stars." Here one must pause a while and feel the stillness of contemplation. How everything sinks away around us, and only the star-filled heaven remains—which in the land of the Psalmist shines much more clear and radiant. Let us feel for a while the calm peace—all self forgotten—of this

sight. . . . "When I contemplate thy heavens . . . moon and stars . . ."

But now this forgetfulness of self emerges, in what follows, into the question of man. A deep inner logic lies in the fact that this experience of the stars, which carries us out into the infinite universe, turns back to man. One who is sunk in contemplation of the heavens does not lose himself in foreign distances; he connects himself with the eternal powers who work together from the periphery into the midst in order to bring forth man. In the stars he beholds the cosmic dwelling-place of the higher beings who take part creatively in his own human evolution. The macrocosm without stands in intimate relation with the microcosm, man. This lies between the lines, it is the inner logic of the transition from the contemplation of the stars to the question about the human being. And here again we will consider the movement of the upwards and downwards, between heaven and earth, peculiar to the 8th Psalm.

"What is man that thou art mindful of him?"

One must not hear this question with the ears of the modern "enlightened" men of natural science. For them it would mean: "What indeed is the speck of dust, man, in face of these giant astronomical measurements!" Just a rhetorical question. What indeed can man signify in the universe! Less than nothing. To consider the world from the standpoint of magnitude lies far from the mood of the Psalm which still knows of its supersensible background. Incidentally, this "grain-of-dust mood" seems no doubt to be praiseworthily humble; it is, however, very convenient. Through a purely quantitative view one reduces man to nothingness, and then in light-hearted irrespon-

sibility one can lead a morally inferior life, free of all restraint, based on the unimportance of this grain of dust. If the starry heaven is known again as the revelation of creative spirit-powers, then the question: "What is man?" stands there once more in all earnestness.

The being whom we call man is not yet completed. Called to free spirit-personality in the image of God, man is still in process of becoming. For the sake of this evolution of his to the distant high goal he goes through a "history". A constituent part of this history is the Fall of Man, an event which is presented in the Old Testament in hieroglyphic vision-pictures and which had the purpose of severing man from the world of his origin. This enabled the powers of death to draw near him. Some echo of this sounds in the text of our Psalm, where for "man" the usual "Adam" is not used at first, but the word "*enosch*". This denotes the "transitory", the "perishable". Somewhat as we speak of men as "mortals". Thus: "What is a mortal that thou art mindful of him, that thou bearest him in thy divine consciousness?" In the next lines, however, the word "Adam" appears in "*ben-adam*" which denotes "son of man".

"And the son of man that thou carest for him?"

Man sinks himself into the contemplation of the star-filled heaven. This he could not do if he were made through and through only of what is transitory. In beholding the stars he becomes conscious of the riddle of death which has been added to his humanity as its mortal, transitory nature: "What is mortal man that thou cherishest him in thy thoughts?" Our gaze passes from the man of to-day out into the future. "The son of man." Here again man bears the Adam-name, which stresses his earth-

relation but which nevertheless has not the sound of the perishable. The "son" of man—this is the human being growing into the future, striving towards new possibilities. It is the figure which out of the old man marked by Death and the Fall, is to come forth one day as something new, bearing the forces of the future. In the New Testament "son of man" appears significantly as characterizing the Christ: for He alone can overcome the powers of the Fall and make the human being capable of reaching a godlike future.

Let us note too the polarity of the elements of thought and will in the words "mindful of" and "carest for". God is mindful of mortal man, he carries him in his consciousness. He cares for, takes charge of, the son of man. He lets his vigorous help stream to him. The Hebrew word is sometimes also rendered by "visit" ("visitare") in the positive sense of going as visitor. The Godhead unites itself with the future form of man and inclines to him with strength of being. Therewith mysteries of Christ are touched upon from afar, as in premonition. Only in the light of Christ does the question of man and his future form find its answer. Only, too, in the light of Christ as the re-instater and perfecter of true manhood, do the following verses, speaking of man's glory and honour, receive their full meaning.

Before we pass on to these, let us look back once more and see how man meets us in three forms, how in Psalm 8 he bears the three names: the child—the mortal—the son of man. The "child" is the human being still fully enveloped in the divine forces of his origin. The "mortal" is the grown man of the Fall, who has bought his consciousness at the cost of being permeated with the powers of death. The "son of man" stands as the figure of the future in the glory of Christ.

That the Psalm does not answer the question about man which took its rise from contemplation of the stars, in the sense of the grain of dust, is shown in the way it continues. The glory of his origin and the glory of future perfection lie in the words:

"Thou makest him almost of godlike dignity. Thou crownest him with the light of revelation and splendour of majesty."

Man—"almost a God". In this "almost" lies the drama of his evolution, his problem. He feels himself called to divine status. Lucifer knew how to lay hold of him through this noble urge for perfection. "Ye shall be as gods". But only Another will really redeem this promise—"ye are Gods" (John 10; 34).

The radiating crown on the head was an accepted image in ancient times, indicating that the spiritually endowed man was not closed above, but projected upwards into the divine light. Thus is man spiritually crowned with "glory and majesty", with "*Kābōd* and *Hādār*". The former word often stands in the Old Testament for the Light-aura of the Godhead when the tabernacle or later the temple is filled with the shining traces of its presence. The second word means "radiating sublimity"—majesty. Certain early Rabbis saw in this crowning with *Kābōd* and *Hādār* a reference to the endowment of man with the "higher soul" (the *neschamah aljonah* in the works of Kimchi and Salomon ben Melech). And rightly so: for it is truly connected with the endowing of man with the higher members of his being, through which he rises up into the light-sphere of the Godhead. This mystery again only finds its full consummation through the Christ. The apocalypse speaks of the "Crown of Life" which is

given to him who goes with Christ through death, and the warning is uttered "that no one rob thee of thy crown". This points to the powers of the adversary who would snatch from man his higher spirituality and thrust him down into the animal nature.

The Psalm, which in the image of the Light-crown looked up to the heights, once again lowers its gaze from heaven to earth. After having considered that which is above man and which descends as a crown upon his head, it passes on to consider what is beneath him:

"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."

The created world is put in subjection to the spirit-crowned one. Man participates in both worlds, upwards he ascends to the Godhead, downwards he shares in the creature-existence of which his own body is the summation. Mediating between the visible and invisible world, he is the one called to be the representative of God—the *Vicarius dei*—on earth. Should he permit the opposing powers to rob him of his crown, then he becomes tyrant, exploiter of the earth. That he should subdue the earth is a divine commission (Gen. 1; 28). But he dare not forget that he may only rule the earth as the spirit-crowned one and that the world beneath him is "the work of thy hands"! Herein lies the whole programme for the work of human culture and civilization on the earth.

And now the animal world is especially mentioned as subjected to man, not in the order of Creation as in Genesis, but in the reverse order. The text therefore begins with the higher animals, those standing nearer to the human being, and then advances to those farther removed, the creatures of air and water. First the domestic animals,

then the wild animals (beasts of the field) then birds and finally fishes.

"All sheep and oxen, yea and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."

This rulership of man over the beasts has another aspect, a more inward one. There exists something like a sub-earthly connection between the animals and the various soul-impulses of man. Fairy-tales and dreams make known to us in manifold ways that the animal world is actually "the totality of man's emotional nature laid apart". Certain soul-forces are "objectified" in the animal forms; they dwell also within the soul. To rule over the animal, including the animal in one's own inner being, through the connection with the realm of Spirit-light above, this is set man as a task. He stands between angel and beast. In Psalm 91 this comes classically to expression: "For he shall give his angels charge over thee . . . they shall bear thee up in their hands . . . thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet" (91; 11-13). Not in the proud Luciferic sense is the majesty of man intended here. The Psalm concludes again with the same sentence with which it began:

"O Lord, our Lord, how doth the glory of thy Name shine forth upon all the earth!"

The same sentence as at the beginning. But it has grown richer. Man is now built into this song of praise. Only when his dignity is fully established can the Name of God truly reveal itself on earth. Dedication to man is man's true Divine Service.

GOD IN NATURE

Psalm 104

THE 104th Psalm is like an echo in hymn form of the story of Creation in Genesis; the events recorded in the succession of the days of Creation resound to a partial extent in the Psalm, which falls into seven divisions.

I

The Heavens

"Praise the Lord, O my Soul. O Lord my God thou art very great."

This expression "very great" is more than a merely edifying turn of expression. The key to an understanding of the creation of the world lies in the right understanding of this being "very great". "Great", for ancient times, is a term for a spirituality which is able to overstep the domain of a purely-inward-existence. It is an inward state of such overflowing force that it can pour itself creatively into an outer world. A spirituality which from inner superfluity can become "spiritual-physical". The pre-eminence of the purely spiritual as the original beginning is not infringed upon, we must only think in the sense of "magic-idealism" of such a Spirit as one would deem capable of a world-creation.

The 104th Psalm once more repeats the way that leads from the inner-existence of the Godhead to the world-becoming. In this progress several stages may be distinguished.

It begins with the "spiritual-physical" quality of the state of "greatness". What then proceeds out of this existence of the Godhead is designated with a pair of words that in the original Hebrew text have a mantric tone of power: "*hód we hādār*".

"Thou hast clothed thyself in radiance-of-being and splendour-of-majesty."

"Radiance-of-being and splendour-of-majesty"—the meaning, but not the spoken sound of the two words may perhaps be thus distantly reproduced. They are unusually impressive, both in consonants and vowels, and precisely in their sequence. The first word "*hód*" appears in the Greek translation of the Septuagint as "*exomologesis*", Latin "*confessio*" and English "confession". This would express that in the confession, the acknowledgment, something inward is turned outwards and made manifest. Goethe called his works "Fragments of a great Confession". The Act of Consecration* speaks of the fact that the "body" is to "carry the confession", the turning outwards of divine inwardness.

The two words express a streaming out from the unmanifested into the manifested. They are to be placed even before the "Light". There is as yet nothing externally physical in question, we are still in a region of etheric light. Only in what follows do we enter the realm of the visible world, even though "light" as such is not yet actually "visible", but only renders the world visible for

* "The Act of Consecration of Man" is the name of the Communion Service in the Christian Community.

us. However, compared with *hōd* and *hādār*, it is already a step further into external existence.

*"Thou coverest thyself with light as with a garment.
Thou stretchest out the heavens like a tent.
Thou buildest thy high house in the waters."*

Only now we have reached the "Let there be light" of Genesis. The shining of radiance-of-being and splendour-of-majesty is attached to a still earlier, preceding stage. The heavens appear together with the light, then "the waters". As yet this is no earthly water, nor is it water existing in cloud-form, but it is the "water above the solid", a heavenly ocean of etheric fluid forces.

Let us look again at the succession so far present: Being Great—Radiance of Being—Splendour of Majesty—Light—Waters. It is the path into ever denser forms of existence, the path from within to without. This becomes very evident when we set the other series beside it: the words of comparison which are meant to express the relation to the Godhead: garment, mantle, tent, high-palace (balcony, upper chamber). The "garment" lies in the closest connection—and the Psalm compares with it the radiation which still precedes the light. The "mantle" is already more "external". Removed still further from the original Person is the "tent", which however does not stand so far removed from the "mantle", as finally the "house". With the "Being Great" at the beginning we are still in the being of the very Person of God. Then begins the manifestation and the resulting world releases itself more and more from the immediacy of the Creator, it covers him, concealing-manifesting, manifesting-concealing as garment, as mantle, as tent, as house. But this house of the heavens is at the same time the temple of his direct presence.

From this high "Light-heaven" we now descend to the atmospheric heaven which is already nearer to earth. We pass over at the same time from a world of tranquil being and tranquil radiance of revealing into the dynamically agitated spheres of active forces.

*"Thou makest the clouds thy chariot.
Thou stormest forth upon the winds of the wind.
Thou lettest thine angels work in winds,
Thy lofty ministers in flaming fire."*

Clouds and winds bear the Lord in his movement, when he forsakes the Temple-calm of his heavenly being, and "goes out of himself", "fares forth" in the ecstasy of the storm. Finally, contemplation springs over from the immediately divine Person to the forces which have released themselves from this Person as separate beings, as independent spirit-personalities. There are the "messengers", the "angels" (*Angeloi*) which can incorporate themselves in the wafting winds as in a fire body. There are the "lofty ministers" of God, his "liturgents" as the Greek translation says, which can embody themselves in the flaming fire, in the lightning. The Hebrew word *meschareth* does not mean the slave-like ministrant, but one who from freewill serves as "Minister", as server in a lofty and noble sense. The ninefold order of the heavenly hierarchies has as the lowest degree the messengers, the angels. They can incorporate in the wafting winds. The highest hierarchy is the "Seraphim" which means the "Burning Ones". They manifest in the fire of lightning. The Prophet Isaiah sees them in his great Temple Vision as the heavenly liturgents who begin to sound the hymn of the "Thrice-Holy", the "Sanctus".

The Earth

Through the spheres of clouds, storms and lightnings, charged with the elements, we descend to the solid earth.

"He has laid the foundations of the earth that it should not be removed for ever."

In order to characterize in their stages the gradual freeing of the world from the creating Godhead, Rudolf Steiner once gave a series of four concepts; Being—Manifestation—Active Working—Accomplished Work. "Thou art great"—here we are still in the Being. With the Light-heaven, the Manifestation began to issue from the Being, but it still remained intimately linked with it. The world of clouds and winds, of lightning and thunderstorms—this was the sphere of the Active Working, where the Being is represented through the forces sent out, but Itself stands still deeper in the background. With the solid earth the stage of the Accomplished Work is finally reached; it is concluded, finished, released, henceforth set free from the Creator. What has been brought forth is rigid as cooled-down lava.

Precisely in the deadened state of its stony hardness the earth has an important function in the evolution of man. Man is to come to independence. To this end he must be withdrawn for a time from the direct life of divine being, in order to become aware of his own force of initiative in a world of death. It is precisely in the rigid element of earth, isolated from the direct life of the higher worlds that man can awaken to the consciousness of himself as an individual personality. Moreover the solid earth holds

fast the works of man and sets impressively before his eyes the result of his deeds, whether they have been constructive or deeds of destruction.

The production of this solid earth was a particular work of the ego-creating God.

*"Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment.
The waters stood above the mountains.
At thy rebuke they fled;
At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away."*

The Deep, *Thehôm* appears often in the Old Testament as a sinister demonic being, as a kind of dragon of the pre-world chaos. The path of evolution to the firm earth with its solid ground for the developing of man's self-dependence was a God-willed path. In the ever-recurring flooding of the arising firm land, one beheld the dragon-heads of luciferic beings, who were servants of chaos and who opposed the state of awareness and clarity which was to be developed by means of the hard rock. As in the Babylonian myth Marduk in a kind of Michael conflict subdues the dragon of the primeval world, Tiamat, so here, the ego-creating God rebukes with powerful thunder voice the ancient powers of chaos and frees the earthly scene for man's activity.

So now the earth emerges from the covering of primeval waters:

*"There went forth the mountains, there sank down the
valleys,
Unto the place which thou hast founded for them.
Thou hast set a bound that they (the waters) may not
pass over,
That they turn not again to cover the earth."*

It is said in the 95th Psalm still more plainly how the shaping of the Earth's surface is divinely brought about: "And thy hands have formed the dry land" (95; 5). (In the Greek "*eplasan*"). Thus mountains and valleys are the theatre prepared by divine Providence for the unfolding of man's destiny. We can remember many sacred mountains upon which men received divine revelation, and think perhaps of the deeply-cut Jordan valley, lying far below sea-level, where in the Baptism by John the God entered into Earth existence.

III

The Life of the Earth

The boundary is set to the flood. The continents are there in order to give continuity and conciseness to the earthly human consciousness. In the solid element the earth is for the first time truly "Earth". But if the earth consisted only of earth it must needs become a waste of death. Lucifer worked in the floods of chaos—but in the shadow of Jahve who hardens the earth, Ahriman appears, the lord of death. The earth must be kept living. The water-element, no longer as *Thehôm*, the Dragon-power of the primeval deep, but in a ministering function helps the earth to maintain a livingness.

So there is now a description of how the Earth is snatched from the ossification of death by water in the form of rivers and streams and rain. Without water no plants! One must not, however, give water, as such, the value of life itself, but on earth it is the necessary "medium" of life, the vehicle of the etheric life-forces, which cannot approach the hard earth-crust directly. Through the mediation of

the finer fluidic watery element which stands nearer to them these life-forces can intervene in earthly substance. No life upon earth without water. And just as the moulding of the earth in hill and dale is no accident but the result of plastic divine fashioning activity, so too are the streams and rivers in the landscape which come forth from the spring-wonder, the result of organizing divine action.

*"Thou who sendest the springs into the valleys,
Which run among the hills
They give drink to every beast of the field,
The wild beast quenches his thirst.
By them the fowls of the air have their habitation
Which sing among the branches."*

Many commentaries have already pointed out the poetic beauty of this description of nature. The vivifying water not only appears in brooks and streams but it also wells up out of the earth. It comes too upon the earth in rain. The outer form of the rain is wonderfully tuned to the life conditions of the plants. By falling in numberless drops the descending mass of water is robbed of the destructive element. Moreover the water in ascending and evaporation has been enriched with certain forces, which it now brings with it in the rain as a blessing. Thus for antiquity, and rightly so, something is united with rain that comes here direct from above, from God. Even if for our physical "enlightenment" rainwater comes from the earth by way of evaporation, its actual "etheric" quality is a gift from heavenly spheres, its "blessing" has its source "above"—

*"Thou waterest the hills from thy heaven-house,
Thou satisfiest the land with the fruits thou createst."*

Then the Psalm describes in detail the fruitfulness of the earth:

*"Thou causest the grass to grow for the cattle
And grain for the service of man,
That he may bring forth food out of the earth."*

The grass just as it grows is for the cattle. The grain grows by labour for the service of man. Human efforts must here be inserted into the mere nature process in order to tend the grain rightly and then bring about the bread by a lengthy, laborious path. The laborious service of man in producing corn for bread—*agricultura*, the origin of "culture", and also of "cult". Both are derived from the word '*colere*', to till the soil. Here, in connection with the preparation of bread, man is mentioned for the first time in Psalm 104.

*"That the wine make glad the heart of man,
That his face may shine with oil,
And that bread may strengthen man's heart."*

The trinity, wine—oil—bread points especially to the sphere of the original experience of the cult. Bread and wine are both brought into connection with the human heart. The bread "establishes our heart in steadfastness", the wine makes it "glad". These are the two fundamental forces of the form-fashioning steadfastness, and the fiery, blood-filled permeation which in the service of the Sun-Being, Christ, work in the altar sacrament as his Body and his Blood. The heart is especially the Sun-organ in man.

To bread and wine with their relation to the heart there is added, as a third, the substance of oil, likewise sacramental. "That his countenance may shine from oil". Oil

is connected with light. It appears in Extreme Unction and in the Consecration of Priests as the bearer of the spiritualizing process. It is not connected with the heart, but with the countenance (Original Text) in which spirituality comes especially to expression.

At first the Psalm uses the word "Adam" for man, that is, the earthen, the earthly. This word is used where reference is made to the service of man in producing the grain. In connection with the bread—wine—oil, on the other hand, we have the other name, "*enōsch*" which stresses more the frailty of the mortal (cf. Psalm 8). He who experiences as beneficial in his heart the stabilizing force of bread and the rousing fieriness of wine bringing gladness, he who allies his countenance to the light through the oil—he is "*enōsch*", the perishable. It is just the consciousness of his mortality which makes him willing to receive divine gifts of grace.

The Psalm then passes from the world of cultivated plants to a nature which is far removed from man. Linking again to the words, "He watereth the hills from above" it now reads:

"The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted: where the birds make their nests. The stork has her nest on the tree top. The high hills are the realm of the wild goats and the rocks are a refuge for the conies."

In a magnificent-mystical way the "trees of Jehovah" are spoken of here, the cedars of Lebanon which He himself planted. Primeval forests stand on Lebanon, nature still untouched by man. We find again and again in the Old Testament the wondering awe which was experienced at the sight of the mighty cedar trees. In ancient mytho-

logical times the creating Godhead was himself directly felt in the midst of such forest-growth. So Psalm 80; 11 also speaks of the "cedars of God". When one considers the peculiar lack of a nature sense in later Jewry, one can be glad to hear such tones in the Old Testament. In the stories of the Patriarch Abraham sacred groves and sacramental planting of sacred trees play a great rôle. In the case of the cedars of Lebanon this planting had been accomplished by God himself.

If we would transpose the "conies" into our European high mountain world we could perhaps think of the marmot. When wandering over a lonely hillside set with boulders one can hear the call of the marmot that warns of the approach of man. The world in which one hears the call of the marmot and the clattering of the stones which have become detached under the foot of the fleeing chamois—that is a world of untouched solitude, far from man and his civilization. In the Psalm's devotional contemplation of Nature this world remote from man is also included. It is as though it had a feeling that the sphere of human activity required round it a zone of undisturbed nature belonging to God.

IV

Sun and Moon

The celestial bodies sun, moon and stars only became visible on the fourth Day of Creation in the account given in Genesis, even though the Light-heaven had been there for some time, and similarly Psalm 104, which follows the events of Genesis in a freer way, only comes to speak of stars, moon, sun in its fourth section.

The Psalm begins by a descent out of the spheres of light to the heaven-waters and clouds and then down to the firm earth. In considering the earth this way is reversed, first the earth as "solid land", then the earth in so far as it is kept living by the water, and now the earth with the manifold emotional impulse of its inhabitants, as these impulses of soul stand in an "astral" relation with the celestial lights. For sun and moon do not appear here in their own capacities as belonging to the Light-heaven, but in their relation to soul life in the domain of earth. The stars, the "*astra*" work in the "astrality" to be found on earth.

*"He appointed the moon for seasons,
The sun knoweth his going down.
Thou makest darkness and it is night.
Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.
The young lions roar after their prey,
And seek their meat from God.
The Sun ariseth, they gather themselves together
And lay them down in their dens.
Man goeth forth unto his work
And to his labours until the evening."*

In the first place the kingdom of the moon. Here too the day originates with "evening and morning". The moon stands in the evening sky as a "sign". It marks the divisions of time, according to its phases. We know how far-reaching is the significance of the moon-periods in earthly life. Even to the fixing of the Easter festival.—The sun "knoweth his going down". It "knows" that earthly creatures may not be uninterruptedly exposed to its effects. So in going down it makes place for the kingdom ruled by the moon.

“Darkness” and “night”, as in Genesis, have essential being. They are not merely “absence of light”. With the night the astral world of the moon comes to life, to which the animals belong. Moon-astrality, penetrated as yet by no ego-consciousness, enchanted in dream magic, makes the beasts of prey stir in the dark forests, makes the lions lift up their voices. The roaring, the cries, the bellowings of the beasts by night give us an impressively weird feeling of the remoteness from man of this animal soul-world dating from the world’s primeval ages.

It has been thought touchingly naïve that the Psalm implies a prayer to God in the roaring of lions. But in general the naïve view stands still nearer to the original fact. So one gets a feeling here of how this animal soul-nature in its original stirrings is, as it were, still proximate to the divine worlds. These original instincts are no longer so guiltless in man as in the beast, but are poisoned through the contact with an egotistic selfhood, which has not yet pressed forward to the true selfless ego. Among men this direct proximity to God has been almost entirely lost.

The moon-world is invalidated through the rising of the Sun in the solemn dawn. The nocturnal beasts of prey hide in their holes. In the soul life of man something similar occurs. Nightmare, bad dreams, anxiety, spectres—all this vanishes when the sun comes up. It helps man to kindle spirit-consciousness in his ego, it brings him to himself, helps him to be himself. “Be no longer anxious, nor torment thyself, my Soul. Already here and there the morning-bells have wakened.” In mood of cult and festival it is said: “Man goeth forth unto his work.” It is the world of the Sun-day to which the human-being is most deeply united. This work belongs to its light, his “labour until the evening”.

The fourth section closes with this classic picture of the

worker who in sunlight "works so long as it is day". The contemplation of the earthly world has reached its summit. First: the earth as firm ground. Then: the earth vivified by water in the adornment of its plants. Then: the earth with the soul-stirrings of its beasts, and finally the sun-allied man, setting his earthly work in order. Here the Psalm lifts itself to words of marvelling wonder:

*"O Lord, how manifold are thy works!
In wisdom hast thou made them all.
The Earth is filled with what is thine."*

Literally: the Earth is full of thy possessions. The creating Godhead has laid something of its own into the earthly world.

v

The Sea

Just as Genesis makes the swarming in the sea of moving animal life (fifth day) follow upon the appearance of the celestial lights (on the fourth day) so too does the Psalm turn its gaze once more to the sea and its living creatures.

"So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There the sea-wonders take their way; leviathan whom thou hast made to play with him."

Here lives still *Thehôm*, the primeval flood, but within the bounds given to it. The sea is like a memory of pre-stages of earthly existence, before this had stiffened to the

firm solid form. Indeed, everything living has had its beginning in the sea. The composition of our human blood shows a mysterious relationship with sea-water—memory of far-distant stages of the development of our bodily nature.

In the Classical Walpurgis Night Goethe takes the Homunculus who would fain originate from a true bodily nature, to the sea. Proteus, the master of transformation, metamorphosis, advises him: "Thou must commence in the wide ocean yonder!" And Thales, the Sage, who taught that all began originally in water, says: "Yield to the worthy exhortation from the first step to start creation; for prompt activity prepare. Thou'lt move thee by external norms there, through thousand and yet thousand forms there, and ere thou'rt man there's time to spare."

According to an illuminating conjecture it should not read "there go the ships" but instead of ships: "sea-monsters". The leviathan is then mentioned directly in connection with this. The mythical sea-dragon is an echo of long-vanished worlds of the saurians. "To play with him." The "play" points in the direction of artistic activity. In all the changing of form among the living and ensouled plasma, divine formative force is at work—comes into play. It is "in play" on the infinite possibilities of form in organic substance, until after the great prelude of metamorphoses the human form finally appears. On the way to the human form lie too the fantastic prehistoric shapes, sea-monsters and dragons.

(In order that no misunderstanding may arise, the following may be added: The human being was never "animal". His being of spirit and soul originated from the higher world. His corporeal part was certainly led through forms similar to the animal, but the supersensible element belonging to such bodily forms was never of "animal"

nature. Such bodies as could not be used for further transforming in the direction of the human body, were thrust out, let fall, and then were occupied by animal soul-life. The animals' bodies are the waste products of the path that led to the human form.)

VI

The Mystery of Sustaining the World

*"These wait all upon thee ; that thou mayst give them
their meat in due season.
That thou givest them, they gather ;
Thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good.
Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled :
Thou takest away their Breath, they die, and return
to their dust.
Thou sendest forth thy Breath—they are created
And thou renewest the face of the earth."*

In a backward glance at the totality of living creatures, the Godhead is acknowledged and honoured. Three pictures express what the Godhead continuously means for the world, even after creation has ended. These three pictures are: the opening hand, the face turned towards or away, the ingoing and outgoing breath. These pictures harmonize to a wonderfully organic trinity. They are taken from the three members of the human organism, known in Anthroposophy as the nerves-senses system, the rhythmic system working in pulse and breath, and the metabolic-limb system.

In the countenance our consciousness comes to expression. The preliminary condition for the existence of the

world is that God turns his face to it. Should he turn his face away, the great fear of annihilation comes over all living beings. The world remains in existence as long as it is beheld and affirmed from the divine consciousness.

The picture of the breath is drawn from the rhythmic sphere. The word exists so long as the divine breath permeates it. If God draws in his breath, the world falls into nothingness. Similarly in Job (34; 14, 15), "If he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh shall perish together." This view is reminiscent of ancient Indian wisdom. The world is dependent on the breath of the God-head. It breathes out: world arises. It breathes in: world perishes. And so in exalted rhythms, incalculably long. Manvantaras and Pralayas, Cosmic Days and Cosmic Nights are the result of this divine rhythmic breath. In the world-creative out-breathing the breath of life (the Hebrew "*ruach*" is both "spirit" and "breath") is still directly God's—"thy Breath". In the withdrawing of the breath it is seen how the outstreamed divine life-force has apportioned itself among the separate beings, has become their own; for it now reads: "their" breath. "Thou takest away their breath". The life of God becomes the life of the individual beings. But inasmuch as he takes back the world into himself, "their" breath returns to its source.

The picture of the hand that closes or opens belongs to the sphere of voluntary movement. The divine hand opens, the beings are filled with "good". "Good" is a word that in the special sense belongs to God alone. The God-head gives away of its own being, its own substance, so that something can come into existence. There would be nothing there, if this mystery of divine self-imparting, self-surrender were not to be. The whole world is fed from divine "substance". The reception of nourishment is again only a picture, an image. Even without eating in the

external sense, a being "lives" from the Godhead in every moment of its mere existing. Beyond the comparison of the individual taking in of nourishment, there is the great communion of all creatures in the Substance of God Himself. "Thou openest thy hand—they are filled with good." "Good" in the original text is the same word as "goodness". In a wider sense every good thing, all goods, even to the everyday goods for consumption are dependent on the divine self-imparting, on the original goodness. This mystery becomes visible in the Last Supper. The opening hand is the gesture of the great divine "Take this"! (Psalm 145; 16, offers a parallel to this: "Thou openest thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.")

From different aspects the relationship of God to his world is set forth in these three pictures. In order that the world may be, God must turn his face to it, he must breathe into it his breath, he must open his hand and distribute. The Psalm begins with the feeding, goes from there to the picture of the countenance and ultimately lingers longer at the mystery of the breath. (Psalm 33; 6, also speaks of the creative out-breathing: "By the word of Jahve were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath—*ruach*—of his mouth.")

The face of the earth is renewed. The earth has already passed through manifold forms; there was once the earth of the coal-forests and the saurians. Each time the face of the earth was uniform, formed according to a definite "style". These ancient worlds passed away when their hour had struck and gave place to new epochs. The earth's countenance has thus already been many times renewed. This is true too for the succession of culture-epochs. All these events are associated with the inbreathing and out-breathing of God. The world is not only "sustained", in greater or smaller rhythms it is continuously renewed

through the living breath of the Spirit which ever and again sends up new waves of becoming, as "Creator Spiritus".

VII

Closing Verses

*"The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever:
The Lord shall rejoice in his works.
He looketh on the earth and it trembleth,
He toucheth the hills and they smoke.
I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
My meditation of him shall be sweet,
I will be glad in the Lord.
Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth,
And let the wicked be no more!
Bless thou the Lord, O my Soul.
Praise ye the Lord."*

After the Psalm has been offered in dedication to the Godhead, there yet sounds a dissonance in the harmony of creation. The wonderful symphony is disturbed through the evil in man. The psalmist knows of no other solution than to desire that the evil-doers be exterminated from the earth.

The Fall of Man follows the creation of the world. Since the song of praise is honest and realistic it cannot pass over this fact. It calls for a sentence of punishment in order that the creation may be purified and re-established. The Christ-Mystery has not yet been revealed. Nor can it yet be evident that the permitting of evil was only recoiling before a new creation, going beyond nature.

Man was to be set upon his evolutionary path, in order in future days as one who has himself been redeemed, he may place his earth-won independence freely into the service of the divine.

But this dark shadow, this unresolved discord cannot essentially disturb the impression that this great hymn of the 104th Psalm is steeped in the element of joy. Joy and gladness is the real character of this song of praise of nature. In the final verses the rejoicing is spoken of by name. God rejoices in his work. Without joy no creation. In response comes the rejoicing of man in God. The sight of nature and its beauty turns into joy in God: "I will be glad in the Lord."

The Psalm ends as it began, with the exhortation to one's own soul to join in the song of praise.

THE HEAVENS DECLARE

Psalm 19

I

The Starry Heavens

THE 19th Psalm opens in a mood of marvelling contemplation of the *star-set sky*. Its first word is "The heavens" and the whole Psalm is dedicated to this subject and flows forth from it. Whilst the Psalmist dwells in absorbed and selfless contemplation of the shining worlds they begin to sound and speak to his inner ear. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament proclaimeth His handiwork."

When antiquity spoke of a "music of the spheres" it was not irresponsible fabling of fantasy but the outcome of definite supersensible experience. The heavens not only shine: to the opened spiritual ear they become sounding, ringing, even speaking. There is a reverberation of a former intimate cosmic experience in the words of Goethe's Faust.

*"The Sun with many a sister-sphere
Still sings the rival psalm of wonder." (a)*

*"And to spirit ears loud-ringing
Now the new-born day is springing." (b)*
(Latham's translation)

(a) "The sun-orb sings in emulation, mid brother-spheres his ancient round."

(b) "Sounding loud to spirit hearing, See the newborn day appearing."
(Bayard Taylor trans.)

The heavens "declare"—the Hebrew word is of the same origin as the word "*sepher*", the "book"; the book in which things are entered, enumerated, declared, booked. The star-set heavens are the archetypal book, the book of books. Originally mankind had had the feeling that the heavens revealed themselves as a holy script. The Holy Book on earth meant image, likeness. So even to-day the book on the altar is not merely a support to the memory of the celebrating priest but a cultic image of the Book of the Heavens.

The contents of this cosmic proclaiming is the "*Glory of God*". "Glory" is, however, too external a rendering. It is rather a question of the light of manifestation, the "*gloria*" in which the Divine makes itself known. For "God" the original text here uses the word "*El*". It is not a matter, therefore, either of the Jahve or of the Elohim, but of an original, all-encompassing Divinity.

If the first sentence speaks of the divine wisdom, revealing itself in the splendour of light, in the second sentence there lives something of the divine power: "And the firmament proclaimeth his handiwork." The fixed, the firmament (for *firmus* means fixed) is for modern man the expression of an out-of-date natural science, which by firmament understood something firm, fixed. To the natural scientist of to-day the tranquillity of the firmament is only an external illusion, the starry heaven is resolved into movements of individual celestial bodies. And yet in the ancient word "firmament" there is something of truth. It conveys to us the spirit experience of a divine world, resting deeply in itself despite all creative activity—a world eternally founded in its own being. This spirit experience is released through the sight of the stars. It is not for nothing that the fixed stars in their stability appear to the human eye as resting stars. It is just as little

accidental as the blue of the sky, which indeed is also "only" an optical phenomenon. The pictures in which the universe offers itself to the eye of man are not idly accidental. They have their own picture-value, their own picture-justification, which rests upon quite a different plane from the questions which may be associated with them as physical events. As pictures which the cosmic artist has allowed to appear thus and not otherwise before the eyes of man, they have their own imaginative law and face the physical phenomena as a law unto themselves. To this extent it has its justification when man in contemplation of the firmament experiences a super-earthly world of calm, eternally founded upon itself, one which can fill him with inner stability and assurance and harmony.

The Psalm originates in the world of eternity. It rests at first in the contemplation of the highest spheres. Then it gradually descends. It is as though it traversed at the same time the path of incarnation, the path followed by the super-earthly when it betakes itself down to earth to become flesh.

From the eternal world of the immovable stars we sink gradually down into the element of time. We have not yet reached the spatial and corporeal. But the soul which was surrendered to the timeless and eternal, sheathes itself now in the fine web of the *temporal*. Before it enters the spatial body it assumes, as it were, the time-body as a fine sheath:

"Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge."

With this we have entered upon the world of the rhythmical time element. That is impressively shown in the

original text, "*jom le jom . . . lajelah le lajelah*," "day unto day . . . night unto night." Quite literally, it reads, "Day lets word arise to day, night makes knowledge living to night." Here a fine differentiation is made between day and night. The *day* brings to light the "manifestation", it expresses the proclaiming word, it brings it "to the day". But this "bringing to light" is only one side of the process of learning to know. When we sleep, mysteriously in the depths of the soul, all that we have acquired by conscious experience by day is further worked upon throughout the night. Everyone is aware how a thought can live and develop further when we "sleep on it". What the day makes evident to us is permeated by higher life in the *night*. Life is added to Light. In German "day" is masculine, "night" is feminine. In Hebrew, too, "*jom*" is masculine, "*lajelah*" is feminine. In the clear concept of the day a male element is, as it were, active; the night, however, is a mother of life.

Only now does the Psalm reach our earth and its spatial, material existence. But it no longer sees the earth with normal, everyday sight; descending from heaven, it hears the star-word resounding in the corporeal element. The terrestrial shows itself to be ordered, super-fashioned, sounded through by the celestial.

"Their line has gone out through all the earth." The line, that is the measuring line. Inasmuch as the chaos of earthly substances comes to life in manifold forms, our enlightened eye now beholds the heavenly forces at work "giving measure", setting a standard. One may think of the well-known experiment of the Chladni sound-figures, where the iron filings on the glass plate take on forms with the resounding tone. In the same way the sound-figures of the stars are interwoven into the earth in its formations.

"There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line goes out into all lands ('erez' is at the same time 'the earth') and their words to the end of the world."

We can by now take a general view of the first part of the Psalm which speaks of the heaven of the stars and its activities. It leads us through three worlds. First, the eternal in eternity. The fixed stars radiate in the firmament. Then—the eternal entering into time. The temporal, rhythmic world of day and night stands as mediator between the eternal light of heaven and the darkness of the earth. Finally—the eternal working into space, "the working of the stars in earthly substances", the sound-figures of the resounding celestial spheres in the dust of the earth:

*"The celestial spheres declare the light-manifestation of
the eternal,
The firmament extolleth the work of his hands.
Day unto day uttereth the word of revelation,
Night unto night bringeth knowledge to life.
Not inaudible are these words and this speaking;
Their sounding brings order into all earth-existence.
To the ends of earth's circle their speaking resounds
and is mighty."*

II

The Sun

The first part of the Psalm has led us along the path from the heights of the stars into the depths of matter. When we find ourselves again in earthly existence the

splendour of the stars grows pale. We hear it still echoing in earthly substances—then all this vanishes before the glowing sunrise. The deeper foundations of earth-existence conceal themselves behind the veil of the sense world. The rising *sun* deprives us of the sight of the stars but it shows us instead the earth as the field of our labours, as the scene of our actual life as man.

“Which cometh as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a hero to run his race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven and his circuit unto the ends of it and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”

We must keep in mind that in Hebrew as well as in English the sun is masculine. We could perhaps reproduce it as “the sun-spirit”, the “sun genius”. Here in the Psalm it becomes a manifestation of *the Son*, while behind the stars the Father-God appeared as the eternal ground of existence.

The men of ancient times had not yet the power of an independent ego-consciousness within them, as have the men of to-day. They were dependent on the sun for coming to their aid with its daylight. They were only truly themselves in the shining of the sun. With the going down of the sun the contours of their personal consciousness also began to grow hazy and at the dimming of the brightness of the “ego” the supersensible—the divine but also the demonic—came towards them. The further humanity receded from its original purity the more definitely night became the realm of spectres and ghosts, instead of being the “holy night” of revelation. In Christ the Godhead appears as the great I-Am in the bright day-consciousness, in order to sanctify the awakened human ego and on this path to unite it again with the supersensible. In pre-Christian times something of the being of Christ shone down to man out of the sun. Even to-day we

still feel how the sunrise can rescue us from the horror of an uneasy night and make a "new man" of us. The sun gives fresh vital energy, new joy in earth existence and "holy peace". It drives away the phantoms of the night. The Psalm beholds the exalted Sun-Spirit in two images: as Hero and as Bridegroom.

The Hero is the outstanding man who shows others what it really means to be man; that it means treading a path, completing a course. Man is a being that passes his life in developing and transforming himself. The stronger the personality, the more strongly marked is the line of this course. The average man idles away his time to the right and left of his path like Little Red Riding Hood when she met the wolf. The higher the human being reaches up into the divine, the more he is the Hero, so much more does line and significant configuration appear in his life. In the Ancient Mysteries there was an initiation grade of "Sun-Hero"—literally, "*Heliodromos*", the "racer-in-the-sun", who like the sun goes on his course sure of his goal and full of strength. Thus Paul could say in old age, "I have finished the course" (*ton dromon teteleka*—2 Tim. 4; 7). In the sublime, unswerving following of its path—"and still his fore-ordained career accomplishes with tread of thunder"—the sun daily displays the exalted image of a glorious race-course. In the *Commentary on the Psalms* by Professor R. Kittel, there is a beautiful description of how the Israelites experienced this daily course of the sun: "Behind the eastern mountains, the ranges of Moab or Basan and further back behind the unending eastern desert, the sun rises for the inhabitants of Palestine from the haze-encircled horizon in red and golden brilliant splendour, of which a western man can hardly form a conception. It moves along in its majestic course over the land, to dip down once more in the evening into the blue

flood of the western sea behind the cliffs of Joppa or on the dunes at the foot of Carmel, wrapt in red-gold haze as in a purple mantle" (page 370).

What the course of a Hero reaching achievement meant to an ancient time, however, could only be a prophecy of the earthly path of Christ. The Lion Gospel of Mark, in particular, describes the Christ-Life on earth as unswerving—a sun-path that must take such a path and no other. Again and again one finds in Mark, "And straightway . . . And straightway . . ." (Which, by the way, is an exact rendering of the Greek word "*euthys*"). The "straightway" which appears so often in Mark has no hint of haste or breathlessness. It intends to express how all the deeds of Christ lie on the direct path of his Sun-Hero-Course.

But Christ is the great Exemplar not only as the predecessor on the path. A prototype precisely by its perfections can also take away courage and make all emulating efforts seem purposeless. Christ is not only Example, he is more: he is the archetype of our true being working creatively within us. The archetype of the plant, for instance, does not stay outside the plant but is present in it, concretely active and creative. So does the Christ desire to draw into us as creative archetype. Therewith the relation to him passes over into mysticism: he is the *Bridegroom*. This word had an echo of the Mysteries. John the Baptist "rejoices over the Bridegroom's voice" and Christ frequently describes himself as the "Bridegroom". The exalted Sun-Spirit is called Bridegroom because he is to receive the full surrender of the human soul, with which he will unite himself in the innermost communion of the "Mystic Marriage". If we follow Professor R. Kittel the original text apparently reads, "He has prepared for the sun a dwelling in the ocean." (Instead of "in them", i.e.,

“the ends of the world”). The concepts of ancient mythology are here in agreement. One saw the sun in the evening dip down into the sea and thus was produced the mythological picture of the bridal chamber of the sun-god in the depths of the ocean. A higher truth is revealed in this image. The depths of the ocean become a genuine allegory for the depths of the soul. The Christ who is experienced in the bright day-consciousness unites at night with deeper regions of the soul’s life. The wonderful ancient mystical image only becomes true and real in Christianity.

The second section of the Psalm, behind which stands the mystery of the divine Son, may be rendered in somewhat the following words:

*“To the Sun-Genius gave God his abode in the depths of
the sea,
And He—as a Bridegroom He goes forth from his bridal
chamber,
Rejoicing as a strong hero to run his race.
His going forth is from the end of heaven,
And to the ends again He closes the circle.
Nothing is hid from His fiery glow.*

After these verses, full of the powers of nature, the Psalm takes on a quite different tone. It turns from star and sun and becomes a hymn on the Law. It thus loses in colour, in an elemental force that overwhelms the heart; it becomes paler, more abstract. Critical investigation is therefore of the opinion that this praise of the Law did not originally belong to the preceding part but was added in a later, decadent period to the forcible Nature-Psalm. However the matter may stand, this Hymn on the Law belongs in any case to the 19th Psalm and we find that it is nevertheless a true completion of the preceding part.

In the star-set heavens something of the being of the Father-God is experienced; in the sun something of the Son-nature. The experience roused through the *Holy Book* enters, as it were, the yet future sphere of the *Holy Spirit*. And since the working of the Holy Spirit is something that is still to come, we cannot be surprised if in the third part of the Psalm we find something more abstract, less vigorous and natural. Yet this part, too, possesses its distinct beauty.

At the beginning of the Psalm the heavens with its stars is extolled as the great manifestation; there the heavens are the book. In the third part of the Psalm this is reversed and in the book the heavens are discovered. "And when your hands unroll some parchment rare, all Heaven descends and opens out before you." Even if the dry and dusty bookworm, Wagner, speaks these words in Goethe's *Faust*, they are nevertheless a kind of reflection of genuine joy of the mind, genuine delight of knowledge given through the opening book of wisdom. This dried-up scholarship of the amanuensis is already to be noticed in the old Jewish Rabbi's study of the Law. But the words of the Psalm, which speak of the blessedness which springs from the meditative study of the inspired holy texts have nevertheless something valid for all time, quite apart from the "Scribe" element. Only in Christianity can they become alive and true for us in a new sense. So, for instance, St. John's Gospel can become a book for us to-day in which "all heaven descends to us".

This eulogy of the holy Scriptures is cast in a form which divides strictly into exactly twelve sentences (six double sentences). Something of the ordering of the starry heavens lies in this twelvehood. The soul surrendered in devotion to the Law feels the harmonies of the star-world stream into it, bringing peace.

*"The world-ordering of the Lord is a cult without flaw,
making peaceful the soul.
The testimony of the Lord creates spirit-confidence,
making wise the simple.
The statutes of the Lord are righteous, rejoicing the
heart.
The ordained goal of the Lord is ether-clear, enlighten-
ing the eyes.
The fear of the Lord cleanses through and through,
enduring for ever.
The precepts of the Lord bear a timeless existence,
bound righteously to one another."*

A comparison follows these twelve statements which once more gathers the whole mood together and in its forcible imagery would make us feel that the joy of the spirit does not yield to the experiences of the joy of the senses, but can surpass them in intensity of happiness.

"Nobler than the noblest gold; sweeter than the sweetest honey."

Gold was seen at all times as the transitory symbol of the sunlike light of wisdom. In Goethe's Fairy Tale the Golden King utters the words, "Know the highest!" Honey in ancient times was something like the food of the mysteries. The Risen One, according to the Luke account, betook of honey as well as fish. In the Oberufer Nativity play one of the shepherds says of his clairvoyant dream, "My soul received much sweetness, much honey and much roses." In the sense of the Psalm the Holy Book mediates the gold of wisdom and the most exquisite blessedness.

The Human Being

The 19th Psalm has entered into the three spheres of manifestation of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Now at the end the *human being* turns back to *himself* out of the depths of his absorbed contemplation of the divine mysteries. And as the first verses spoke of the resounding of the stars, of the Word of God sounding out from the Heavens, to which the pious man gives ear, so the Psalm ends with the desire that likewise the inner word of man may be heard above the heavens. This is not presumption, but an actual presentiment of the dignity to which man is called, in which he can only be fully established through the Christ: i.e. that he may not only hear but may also speak as spirit to spirits, to the Godhead. As in the Lord's Prayer, the petitioner passes over from the selfless absorption in the apostrophe of the great wish which is wished on behalf of the Divine (Thy Name . . . Thy Kingdom . . . Thy Will . . .) and only then comes to his own needs and necessities, so likewise at the end of Psalm 19 man enters again into the sphere of his own destiny. From being submerged in prayer he seems to emerge again and come to himself. But he himself has become another being. He has come to know the bliss of the higher life. At the same time, however, he has acquired deeper insight into his own inner nature and the perils and threats confronting it. He knows that much of our wrong-doing never enters our consciousness. He knows of much that "wanders by night through the labyrinth of the breast unknown, unheeded by man". He has gained impressions of the dominion of the opposing powers; for

the old law holds good that the devil also draws nearer to us if we have been able to take a step towards God.

Again it must be said that the words of the Psalm only reach their full and right significance in connection with Christianity.

*“Moreover by them (the precepts of the Lord) is
thy servant enlightened.
And he who keeps them in his soul earns reward
from God.
How often do we offend in our speech!
Who is conscious of it!
Cleanse Thou me from secret faults,
Preserve me from the adversaries,
Let them not gain dominion over me;
Then I have part in the eternal
And am purified from great transgressions.
May my words find the echo in the heavens,
May the meditation of my heart reach unto thee
O Lord, rock-foundation of my ego-being and my
redeemer!”*

THE SEVEN THUNDERS

Psalm 29

I

A HEAVY storm approaches over the sea. The devout man of the Old Testament lets his gaze rest upon the threatening cloud-masses in solemn and anxious expectation, as befits the reception of some great revelation.

Then comes a flash of lightning, flaming over the whole sky. It rends the clouds. It rends, too, a curtain before the gazing eye. The soul knows that it is rapt away from the earthly. Vanished are earth, sea, thunder-clouds. In mighty visions appears the ritual in the heavens, Divine Worship as it is solemnized by those who dwell in the higher worlds.

*"Bear to the Lord, ye Sons of God,
Bear to the Lord revelation and power!
Bear to the Lord the reflection of His Name!
Offer Him worship in holy vesture of light!"*

II

The vision of the heavenly High Mass fades. Among deepening rolls of thunder the curtain closes again. The soul that was snatched away returns to the earthly body, sees again earth, sea, storm-clouds and hears the thunder

which now follows the forewarning lightning. The soul is now able, however, sanctified by the vision, to give the thunder its right name—"the voice of the Lord" (*qôl Jahve*). For the Hebrews that was the designation of thunder. Seven times in the 29th Psalm sounds the dull rolling "*qôl Jahve*". It may perhaps be rendered "thunder-tone".

*"Thunder-tone of the Lord over the sea.
The God of glory thunders;
The Lord over the great waters;
Thunder-tone of the Lord, full of strength,
Thunder-tone of the Lord full of majesty."*

The storm moves slowly over the leaden sea. The voice of Jahve over the waters— memory arises of Creation's beginnings; how once the Spirit of God brooded over the waters like a cloud. It was pregnant with creative lightning-thoughts and powerful thunder-words, below it the plastic element expectantly yielding itself in obedience.

III

The thunderstorm moves towards the land. It takes its way over the hills of the coast to the desert of Kadesh.

*"Thunder-tone of the Lord—he cleaveth the cedars.
He cleaveth, the Lord, the Cedars of Lebanon;
He maketh them leap like calves,
The mountains of Lebanon and Sirion,
Like young unicorns,
Thunder-tone of the Lord sendeth forth flaming fires,
Thunder-tone of the Lord shaketh the wilderness."*

*He shaketh, the Lord, the desert of Kadesh.
Thunder-tone of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve,
Sheddeth leaves from the forests."*

From the sea to the land—the solid land is the domain of man's existence. All that in primeval beginnings was yet pliable and heaving ocean is hardened and solidified in the earthly element. The world of "finished work" trembles before the creative word of the Highest. What has taken shape on earth feels itself in question when the Eternal with fulness of power speaks new words. The Sons of God in the heights solemnize the High Mass—earth-man feels himself brought to judgment.

"The mortal shakes in its foundations" (Novalis)—the Psalm shows this in its manifold pictures. Age-old cedars, high-towering trees are struck by lightning and split asunder. Who can behold this and not be gripped by the gravity of the Last Judgment! The mountains tremble, rocked by an earthquake. In rich metaphor the Psalm compares them with the skipping unicorn. Branches and leaves are torn from the trees by the tempest. The elemental pressure of what is taking place seizes the beasts of the forest, it penetrates them through and through.

In seven mighty thunder-claps, three over the sea, four over the land, the storm passes over. One is reminded of the seven thunders of the Apocalypse of John, "Then seven thunders uttered their voices" (Apoc. 10; 3).

IV

On earth there is excitement, shock, shatterings. "The mortal shakes in its foundations." The seven thunders have sounded. The soul which had trembled in its mortal

part turns from the picture of the groaning, uprooted forests and lifts itself to the eternal. "But the immortal begins to shine more brightly and know itself."

*"And in His temple—all that is his, cries: Gloria!
The Lord—above the flood he sits enthroned.
Yea, throned is he, the Lord, a King in eternity.
The Lord—strength will he give to his people.
The Lord—he will bless his people with peace."*

The Psalm ends where it began: in the heavenly sanctuary. There, above, resounds the "*Gloria in excelsis*" of the heavenly hosts. The eternal is throned in tranquillity above the flood—with the mention of which the earthly, catastrophic storm once more appears, dying away in violent downpour of rain as in the days of the flood itself.

It is especially impressive in the Apocalypse how in the midst of the pursuing visions of disaster, ever again the picture of the heavenly throne appears as a quietening pole that gives us the assurance of a final guiding of events which is fraught with meaning. So here, too, the tranquil enthronement of the eternal over the storms is presented in magnificent contrast.

The last word of this Psalm of thunderstorm is "peace". The storm is followed by the rainbow, the divine token of the security of the covenant. This peace is not anything weak or cowardly. The human being who has passed through the storms and has become conscious of his immortality feels the transit through the zone of shattering confusion as an increase of inner strength. So, too, the transit through the apocalyptic catastrophes effects an increase of forceful spirit-will. "The Lord will give strength to his people." Upon this word of strength follows the word of peace! "*Gloria in excelsis*" is answered

by "*et in terra pax*"—the peace on earth (to which Delitzsch has pointed in his *Commentary on the Psalms*). Throughout the storms man knows himself to be united with the One throned in eternal majesty. The divine tranquillity throned above becomes a peace full of strength in the human heart below.

Appendix

"The Heavenly Ritual"

Those who performed the heavenly worship were called in the original text "*benē ʿēlīm*", that is, "Sons of God", not only "ye mighty". In the same way we have in Faust "ye true sons of God". The gods of the ancient religions are beings from the ranks of the heavenly hierarchies, the angelic ranks of a ninefold order.

They are also spoken of in Psalm 89: "And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord, and thy faithfulness in the congregation of the saints. For who in the clouds can be compared to the Lord? Who among the Sons of God can be likened unto the Lord? An exalted God is he in the assembly of the saints, great and feared of all that are about him. O Lord God of Hosts, who is like unto thee?" (89; v. 5-8). Thus the vision of ancient times saw the God who speaks the great I-Am in the midst of numberless hierarchical beings, for it is these that are meant by the "saints" in Psalm 89. It does not refer here to those upright men who have reached perfection, but to high beings from the ranks of the angels. It is those who, standing in his direct presence, partake in his holiness, as perhaps the Seraphim whom Isaiah hears intone the great "Holy, Holy, Holy" in his Temple Vision. (Isaiah 6).

The Sons of God bear to Him the light of Manifestation (Glory, *Kābôd*) and power. He has graciously poured forth his being into the widths of the world and they ray it back to him in gratitude. Divine thoughts and divine will-forces are reflected, as it were, in the world, and the beings of the angelic ranks mediate this divine reflection.

In Psalm 96, which extols apocalyptically the Coming of the Divine, almost the same words are to be found: "Radiance of being and majesty (*hód we hādār*) before his countenance. Strength and beauty in his sanctuary. Bring hither unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, bring hither to the Lord manifestation and might! Bring hither to the Lord the reflection of his Name! Bring hither offering and come unto his courts! Bring the sacrifice of worship to the Lord in holy vesture of light!" (96; v. 6-9). There is, however, the difference that in Psalm 96 men and indeed the universality of mankind are considered worthy to enter likewise into this heavenly worship. The outraged divine light of thought and the out-poured force of will are egotistically absorbed in man and kept back for himself. The 96th Psalm looks into a future in which men will place at the disposal of the Godhead in free sacrificial surrender all that they have received, instead of keeping in their own service the holiness of thought and energy of will that originate in the divine. Psalm 29 does not yet take this human possibility into consideration. It looks upon the worship of the Angels.

In both Psalms there is mention of the Light-vesture of the worshipper: the one who turns to the Highest in prayer and sacrifice is clothed in Light. Ancient wisdom spoke of the fact that the one who worships receives a reflected splendour of the one who is worshipped. The Light-garment of holiness is the heavenly prototype of the priestly robes.

THE WORLD OF SIN AND THE WORLD OF GRACE

Psalm 36

IN verses 5-10 this Psalm contains a hymn which in its mythical greatness and mystical fervour may be counted among the high lights of the Old Testament. This Hymn to God in a rare example of "counterpoint" is framed in a recital of how the evil in man becomes active from stage to stage.

I

The first verses give a direct psychology of the Fall of Man.

*"Evil whispers to the transgressor in his inmost heart.
There is no fear of the divine in his eyes."*

The word "whisper" is generally used in the Prophetic Books for the inspiration of the voice of God. There is here a sinister antithesis to such divine inspiration. The powers of the adversary are also aware of how to instil something into man. Thus the serpent speaks to Eve. Thus the Devil lays it "in the heart" of Judas to betray the Lord (John 13; 2). The Psalm knows that "in the evil incitements of man an objective spirit-world, outside man, comes into play".

After the heart comes the eye. The whisper of evil has installed itself into the heart, now the eyes become "bold". They lose the reverential awe of the divine. No longer the gaze beholds in the glory of the sense world, the glory too of the divine. It is entangled in the empty vain show of the foreground, and with all its cleverness becomes blind to the heavenly golden ground behind the objects.

The next verse is difficult to translate. Perhaps it reads: "*Sin flattereth his eyes, that he findeth guilt and hatred.*" There lies in flattery the appeal to vanity which is so effective. And then the man "finds" guilt and hate, he falls into their realm, he himself not knowing how.

Verse 3, passing outwards from the inner circle of the mind, now speaks of "words". "*The words of his mouth are iniquity, wantonness and deceit. He hath left off to be wise and do good.*" The word loses its sacredness, it falls a prey to the powers of lying. Wisdom and goodness are lost from the word. In their stead enter cold cunning, which with all its calculating is ultimately "foolishness before God" (for in spite of all brilliant intellectuality the popular expression holds good "stupid as sin"), and lovelessness, even hate.

The expression is a significant one that the man who has gone astray "ceases to be wise and good". Evil is nothing primary and original, it is not an attribute of man from the outset, it is, on the contrary, a question of an "infection" as in fact we express with the words "sickness of sin". Man has suffered an infection with a spirituality fundamentally foreign to him. Evil is "non-human". It has come upon man like an illness. He is now in danger of completely losing his primitive state, his innate divine nature. Therefore "he has left off", he has departed from, being truly wise and good. "*He deviseth mischief upon his bed.*" Man companioned by his sleepless hours—that is a

motive frequently found in the Psalms. It is not only in our "nervous" age, when it has become an illness, but even earlier we find man passing the night in sleepless hours, driven round and round by consuming care or filled by strongly stirred feelings which keep him awake. The intercourse with sleepless hours is an important chapter of self-training. A "culture of the sleepless night hours" looks at us candidly from the Psalms: "The upright man meditates on the law day and night" (1; 2). "In the night my song is to him" (42; 8). "To show forth thy loving kindness in the morning and thy truth at night" (92; 2). The words from the Book of Job are also especially noteworthy: "They cry that there is much oppression and cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty, but none asketh: Where is God my maker, who giveth songs of praise in the night?" (Job 35; 9, 10).

From the poisoning of these silent hours in which man "upon his bed" is alone with himself, there logically proceeds the wicked deed in the light of day, "*he setteth himself in a way that is not good*" (verse 4). Therewith the evil that began with the inspiration in the heart and then encroached on the sphere of words, henceforth penetrates into action. It is the treading of a "path". A path is entered upon with the first wrong deed, and one step follows another. All is in process of evolving, of movement. From his power to be free man can give this or that direction to his development. The first Psalm represents the "two paths" most significantly.

"*He rejecteth not evil*"—Man loses the natural strangeness that he first feels with regard to evil. A healthy nature rejects by a right instinct a food that is not good for it. So are we also fundamentally equipped with a feeling for what does not suit us, is not in accord with us, for what is foreign to our nature and does not belong to us. But in the

sphere of moral action the bad habit can gradually paralyse the sound instinct of defence. "He rejecteth not evil"—he loses the power of repulsing what is not of his nature.

II

There now begins the wonderful hymn to God, apparently with no direct connection. Till now the eye rested on the oppressive spectacle of how evil takes hold of man and with inexorable logic works itself out from the mind into the word and from word to deed. This is depicted with deeply penetrating observation and knowledge of man. One could become alarmed at these reflections. How then is this sinister process to be countered?

The Psalm gives a grand and noble answer. Without concerning itself with the externally logical succession of its sentences, it breaks off abruptly and speaks of something quite different. As if it wished to say: turning one's gaze resolutely to the positive-divine is the only remedy! The verses which then follow are all the more impressive through the active contrast:

*"Lord, in the heavens—thy grace.
Thy truth—unto the clouds.
Thy righteousness—like mountains of God.
Thy judgments—a great deep.
To man and beast art thou a saviour.
O Lord, how excellent is thy grace.
Divine beings and sons of men put their trust in the
shadow of thy wings.
They satisfy themselves in the abundance of thy house.
Thou givest them to drink of the river of thy bliss
For with thee is the fountain of life.
In thy light we see the light."*

At the beginning of this hymn the Psalmist uses the name of God which bears in it the mystery of the I-AM. And it is as if the naming of this hallowed name leads his soul upwards in a mighty ascension.

"Lord, in the heavens—thy grace." The ardour which immerses itself in the divine is all the more powerful against the background of evil. It is like the sudden rending of a curtain. From the name of God there unfolds the view of his heavens. That physics and aeroplanes have got rid of the religious "heaven" is only a plausible notion. It is the same as if one fine day one "discovered" that the Sistine Madonna was only a painted surface, that there was in fact nothing further of a corporal nature upon it or behind it. That takes nothing away from its importance for it is a picture. A picture which points however to a reality of a higher order. So too the external heaven in its vaulted arch, in its blue, in the changes of its phenomena of light is a picture which is given to us as such, one that loses nothing of its value through the explanations of physics and astronomy. A semblance that only deceives someone who cannot understand it as a phenomenon. To surrender oneself to a contemplation of the heavens unlocks in one's inner being the worlds of God's grace—which are assuredly not "spatial".

For the Psalmist the heavens are the sphere in which the Godhead is utterly and entirely "at home", by itself, in its own element, in which as it were it can live undisturbed in its innermost essence. This innermost essence however is known as "Grace".

"Thy truth—unto the clouds". The clouds too belong to the "heavens". How much exaltation, rapt away from earth, have men already felt in the devout contemplation of the "lofty cloud-spaces". But still, in this second line in contrast to the first ("In the heavens—thy grace") we

have already descended one stage and come nearer to the earth. In comparison with the starry heavens and the pure blue the clouds are nevertheless a transition and border region in which the heavens let themselves descend nearer to earthly existence.

Now why should precisely the cloud be combined with the experience of truth? For us the cloud is so often precisely something that veils, that conceals the outlook, that overcasts the clearness. But it was still living experience to the men of old that the cloud not only veiled but also revealed. Hidden forces of vision can be released in the soul by surrendering to the picture of the mysterious invisible hands of God which are at work in the changing forms of the clouds. The truth of God as of the eternal disposing One, the forming and transforming One, reaches from the upper heavens down to the realm of the clouds. The clouds carry down to us beneath, the active manifestation of the living God and make it visible. Down to the clouds there still extends—his “immediacy”.

Grace and truth—we know these significant two words from the prologue of the John Gospel. It is said of Him who had become flesh, “full of grace and truth”.

For John there has appeared for the first time in earthly form what for our Psalm still belongs to cosmic distances. “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” For John there has now actually entered the stream of historical human evolution what the Psalm still beholds in the “above” removed from earth.

The next line, the third, is again a descent: from the clouds to the mountains. And then we set foot on the solid earth. In Goethe's *Faust* this transition from the clouds to the mountains is wonderfully presented: “Beneath my feet Beholding deepest solitude, Alight I circumspectly on this summit's verge, Relinquishing the wafting of my

cloud, that soft through days serene hath borne me, over land and sea." (Part II, Act IV.)

The mountain summit regarded from above is indeed "earth". But for the earthly man far below, the mountain is something that still belongs to heaven. On mountain heights the ancients felt themselves in a greater nearness to the heavenly Godhead. One who saw from below the sacred mount towering upwards, felt himself in his ordinary flat country reminded of the eternal. The devout experiences of past millennia, of forgotten "fathers who have worshipped upon the mountain", surround such an expression of antiquity as stands here in the Psalm: "God's mountains".

"Thy righteousness—like the mountains of God." A comparative "like" appears for the first time. Up to now we were still in a sphere of the divine "immediacy".

Righteousness is for the Psalm an effect of the divine that has more connection with the terrestrial than the heavenly grace and truth. The sternness of an eternal righteousness looks down from the mountains of God upon the drifting changes below.

Still one more, a final descent is accomplished: "Thy Judgments—a great deep." Great deep—in the original text: *thehôm rabbā*. *Thehôm* is the primal flood, savouring of the weird, darkly chaotic, losing itself in dreadful darkness. *Thehôm* is the totality of all nocturnal powers of Chaos which in the form of the dragon "Leviathan" had to be thrust down by Jahve in the primeval world conflict (cf. Isaiah 51; 9) so that an orderly creation might arise.

Thehôm rabbā, the great deep, significantly occurs in the narrative of the Flood. Where man transgresses against measure and order, God punishes him by allowing the ancient powers of chaos to raise their head again, for

though they were formerly vanquished, they were not destroyed. Then man is delivered over to the powers whose chains he has wantonly unloosed through his transgression. "All the fountains of the great deep were broken up. . . ."

This Flood, this fall of the iniquitous Atlantean magicians and "arrogant giants" (Book of Wisdom, 14; 6) is the classical example of divine judgment, the prototype of the court of justice. That stern righteousness looking down upon earth from the holy mountains was given expression in the catastrophe sent as a judgment.

Grace and truth—God in heaven.

Righteousness and Justice—God upon Earth.

In other words: the God as he can live out his true being, "by himself" in his own archetypal world—and the God as, in virtue of eternal law, he must show himself on the earth inhabited by fallen mankind. The God as it were the one time in his light-filled freedom, the other time in his dark necessity. Only through Christ is the heaven of grace and truth carried down into the dark world which stands under wrath.

Heavens—clouds—mountains—sea depths. Grace—truth—righteousness—judgment. Mighty and of mythical greatness is this gradation from the freedom of God down to the abysmal necessities.

Into the echoing of the sinister word of the flood "*the-hôm rabbā*" there is mingled as consolation, reminiscent of the Ark of Noah, a brighter motive: "To man and beast art thou a saviour." To the animal too, one must not fail to hear this—God's aid is promised here. Man has drawn the animal down with him into the fatal consequences of his fall into Sin. Hence he must not only desire his own

soul's welfare by the powers of redemption, he must take to heart also the destiny of the creature.

This thought of God's help is at the same time the transition to the mystical inner precinct of the Thirty-sixth Psalm. For the experience of the divine grace is proclaimed as in a foreshadowing anticipation of what will first be disclosed to men in the full sense through Christ.

"Lord, how precious is thy Grace. God-beings and sons of man shelter in the shadow of thy wings."

In the original text, according to Hebrew grammar, the word "*Elohim*" very likely belongs to the next line, so that the text employed by us reads: *Elohim*, that is, divine beings of the higher hierarchies and sons of men shelter in the shadow of thy wings.

An experience of grace that goes beyond being sheltered is the Holy Repast through which the communion, the imparting of divine life is received: "They satisfy themselves with the abundance of thy house. Thou makest them drink of the river of thy bliss. For with thee is the fountain of life."

The "house" of God is the abode of his presence. The man of the Fall, like the Prodigal Son in the parable, wasted his heritage far from his father's house, destroyed his "substance". He has fallen into bitter need. The divine grace will call man again to the table of its fullness, when in the company of higher beings (*Elohim*) he eats the "bread of the angels" (Psalm 78; 25). As it says in Faust: "Such the Spirits' sustentation, With the freest ether blending, Love's eternal Revelation, to Beatitude ascending."

The "river of bliss" is the same as the river of Paradise spoken of in Genesis. "Bliss" in the original text is "Eden". It becomes very clear here in the Psalm, that in regard to the description of Paradise one should not primarily ask

about a "where", conceived geographically. The source of the Eden-river, which is regarded as flowing life, is "with thee".

Life as such is not visible to earthly eyes. These see only what is filled with life, not life itself. It is like a fine fluid of higher worlds. It has its image in the flowing water. And all natural life, however sacred and mysterious in itself, is again but the reflection of a still higher, truly supernatural life. The issuing of life from God is the eternal miraculous fount.

It is Johannine air that we are breathing in this Psalm. If it was at first the words "grace and truth" that made us think of the prologue in the John Gospel, we now see how "light" is added to the "life".

"In thy light we see the light". Simple as these words may sound, there nevertheless lies hidden in them a whole theory of knowledge. It would be impossible for man to have real knowledge if the world confronted him as utterly and entirely foreign. The light of the world outside might shine upon us ever so brightly and clearly—it would have simply run off the surface of our foreign nature without finding the way into our inner being. But man has himself an actual inward participation in the light. He can behold the light of the world because he can take to meet it his own inner human light, light uniting with light. By the very participation in the light, standing within the light-nature, we are able to see the light.

This light active in the perceiving man is however again not his own, purely subjective light, but even as single individual he has a share in the divine light itself. Hence the light arising in the perceiving man can hold good objectively for the world. "In thy light we see the light."

Similarly the 18th Psalm says: "Thou lightest my lamp" (Psalm 18; 28). Man has his own light, the "lamp".

But God must illumine it for him by feeding the lamp of man with his own divine Light-being. A passage in Job points to a still earlier time when the light entrusted to man made no pretension to be his own, but was felt as still belonging directly to the Godhead. Job desires to be back in the time "when God preserved me, when his lamp shone above my head".

We participate in a light of vision and of knowledge because the Godhead that bears us is itself living in this light-element of vision and knowledge. So says Psalm 94; 9: "He that created the eye, shall he not see?"

III

This mystical central piece of Psalm 36 is followed by a concluding prayer that ends with an apocalyptic view of the fate of the wicked:

*"Continue thy grace unto them that know thee,
And thy righteousness unto them that are upright
in heart.
Let me not be trodden down by the foot of the proud,
Nor the hand of the Godless drag me to the ground."*

The personal enemies and opponents of the Psalmist become the symbol for the powers of evil that break in upon man and against whom he hides himself in the divine Grace.

*"There—they are already fallen, the workers of iniquity.
They are cast down and shall not be able to rise."*

It has the character of a vision, an apocalyptic view.

“There—they are fallen!” It is the apocalyptic perfect tense: in the spirit-vision something is accepted in advance as having already happened. So the Christ says in the Farewell address—that is to say, before Gethsemane and Golgotha—“The Prince of this world is already judged.” And: “I have overcome the world.” It is the same too in the Book of Revelation, where in Chapter II, the songs of victory already resound in heaven, before the Antichrist reaches the zenith of the unfolding of his power on earth. Whence comes this anticipation? Spirit-vision carries one into a region in which the decision has actually already been taken. It is only that it still needs a little time until what has been decided in principle gradually “arrives” upon earth beneath.

Thus the Psalmist in lightning-like vision also sees the adversary as though already fallen. Evil is in principle already “despatched”, it is judged and sentenced to death. Let it celebrate triumphs however great—the truth of the apocalyptic vision suffers no injury.

THE GREAT CONFESSION

Psalm 51

I

“THE greatest of evils, however, is guilt.” An adversity that meets us from without, through destiny, is, with all its pain and suffering, easier to bear than the sight of one’s own guilt and its effects. All that transpires in the soul of one who has done wrong and who yet yearns and strives for the divine blessing—this is the content of the well-known “penitential” Psalm 51. Tradition says that it is a prayer of David after his sin with Bathsheba.

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness;

According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my sins.

*Wash me thoroughly from my guilt,
And cleanse me from my transgressions.”*

The trinity of sin, guilt and transgression is to be found at the beginning of the thirty-second Psalm, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord computeth not iniquity.” The word that we render by “sin” is the gravest of these three. It denotes an offence committed deliberately, whereas “transgression” means rather sins of passion or weakness. “Blot out my sins”. In the

original text "blot out" is a word that one can very well use for obliterating what has been written. May the sin be effaced like the writing in a book. That is more than an ingenious image. With all that man does, feels and thinks, he makes something like "entries" in an infinitely fine cosmic substance. Something is detached from us and continues in the universe outside our space, and has its consequences.

We have no longer control over these effects of our deeds which have passed out into the cosmos. The prayer of the Psalm can really only be fulfilled through Christ. He alone, in virtue of his sacrifice has the power to blot out the objective consequence of our sins for the universe. We must unite ourselves with him, as with the Lamb that takes upon himself the "sins of the world".

Wash me from my guilt—"Wash" in the original text is a word used for the washing of a garment. Man has darkened the shining of his finer sheaths by sin. He has spotted the vesture of his soul and lacks the "wedding garment".

Cleanse me—this does not mean the washing of a garment but the direct cleansing of the body. It is here a question (using the image of the body) of "us ourselves". With the wrong that we commit we add something to ourselves. But it does not remain our private affair, since it moves out of the private sphere of our inner personal centre into the finer sheaths surrounding us and "blackens" their innate brightness; the sin already acquires an effect in the universe, for our sheath-nature, consisting of the bodily, etheric and soul element, is a fragment of the universe which is entrusted to us as our own. The cleansing of the body and the washing of the clothing has to do with the consequences of sins for ourselves and for the sheaths which belong to our being and which form a

kind of intermediary between our inner nature and the world outside.

And now there are effects which transcend us ourselves and the fragment of the world entrusted to us and which belong to the universe outside. These are not only the changes which we have produced physically in the world through our action. What we have produced in the visible world is, after all, in spite of its often so dreadful reality, only a sort of image of the injury we have done to the hidden spiritual substances of the world and which now stands as a script in the Cosmic Book and looks at us accusingly.

*"For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is
ever before me.*

Against thee, thee only have I sinned

And done this evil in thy sight,

That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest

And be clear when thou judgest."

The Psalmist has become fully conscious of the wrong he has done. It stands before his eyes and afflicts him. "Against thee, thee alone have I sinned." *Tibi soli peccavi*—herein lies the true depths of his confession. First and foremost the sin is committed against the Godhead itself, it is only in the second place that it is directed to this or the other person who is concerned. We are guilty towards the human being whom we injure, but above all towards the Godhead. We also hear in the Act of Consecration that our deviations, our denials of the divine nature, our weaknesses, find their way into the depths of world foundations. Rudolf Steiner once spoke of the pain that we cause to higher beings through our mistakes and failings. This grand, religiously intuitive Psalm can make such an

indication concrete to us, "Against thee alone have I sinned."

*"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity
And in sin did my mother conceive me.
Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts.
And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know
wisdom."*

When the Psalm speaks in these words of "original sin" this is not, as it were, pleading "extenuating circumstances", but in the sense of the following verses it is a recognition of hidden circumstances. The human being, thrown out of the *naïveté* of his matter-of-course existence by the feeling of guilt, has become sensitive to the fact that he and his whole enveloping earthly human nature is incompatible with the divine world from the very beginning. He sees himself gripped in a vast sequence of events, fettered for thousands of years in a state of guilt and wrongdoing from which he cannot become free without divine help. Man knows himself to be guilty not only of individual offences which can be named and enumerated, but he knows and feels that his whole mode of life is not consistent with the divine world. To a superficial view sin consists only in single acts, and if these had been left undone man would have continued "in order". Only a deeper wisdom that penetrates into the hidden element can recognize that the whole condition of man from the beginning is infected by the sickness of sin.

Just as this "from the beginning" is something transcending, something that belongs to humanity over and above the individual, so too, nothing but a divine impulse of a transcendent order can release man from these chains.

This came about through Christ. The devout man of the

Old Testament is praying in the spirit of the approaching Christ mystery, when at the beginning of the Psalm he calls upon the divine grace. This grace which first enters concretely into the earthly world through Christ does not mean that God merely throws over the mathematics of righteousness and replaces it with arbitrary action. No, not that. But he brings a new magnitude into the calculation. The iron law of cause and effect is not annulled, but the result becomes different through the inclusion of quite a new factor. This newly-added factor which gives the whole a new physiognomy is "grace", the Christ-grace that causes an additional force to flow to man, through which the consequences of evil can be changed and transformed to good.

Grace does not relieve us of our own efforts. But it is obvious that without its addition the human entanglement in evil which far transcends our own power of mastering it, cannot be set free.

The 51st Psalm will only become fully true and concrete in the frame of the New Testament. In Christ appears the Grace which can counteract the Fall and its consequences which have long since become too much for man. With the sight of the suffering God on the Cross man first becomes fully conscious of what in a sort of dreaming presentiment is expressed in the Psalm, "Against thee, thee alone have I sinned."

II

*"Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean
Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."*

Here begins the actual prayer for a transforming deed. The imagery of the language is to be understood in refer-

ence to the purification rites of the Old Testament. Aspersions by means of a hyssop branch (which served as a sort of holy water sprinkler) was commanded in the case of leprosy and contact with a corpse. We must imagine the whole dreadfulness of the Eastern disease of leprosy, where a man's entire body becomes rotten piece by piece. The leper decaying in the living body, the corpse which falls into decay: in both cases it is a matter of the destruction of the human earthly corporality, and this dread of destruction was felt to be connected with the sickness of sin. The hyssop branch played a role in the banishing of this horror through the ritual of consecrated aspersion. The one who has become conscious of his sinfulness feels himself delivered up to the powers of leprosy and decay. He "tastes" death in himself. So he prays for purification.

One may not just quickly dismiss the ancient rites of washing and cleansing as mere externals. The inner and outer were experienced to a greater degree in those times as passing over into one another. The bodily cleansing did not remain without effect on the inner nature. One could not undergo it without the process being continued to a greater or less degree inwardly. Even to-day we must not underestimate this passing over of the effect. To be sure, outer cleanliness is not yet inner cleanliness, but it has nevertheless a conducive influence upon it.

"Whiter than snow"—snow gives a greater experience than anything else of unearthly, shining purity. White as snow is the raiment of the Easter angel (Matt. 28; 3). In the seventh chapter of Revelation, John describes the sight of the perfected saints. They are clothed in shining white raiment which they "have washed in the Blood of the Lamb". A paradoxical picture in which lives the truth that through accepting what essentially proceeds from Golgotha the sheath-nature of man becomes purified and

illuminated. It is only the "Blood of the Lamb" that will bring to realization what the pre-Christian Psalm is here imploring: "Wash me, that I become snow-white."

The Psalm passes over from the world of light to the world of sound:

"Make me to hear joy and gladness."

Where the human being radiates again like fresh snow, the heavenly music of rejoicing becomes accessible to the inner ear. In the parable of the Prodigal Son there is also the sound of the singing and dancing of the great heart of rejoicing. It is the jubilation of the heavens that arises when man is given back, cleansed and transformed to the spheres of his origin. The theme of gladness goes through the whole of the 15th chapter of the Luke Gospel which proclaims in three parables the restoring of what has been lost. "Rejoice with me." "Likewise there is joy in the presence of the angels of God." Consciousness of guilt takes away happiness. Presentiment of the powers of grace makes joy awaken. This continues into the depths of human nature and "goes right to the bones".

*"That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
Hide thy face from my sins,
And blot out mine iniquities."*

The negative element of forgiveness is expressed here once more: the turning away of the divine countenance from our guilt, and thereby the cessation of the tormenting reproach that we feel when the divine gaze dwells on our faults. The following verses go over entirely into the positive attitude. Not only the blotting out of our sins is desired but a complete re-birth through a new act of creation by the Godhead:

*"Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence,
And take not thy holy spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation
And uphold me with thy free spirit."*

"Create in me a clean heart." Here the word "*bara*" stands for create. It is a word seldom used, but sounds precisely seven times in the Genesis story of creation. If it is used here it is in order to show that the transforming of fallen man is to be set beside the world-creation. The new creation is implanted in the innermost kernel, in the heart of man's being. And as the working of the Spirit belongs to the Creation, so too in this connection it belongs to the new creation of man. In Psalm 104 it says, "*Thou sendest forth thy spirit-breath, and thou renewest the face of the earth.*" This renewing force of the divine spirit is to show itself here in man's inner being.

It is remarkable how in the 51st Psalm spirit is mentioned in a threefold manner. At first it is the spirit of steadiness, constancy; with the creation of the pure heart the spirit lifts us out of all vacillating to and fro, and makes us come to rest on the granite of eternity. The spirit of constancy—one might say that that represents the father-aspect of this trinity.

Then the holy spirit, connected with experiencing the divine countenance—through the spirit of holiness man is enabled to stand face-to-face with God, is enabled to know the divine as from spirit-being to spirit-being. Without the spirit of holiness he must fade away before this countenance, he could not hold himself up in face of the personal consciousness of God turned towards him. "Take it not from me"—the gift of the Holy Spirit can also be lost.

Blameworthy darkening of our being can banish us from its sight. Man feels the infinite preciousness, the worth of this Holy Spirit, and trembles at the prospect of being again deprived of it. It is just because holiness in the full sense will only be in man's complete possession in the final consummation, that the beginning of our sanctification is something so delicate, so liable to attack and easily lost.

Finally: the spirit of "spontaneity" in connection with the joy in the divine aid. The word assigned here in the original text to the spirit, means also "noble", "distinguished". The root of the word means doing good out of spontaneity, out of one's own free will. Hence, then, the significance "generous" and "distinguished", "noble". In distinction to the spirit of constancy and of holiness, it is here the spirit from the domain of the Son. The Son brings us the help of God ("help of God" is the meaning of the name "Jesus"). He helps man to live rightly as earthly personality and he unseals the power which does good not by compulsion of the law, but out of freedom, generously, from one's heart as an expression of one's own nature. In this lies indeed the true distinction and nobility of man as against the unfree deeds of servitude.

The spirit of constancy—the spirit of holiness—the spirit of spontaneity. It is one of the passages in the Old Testament where the mystery of the Trinity is clearly proclaimed.

If the re-creation of man out of the spirit has been accomplished, he can then have a significance for others—now in a good sense! As one who has been born again and transformed, he can now also show his fellowmen the direction to the divinely-good.

*"Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;
And sinners shall be converted unto thee."*

Just because he has himself learnt to know guilt and for this reason has been able to gain all the deeper insight into the forces of healing and transforming possessed by the Godhead, he can now help others to find their way in life. That should not be a pretentious "teaching"—there is no need for it to take place through words. What streams out of his being has its own effect.

*"Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of
my salvation,
And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.
O Lord, open thou my lips and my mouth shall shew
forth thy praise."*

The man who has injured his fellow men through his misdeeds can now, after his rebirth, henceforth be a help to them—through rebirth he may now mean something positive for the divine world. As a sinner he was a being who served to conceal God and diminish His manifestation. Wherever something bad is present the divine is cloaked and the adversary steps in in place of God. The Psalm petitions that man may again become a being that manifests the divinity. In the long run there will be no other valid proof on earth that God exists except the human being reborn through the spirit. "Ye are the light of the world," says Christ to His disciples. People ought not to complain of the darkness and ungodliness of the earthly world, for it is their own fault that it is dark; they are not shedding light. Man is the door through which God can enter the world of earth.

In a general way people form a far too ordinary, vague and casual idea of what is meant by praising and extolling. This is a result of a regrettable inflation which has robbed the great words of the religious life of their value. To extol

God—that means to bring him to appearance, to manifestation, so to “densify” his divine presence that it again becomes discernible on earth. The 51st Psalm indicates that the extolling of God is not such a negligible affair. Otherwise the prayer would not have been uttered that God himself should open our lips to his praise. It is not done by opening our mouth to speak edifying words. If the outpouring of our being, of which in fact words are only a part, is to extol God, then the higher world must itself make us worthy of it and give us its blessing.

We now understand why there is again a reference in this connection to “bloodguilt”. In the original text the word blood is given in the plural, “Deliver me from bloodguiltinesses!” One must not narrow this to merely one criminal act—as perhaps the murder by David of Uriah. Man feels himself in a vast portentous association of guilty forces of the blood. He feels the original sin in the blood of the entire human race. “Take away from me the guilty blood-forces.” This plural of blood is also found in the Greek of the New Testament, where St. John’s Gospel speaks of “those which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Instead of the sinful powers of the blood, there then enters the mystery of the chalice, the Blood of Christ. Only when the Blood of Christ becomes a power within him will man be able to join fully in the angels’ song of praise extolling the divine revelation.

*“For thou desirest not sacrifice,
Else would I give it;
Thou delightest not in burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,
A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not
despise.”*

The Temple ritual of the blood-offering is made more inward. The Psalm stands at the threshold of an age when the sacrifice of an animal no longer called forth an inner experience by virtue of a primitive, magical feeling of being connected with the cosmos. The inward element begins to be detached. In early times one could not sacrifice one's external "possessions"—perhaps a beast from the herd—without at the same time the corresponding soul-possessions, the soul-force objectified in this animal, streaming upward to the Godhead. This intimate connection with the outer possession was gradually lost, the offering had become more and more an inward one. In the Offertory of the Act of Consecration the soul-possessions of thinking, feeling and willing are placed at the disposal of the divinity.

The Psalm which has this inward experience in advance of the Old Testament time has already grown beyond the period of the once fully justifiable animal sacrifices. Instead, the Psalm places the "broken" spirit and the broken, battered heart, as it reads literally. Spirit and heart are broken to pieces and battered in so far as the egotistic, selfish encrusting and lining are burst open in the pain of the experience of sin and the ardour of surrender to the divine. The selfhood, stamped by the Fall, always wants to shut itself off within its own narrow horizon. This exclusion must again and again be broken up so that we do not shut ourselves into the lower self and thereby block out the true higher Ego which is destined for us.

*"Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion:
Build thou the walls of Jerusalem,
Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of
righteousness,
With burnt offering and whole burnt offering:
Then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar."*

This conclusion has a strange sound after what has just been said about making the sacrifices an inward deed. It has been regarded as a later addition which was attached to the Psalm lest it sounded heretical in regard to the official Temple worship. It has been thought that perhaps through these final sentences expressive of orthodox Temple piety, there was a desire to render harmless the all too bold inwardness of an individualistic religious genius. This is not impossible. However these final verses may have found their way there, they are nevertheless no misrepresentation of the whole, in spite of the certain contradiction to what had preceded. In fact, they bring an important, significant completion whether they are the work of the author or of a strange hand. These final verses maintain the truth that in the shattering experiences of sin and grace it is not just a matter of "God and the soul". After these inner processes something salutary and compensatory lies in the fact that at the close, the attention is guided to the great, cosmic aims. The city of Jerusalem has become a symbol in the Apocalypse of John. The "heavenly Jerusalem" is the new, Christianized earth. Even in the Old Testament Jerusalem begins to mean more than a geographical name. Zion, Jerusalem—already in the Books of the Prophets become a symbol, becomes in the history of salvation the epitome of a coming world of redemption and perfection. This also hovers over the final words of the great Penitential Psalm. Every sin is a contribution to the building of Babylon, the city of the Abyss which is established apart from the divine.

The transforming of the sinner contributes to the building of the Holy City. The flowing over of the Penitential Psalm into the prayer to build the Holy City somewhat resembles the transition from the justified, subjective and

individual sphere of confession, into the objective, supersensual sphere of the Altar, far transcending the individual and his problems.

And the Temple-Offering mentioned in the last verse? The burnt-offering and the whole-offering? They establish the truth that inner sacrifice of the broken spirit and heart which is pleasing to God, is not sufficient alone. Even the most pious emotions of the most virtuous men could not release the human race from the overpowering entanglement of original sin. That could only be effected through something that allows of no comparison—the sacrifice of a God, the Deed of Golgotha. The Temple worship with its blood-sacrifice was the forerunner of this unique Offering, which then lives on upon the altars of Christendom. In the service at the Christian altar the inner sacrifice, the devotion of spirit and heart then enters into its rights. But the inward sacrifice of man is only the preparation for the fact that in the transubstantiation, the sacrifice on Golgotha, the whole mystery of the Christ-Deed can live again. In the Act of Consecration there is an organic uniting of the seemingly contradictory elements of the 51st Psalm—the inward devoutness of spirit and heart, the sacrificial placing-at-disposal of the inner possessions—and the great objective sacrifice of a God, surpassing all human possibility, the fulfilling of the ancient burnt-offering and whole-offering.

IN THE PRESENCE OF ETERNITY

Psalm 90

I

THE 90th Psalm, which bears the name of Moses, has a special profundity and power.

A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God

"Lord thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

*Before the mountains were brought forth or ever thou
hadst formed the earth and the world,*

*Even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.
Thou art."*

Just as in Genesis Moses is the seer who looks back, so here too the Psalm gazes into the past. The eye passes along the ranks of generations. In the table of descent in the Gospel of Luke, the ancestors are traced back to Adam, "which was the son of God". Here too the divine is reached in passing back through the ages.

High mountains are the representatives of eternity on the earth. They soar upwards beyond what becomes and passes away; throughout summer and winter they are crowned with the eternal snows. Immutably they look down upon ever-changing human destiny, playing its part in the valleys.

Mountains, too, are subject to passing away, but it is accomplished so slowly and imperceptibly that we do not see it or realize it. So that after all they are something relatively eternal upon earth. The Psalm knows that even these primeval mountains were once young, they were once born, as the Hebrew has it. In far past ages the earth was not so hardened and dead as it is to-day where life is only to be found in the separate living creatures. The earth was once the living mother of these organisms. All substance was then much finer, it was permeated directly with life. Yes, the earth itself which brought forth the mountains, was also born (formed), it detached itself once from the womb of the creative spirit-worlds.

The space of time that is measured by generations does not suffice for such primeval world-ages. The word *olam* appears here, corresponding to the Greek *aion*, the Latin *aevum*, the English æon. The æon is a cycle of time. God lives from *olam* to *olam*, from æon to æon, from one time-cycle to another. The Psalm says quite literally: "And from *olam* to *olam*—THOU God." That means the same as "thou art". Not "thou wert". Just as Christ does not say, Before Abraham was, I was"—but, "I am". Before Abraham entered life—I Am. That is timeless. It is removed from all sequence of time, from the state of being earlier and from the state of being later. It is something that is above and beyond any temporal element. It has this meaning here, too, in the Psalm: "From time-cycle to time-cycle—Thou Art."

The passages on man's destiny, which speak of man's death, come out of this timelessness.

*"Thou turnest man to destruction
And sayest, Return, ye children of men.*

*For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday
when it is past,
And as a watch in the night."*

The Psalm knows that in the higher worlds time is somewhat different from what it is on earth. There is no growing old, no being "superannuated" there, the millennia lie like an open book before the eyes of God. In contrast to the divine timelessness stands the transitory nature of man's earthly existence, presented in three pictures. It is like the stream that flows past, like running water that cannot be held fast. It is like sleep, for earthly human consciousness is in fact like being shrouded in darkness, like sleep in comparison with supersensible consciousness. It is like a flower soon faded away.

*"Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as
a sleep.
In the morning they are like grass which groweth up.
In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up:
In the evening it is cut down and withereth."*

Deep resignation speaks out of these verses, resignation to the inevitable destiny of death.

II

But the Psalm does not only give way to sadness. It asks the question about the wherefor of this destiny and ventures to give a clear answer to it. So the contemplation of our transitory life does not lead to an æsthetically ennobled, pessimistic weariness, but we are set before a fact which concerns the human being most deeply.

*"For we are consumed by thine anger
And by thy wrath are we troubled.
Thou hast set our iniquities before thee,
Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance."*

If a man were to consist of something having a short, transitory existence and then merging again into the All—he would give no thought to it. He would pass away as a matter of course in the general passing away, without question and "without remainder". He has a feeling, however, that in the foundation of his being he is made of something more than mere transitoriness. He feels the futility of his existence as an un-normal condition and feels himself to be ejected from his own setting and enclosed in a way of existence that is really foreign to him. The Psalm does not merely bemoan an inexplicable destiny in this state of affairs, but recognizes an interpretation which includes man himself in the responsibility: it is a consequence of human sin. We are given over to transitory existence because we have failed in our duty. Our misdeeds stand "in the light of the divine countenance." Ancient visionary experiences are echoed in such a phrase. We can start from an example still to be felt to-day, namely, that we are ashamed of our faults before the face of a revered person who is observing us. That is an anticipation of the experiences that await us after death. In describing the difference between earthly and supersensible consciousness, Rudolf Steiner said that on earth we always feel ourselves to be an observer. We go through existence and inspect our surroundings. It is just the contrary over there; we experience ourselves primarily as those that are observed. We feel how higher beings react to us.

The modern man is inclined quickly to dismiss such an

expression as "God's countenance" with the thought that it is only "anthropomorphism", where in a childish naïve way human peculiarities are projected on to the divine. One attributes a countenance to God because one sees that man has a countenance. The reverse is right. Man is in fact himself an image of God. His countenance, which we feel to be his most spiritual part, is only the reflection of an original experience in the higher world. It is in the divine that we can experience what is in truth a "countenance". The human being is only on the way to having a countenance. Thus a human element has not been transferred to God in an inadmissible or even in an unsatisfactory, childishly uncritical way, but rather what is to be observed in man is in itself a reflection, the reality of which belongs to higher worlds. "The light of thy countenance." The Psalm knows of the power of light and thence also the judging-power of the divine countenance. As epitome of light it is at the same time epitome of justice, it is the sun which "brings it to light". Because the Psalm knows this countenance it also knows sin. Sin is a religious concept. Without having a presentiment of the divine one cannot know what sin is.

In the visions of Moses, in Genesis, there is contained the account of the Fall and the driving out from Paradise into the sphere of the transitory and perishable. Why was the Godhead obliged to make bodily existence transitory for the human being who had become sinful?

The earth-body is something like an insulated cell in its material density. It promotes the development of an independent ego-consciousness. This ego-consciousness in its early stages has received a self-centred egotistic character through Lucifer. The material earth body is the firm stronghold of this egotistic self. Now if transitoriness had not been implanted into this insulated earth-

body which fostered independence, then there would have been the danger of man's becoming immortal in his God-stranged self-hood.

As man of the Fall he would have become eternal and thereby lost the divine. Thus it was a wise measure of Providence to ensure that man could only be active for a certain time in the earthly body, giving his own stamp to his personality, and that he was then from time to time recalled through death to his home in the spiritual world for a longer period, so that he might not completely lose touch with the world of his origin. Thus there is an alternation for man between earthly existences where he develops his personality between birth and death—although impregnated with the Fall—and periods of dwelling in the world of his origin. In the future this influence of the Fall of man is to be overcome through the Christ, the selfhood gained on earth made holy and redeemed to become the true ego that places its free personality in the service of the divine. Then the earthly and heavenly life of man can be reunited to a single mode of being. But that brings us already into the province of the Christian Apocalypse.

But this cannot as yet be seen in the 90th Psalm with the same clarity. In the foreground stands the fact that our earthly existence is transitory and hastens towards death. It is recognized that this is connected with the Fall, that it is a reaction, a rejoinder of the Godhead to the Fall of Man. To the Old Testament understanding this rejoinder flows from the "wrath" of God. "That is thy wrath that we must so pass away."

The intermingling with the Luciferic element is the reason why man, as he has become on earth, conflicts inharmoniously with the divine world. When it calls him home again after an earthly life this summons leads to difficult crises in the after-death life. The one who has

died must pay for his return home with painful purification. When he passes over he finds that with his earthly attainments he does not straightway fit into heaven, that he there works disturbingly. Earth man with his guilt realizes his incompatibility with the world of his origin. He experiences—the wrath of God.

Speaking to-day from the standpoint of Christianity, we may venture to say: precisely in this divine wrath-reaction which makes man mortal there is actually a reverberation of divine Love. In this way Love saves man from being made immortal in his sinful condition; through catastrophes, through judgments, destructions and purifications it ever and again calls him home. Wrath is the form which the divine Love must assume when it meets with the sinning man.

The 90th Psalm sees mankind standing under wrath. At the same time this is a recognition of a history, a development. For the wrath is not an original state. In its nature it is a secondary condition. It points back to a modification which the preceding original first-condition had to undergo. Wrath cannot have stood at the beginning. At the beginning was Love. God created man and blessed him. The Fall into Sin put an end to this primeval state. Does this second condition remain the conclusive and final one?

However, let us return to the text of the Psalm, which at first pursues the motive of transitoriness.

*"For all our days are passed away in thy wrath:
We spend our years as a tale that is told.
The days of our years are three score years and ten,
And if by reason of strength they be four score years,
Yet is their strength labour and sorrow;
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away."*

The Psalm means to say that the whole pride of these few years, the attainments which man prides himself upon, all this is after all nothing. Only toil and trouble and unhappiness.

*"Who knoweth the power of thine anger?
Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath."*

The Psalmist feels himself to be solitary in his views and experiences. With these reflections upon the Wrath standing in the background of our transitoriness, he is aware that he has expressed something that lies outside the general horizon. Many may have a concept of "wrath", dogmatic, abstractly acquired by study and accepted. But the Psalmist speaks from direct and shattering experience, "Who knoweth the power of thine anger?" In Rudolf Steiner's book, *A Road to Self-Knowledge*, there is a passage that can make this experience of wrath concrete to us. It is speaking of what we go through at the threshold of the spiritual world. "Such as the soul now is, a task lies before it which it cannot master, because in its present state it is rejected by its supersensible surroundings; the spiritual world does not wish to have it within its realm. And so the soul arrives at a feeling of being in contradiction to the supersensible world; it must say to itself: As I am now it is not possible for me to mingle with that world . . . such an experience has something annihilating in it for the Self." Here in modern manner, without glancing at the old texts, the experience is presented that is called in Psalm 90 the "wrath of God".

"So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

To number our days means that we should not only think about death, but above all should permeate the dull dream of our existence with consciousness, cultivate retrospection and memory and make ourselves clear as to where we stand. To number the days—in the sense of Anthroposophy that would also mean: to feel the inner qualities of the different age-divisions and place them in the service of evolution. Each division—the seven-year periods are particularly in question here—in the course of this life of seventy years has its special spiritual possibilities. It is not only youth that has its character of “once only” and “never to be brought back again”. Even if it is not so evident, each section of life has its “directness to God”. “That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Wisdom of the heart is to mature from such responsible communing with the years of our life.

III

Following these words on the wisdom of the heart, the attention of the Psalm now turns to the coming salvation:

*“Return, O Lord. How long?
And let it repent thee concerning thy servants.
And satisfy us early with thy mercy;
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast
afflicted us,
And the years wherein we have seen evil.”*

Wrath cannot be the final state. It is a second state, it is the metamorphosis of love in the form and appearance it must assume with regard to the man who has fallen into

sin. Now expectation awaits a third state; the restitution of harmony between God and man, the re-establishment of love, appearing again in the form of love. This third condition cannot come about through man. So the expectant soul looks with anticipation to the Godhead, that it may change existing things through something quite new. Inasmuch as the third part of the Psalm turns towards this anticipation of salvation it becomes "Messianic", although there may be no direct reference to the Messiah.

The supplication for the great return is followed by the sigh, "How long?" But just as the whole Psalm shows a peaceful endurance and manly composure, so, too, is this "How long?" where personal feeling comes for once to the surface, no wild outcry; it is spoken in an understanding patience and mature calm. This "How long?" has a parallel in the Psalm "De Profundis" (130), "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning."

"O satisfy us early with thy mercy." In the Holy Scriptures we must meet again and again with the mystery of the early morning. Morning is the hour when divine grace is near. Even to-day we still feel how the whole day can be vexatious when one has begun it with a dull, heavy, overslept morning. The event of the Resurrection of the Christ was accomplished in the early morning, in the domain still of the night's mystery, but in the light of the dawning day. Easter is a morning event. It did not come to pass without divine disposition that the fundamental Christian celebration was transferred from evening to the morning hour. This morning character of Christianity is significant. A new Cosmic Day begins with the Resurrection. A new ascent is established. To use the expression of Novalis, Easter is a "Festival of Cosmic Rejuvenation".

When the Mohammedan prays he turns towards Mecca, and in the same way the supplications of the Psalms turn, as it were, towards the approaching rising of the Sun of Christ. An example may be specially drawn from Psalm 5; 3—"In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." The "directing", "turning to", refers to the setting up of the sacrifice, but is at the same time the expression for an inner preparation which enables the devout, by virtue of the sacrificial liturgy, to become clairvoyant. "In the early morning I will prepare it for thee and will spy out towards thee." We begin to understand these expressions from our familiarity with the Act of Consecration. Here the words, "Satisfy me with thy grace" find their fulfilment, for in the Act of Consecration not only is the Offering "prepared" and expectation turned to the God appearing in the transubstantiation, but in the Communion the sacred repast is also included.

Precisely in the Psalm of Moses these words are so impressive and affecting. The Psalmist is the aged man, the one who has matured and grown wise. Verses 1-12 are the wisdom of age. But the secret of rejuvenation, the morning mercy, bringing the turning, the change, are touched upon in the last verses. It passes over from the realm of truth to a premonition of Grace. If hitherto the weight of a calm earnest mood of grief lay over the Psalm, there are new blossoms out of this very earnestness and anticipation of genuine joy. The wisdom of age is crystallized pain. The anticipation of the redemptive grace and mercy is joy. "We will be glad and rejoice all our days." This joy is to be a sort of compensation for the previous sorrows.

*"Let thy work appear unto thy servants
And thy glory unto their children."*

This is actually a supplication for the Deed of Christ. And even now that this Deed belongs to history, the petition in the Psalm has not lost its validity, for now the point is that this work should appear ever more clearly before man's understanding and perception. The becoming visible of the splendour of majesty "unto their children" points to a still more distant future, to the vision of the Coming of Christ into the glory of the etheric light.

*"And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us,
And establish thou the work of our hands upon us;
Yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it."*

Psalm 90 concludes with a reference to the work of our hands. Is that not contradictory after the foregoing reflections on our transitory nature? For if everything earthly already bears within it the germ of decay, is not then all activity, all working and creating, all labour-of-love wasted from the outset? Did it not say earlier, "As the flower blooms in the morning and at evening withers away?" It is only possible to understand the remarkable change to a positive mood when one takes the "great return" seriously. It is true that so far there is only supplication for its coming. But it seems as if something of its nature had already been imparted in advance to the devout suppliant. It radiates over the close of this Psalm of Moses like an Easter morning light.

Earthly activity again takes on a meaning through the Resurrection of Christ. The morning-grace makes man able to carry the eternal into the transitory. Let the outward show of the senses then likewise vanish, such earthly deeds remain in existence in the world of true being. In our early action the material is only a kind of "cloak". A quite simple example: someone cleans a floor. How

quickly this floor will get dirty again! But is the act then refuted as meaningless? In no way. The outer effect may be more or less short-lived. But the morality involved remains as reality and is incorporated as positive contribution to the invisible earth. The desire for cleanliness, the readiness to serve, the social feeling that did not consider itself too good to do such work—all this remains.

The Psalm in its closing lines grandly emphasizes this truth with its affirmation of life and its summoning of all good forces: "Yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it!" The Hebrew word means make secure, establish, ratify. This would in fact mean in our case that in the light of the Resurrection men's earthly deeds would acquire their eternal significance, their establishment through the divine. "Yea and Amen."

The 90th Psalm is aware of the eternity of the divine and the fate of man. But it looks prophetically into the world of a coming redemption which already sends out its rays in advance and which makes work upon earth full of significance.

The Act of Consecration speaks of this at Easter, saying that Christ has risen for us "as the meaning of the earth".

IN EXILE

Psalms 42 and 43

THE two Psalms 42 and 43 are intimately connected. Together they form a whole, as it is possible to see from the recurring verses 42; 6 and 11 and 43; 5. Considered historically, it is the Psalm of a priest apparently banished from Jerusalem and living in exile in the region of the source of the Jordan. It expresses his longing for the Temple ritual in Jerusalem. But the Psalm expresses truths which hold good far beyond this special situation of a long past destiny.

The First Strophe

*"As the hart panteth after the water brooks
So panteth my soul after Thee, O God.
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God;
When shall I come and appear before God?
My tears have been my meat day and night,
While they continually say unto me, Where is
thy God?
When I remember these things I pour out my soul
in me:
For I had gone with the multitude, I went with
them to the house of God,
With the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude
that kept Holy Day.*

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art
thou disquieted in me?
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for
the help of his countenance."*

The opening words are well known. It is the picture of the stag which vainly seeks for water in the dry brook under the baking heat of the sun. Such an image drawn from nature has an elemental force that has often been felt.

The soul-experiences of desires, pleasures, pains, meet us in the animal kingdom with undiminished strength. The animal merges completely with its soul-emotions, tastes them to the uttermost. In the case of man, the development of the intellect has spread the pallor of thought over the naturally powerful colour of these feelings and paralysed them. The cry of an animal can "go through and through" us. One only learns from that what a passionate emotion can be. The stirrings in the soul of man act tamely and insignificantly compared with such elemental outbursts.

However, this was different in past ages. When the Iliad describes the terrible wrath of Achilles in the image of a spreading forest-fire catastrophe, we get some inkling of the strength of human emotions in antiquity. Man is not condemned permanently to pay for his clear consciousness by a stunting of the soul. That is only a transitional stage. A false path arises, desirous of bringing the soul-life to a rich colourfulness through demonic and animal elements. Face-to-face with this is a glorious future possibility, namely, that powerful new worlds of feeling will open out to man to the extent in which he holds conscious communion with the spiritual worlds. These worlds of feeling will then, however, no longer live in the body-

fettered darkness of the beast, but in harmony with the consciousness of vision, in the answering vibrating of the soul with what is acknowledged by the spirit. It is only in the form of the intellect that the spirit is "the adversary of the soul".

The Apocalypse describes the Cherubim in the form of beasts who sound the great song of praise. In this figurative reminiscence of what we know on earth as "beast" there is revealed to the writer of the Apocalypse the mightiness of the emotional nature—here, however, not sub-human but superhuman. These celestial "beast"-forms are "full of eyes before and behind". Since they are celestial beings this is undoubtedly an Imagination of star-eyes. Here there is no dull blindness of involved and entangled instinct, seeking an outlet, but eye-faculties of the highest order. Here the elemental power of passion is spiritualized, though this does not mean deadened, but rather dedicated in all its strength to the spirit.

The cry of the beast is on the one hand a reminder to man of a lost powerfulness of soul. On the other hand it is a prophecy that the human soul will one day again set in motion pulsations of feelings that are grander and belong to the spirit.

Thus the religious man sees again in the panting of the hart his own longing. Thirst is in fact one of the most powerful sensations. It serves as a classical symbol of human desire, particularly in the figurative language of Buddhism. Buddha saw in thirst the burning longing in subconscious depths for life and existence, which leads us again and again into bodily existence and hence again and again into suffering. He saw no other way of ending this suffering than to penetrate in meditation into the subconscious sheaths of the soul and destroy there at the roots this urge for existence.

It has only been recognized since the coming of Christ that in spite of its sufferings earthly existence must not be regarded merely negatively. Since that time we dare not see the path to incarnation as a false path. The burning thirst in the depths of being which leads to earthly existence has its justification—it must only be rightly understood in man himself. Man must recognize towards what this thirst, this longing for existence, is ultimately directed; it must not be content with temporary and superficial appeasements. This thirst for existence that guides us with a deep instinct into our earthly life is, after all, the longing of man for his self-realization, the longing to grasp his destiny and to become the bearer of the I-Am. And hence this longing is at the same time the desire for the God of the I-Am, who, as the creative prototype of true Egohood within us will bring about the realization of our self. Ultimately the thirst seeks Christ. The thirst leads us to earthly existence because it is only on earth that we can really find the Christ in His Death and Resurrection Mystery; without Him earthly existence and the thirst for it would be meaningless.

Professor H. Beckh, the profound scholar of Buddhism, has pointed out that the thirst motif appears again in St. John's Gospel, but now in the Christian aspect. These Johannine words relating to thirst take up again over the centuries the experience of Buddha and now carry it further. With the words "I thirst", it is as though the Crucified One takes into His divine soul the totality of the pain of human longing in order that he might fully identify himself with humanity. But by so doing He can give man the promise: "He that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John 6; 35, also John 4; 14 and 7; 37.)

Let us turn back to our Psalm, from which we seem to have wandered a long way—but in order really to

"see" it one must place it in these great interconnections.

"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." Here the primal emotion of thirst has become conscious of its true desire. Unhappily, the expression "the living God" has become widely used as a cheaply edifying turn of speech. The living God is the God acting directly and spontaneously, not only the one working in the law, in the impersonal necessity of what he has ordained. When creation had been accomplished the great Sabbath rest spread over all things: God had ceased to create. Creation now runs along the rails, as it were. But where behind the world which gradually became more concealing than revealing, is the God who acts spontaneously, who once commanded, "Let there be light"?

The Christ brought the great Sabbath to an end. The renewal of the original powers of creation is accomplished in Him. The world has released itself to a certain degree from the creator and has become "finished work". The archetypal divine essence appears in the I-Am of the Christ. He who utters the "I-Am" is the "living God".

"When shall I come and appear before God?" A long evolutionary path leads to this beholding. At some future time we shall stand before the Godhead as ego to Ego, spirit-personality. As Paul says, "But then face to face."

The striving soul must for a time endure mockery, for the adversaries ask, "Where is now thy God?" The man who is called to freedom must at some time have his relation to God exposed to the test of persecution, to prove that without external strengthening and confirming the connection is sustained purely inwardly. The scorn of the adversaries who only have eyes for the outer world and who, through what they find, come to the conclusion that there is no God—that is something that had necessarily to arise in the course of history. It is a station on the way of

the Cross of the God who for the sake of our freedom became weak and powerless. Atheism is no accidental derauling of the human spirit; no product of special wickedness, but something that had once to come, that for a time must be permitted to be active in humanity. The sorrow of the Psalmist is not only his fortuitous personal misfortune but a portion of the great divine-human Passion which is inevitable for the sake of the lofty goal of our freedom. It is even necessary to pass through the bitter-nesses which are connected with the mystery of the Cross of the "powerless God", so that we may "one day come to behold God's countenance".

Memories arise in this state of forlornness—"yet once I possessed it". The Psalmist is speaking of his memories of the Temple worship in Jerusalem, of solemn celebrations in the sanctuary which in those days mediated to him a consciousness of the Godhead. This can symbolize to us something more far-reaching, something with a general application. Religion after all only lives in mankind up till now by reason of such memories of a past nearness of God.

"That to one's pain one never forgets it"—man has one pain the less by forgetting, but also one great richness the less. "So at least have longing for a longing"—by this the Mystic wished to call to life again the almost dying memories of what was lost, so that man should not entirely forget his origin. Thus the memories of the Psalmist can be an expression of the memories of a lost Paradise. It says in the Apocalypse: "Remember therefore from what heights thou art fallen. Strengthen what yet remains, what is already at the point of death." The composer of our Psalm pours out his soul in remembrance. He gathers all the energies of his soul into this remembering and makes it therefore an effective meditation.

We must adopt again the right technique of remembering. In the course of our life we shall all have had many more impressions of a higher reality than it may perhaps seem to us to-day. We go about with our experiences for the most part like thoughtless spendthrifts. We could derive more from the fact that this or that has befallen us. "I will remember these things and pour out my soul in the memory."

The first strophe of the Psalm ends with the verse which then recurs after the second and third strophes: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me?" When one cultivates a spiritual and religious life one is no longer so inevitably merged in one's pains and griefs. One divides oneself, so to say, into the person who suffers and the one who stands by. This other who stands by is often still very feeble; sometimes he stands perhaps—if one may say so—"wringing his hands" before his own soul when it withdraws itself from his encouragement. But again and again the attempt must be made to take up a position outside oneself and from this standpoint of an objective reflection try to call one's soul to order.

The Psalmist places himself likewise before his own soul, which is utterly sunk in grief and cannot find its way to inner peace and calm. He speaks comfort to his soul, "Hope thou in God." When the Psalm lets us see that one single effort at consolation accomplishes nothing, this bears witness to a realistic observation of the inner life. After each of the three strophes the encouragement is repeated. The soul is not so quickly freed from its disquietude and mourning; for at the beginning of the second strophe this reference to being cast down is brought up again, "My soul is cast down within me"—as if there had been no exhortation to courage. But recapitulation is the

secret of the inner life, so the Psalm again and again places spiritual comfort before the mind's eye, until it really takes hold in the soul.

The Second Strophe

*"O my God, my soul is cast down within me:
Therefore will I remember thee from the land of
Jordan,
And of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.
Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-
spouts;
All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me.
Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in
the daytime
And in the night his song shall be with me,
And my prayer unto the God of my life."*

The Psalmist, banished from Jerusalem, lives in exile by the upper waters of the Jordan, which dash in tumbling waterfalls from the mountains near to the snow-covered Hermon. In this region, encompassed by elemental nature-forces, there stood a Pan-sanctuary, near Paneas, the later Cæsarea-Philippi. And here Peter was at a future day to make his avowal, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." (Matt. 16; 16.)

The Psalmist sees himself abandoned to the roaring waterfalls, as if the ancient chaos-dragon-power rose up again in this elemental raging. "*Thehôm*"—the primal flood, not yet subdued by the Ego-God—"abyssos" in the Greek translation. It has a hidden connection with the inner restlessness of his soul, surging and storming with no peace, with the chaotic powers within him which he is

not able at once to control. It is as if all these waves dashed together above his head and passed lightly over his painstaking attempts to take hold of himself.

The pain of banishment, of exile, has gripped him with all its force. Exile—a millionfold has it been experienced and suffered in our own time; this displacement from one's surroundings, from the accustomed world, the house, the place, the home, from the dearly familiar conditions, from one's profession—this being transposed and dispossessed in the strange land, hostile and cold.

But with all their hardships and piercing earthly reality—these experiences of exile are also after all only a "likeness". Perhaps it has happened to many that, on opening the eyes in the morning in strange surroundings a feeling of being dispossessed of one's own belongings lies like an incubus upon the soul. Yet might it now and then seem as if this feeling were already known and familiar to one from somewhere? As if one had gone through this nightmare of waking in exile in some other form. To awake in the foreign land of exile—that is the archetypal experience of incarnation, of embodiment on earth. Our soul was then taken from its own original environment and banished into an environment not fitted for it, into the world of material things. This transplanting from the heavenly home into the material world is the archetypal experience of exile, which still vibrates in the depths of every soul. Religious stirrings are awakening homesickness, dark recollection of a "beforehand". Religion only loses this character of an existence bound to the past by the acceptance of the Christ impulse, because through Christ the heaven-home can be carried into the earthly foreign land, changing all things.

The nightly song of praise, the prayer of which the following verse speaks, are the effort to meet the chaos-

powers of mourning and unrest and to make place again for the ego and what it has to accomplish. It would not be right for one who is dejected merely to say, "I am not in the mood to pray—it cannot be expected of me to-day". One must get away from this subjective mood of up and down. The prayer does not come out of the mood, but the true mood comes out of the prayer. Here the rhythmical recapitulation in religious life is a help to us. The constant reiteration of the Act of Consecration in its passage through the year is for us something quite independent of the moods that are produced from the changing destinies of individuals. It takes hold of man and comforts him and takes him into a larger, more expansive life. The act of blessing rests with God; man's efforts may for a time seem to bear no fruit. But a healing element lies in the very effort of observing regular organized prayer.

So the Psalmist sings his nocturnal hymn. He does not admit that pain uses up all the energy of his soul and makes it completely "toneless". There must always be something left over which is capable of exaltation. To take part in the hours and rhythms of an ordered religious life is here of assistance.

The Psalm carries its afflictions before the Godhead:

"I will say unto God my rock, why hast thou forgotten me?"

Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"

As with a sword in my bones, my enemies reproach me;

While they say daily unto me, 'Where is thy God?' "

My rock—the antithesis to the chaos-flood of "*Thehôm*". The rock, the ego-foundation, the solid ground under the

feet that allows us to stand and endure. This force proceeds from the God of the I-Am.

"Why hast thou forgotten me?" The human being is set free from the higher powers. They have renounced the task of guiding him step by step with leading strings. He is to seek his way on his own responsibility. This experience of being "forsaken by God" cannot be spared us; it makes us mature enough to find in freedom our helper and guide in the Christ.

The question, "Where is thy God?" is again an affliction in this forsaken state. In the first strophe it was the cause of tears, now there is an enhancement: it is "like a sword in my bones". The pain produced by the thought that in this earthly compass the divine can be "called in question" goes through bone and marrow.

So now for the second time there is a return to the consolation of the spirit:

*"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou
disquieted within me?"*

*Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the health of my countenance and my God."*

We must summon ourselves to hope in the consciousness that we are involved in far-extending developments, in great plans of Providence which we are as yet quite unable to survey. We need to be conscious of the fact that we are in a lengthy process of becoming, which takes its time. We need the "long will" which leads through the various phases of becoming with their inevitable sorrows and suffering. Such a "long will" produces then the necessary patience which is no passive letting things befall one or letting things happen, but is a positive attitude of mind.

"I shall yet praise him who is the health of my coun-

tenance", as the one who helps me to my true human countenance, whereas evil "disfigures the mien". As the one who brings the human countenance into reality, he is "my God", the God of my ego which comes to its manifestation in the free personality, in the true nature of the human being.

The Third Strophe

*"Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an
ungodly nation:
O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!"*

The God who will help us towards our human countenance is at the same time the Judge who brings to our consciousness our deformities and our inhumanities. This judgment, however, does not aim at execution but at raising us up again.

Inasmuch as we deliver ourselves to the judgment of the ego-creating God—"Judge me, O God"—we gain in God the aid against our opponents. He who withdraws from the divine judgment of conscience falls of necessity into the hands of the evil powers. To become honestly conscious of our faults separates us from the devil. Inward dishonesty that tries to drown conscience leads us all the more definitely into his realm. The human enemies mentioned in the Psalm are only the visible representations of the invisible powers, of "ungodliness" and "deceit" and of "wickedness". The Godhead itself wages war against these powers when we do not withdraw ourselves from its judgment. Then God becomes our confederate, inasmuch as he carries on our struggle and takes from us the power of the opponent of our humanity, as we hear in the Act of Consecration.

*"For thou art the God of my strength:
Why dost thou cast me off?
Why go I mourning
Because of the oppression of the enemy?"*

The question, "Why hast thou forgotten me?" is here intensified to the still more forcible, "Why hast thou cast me off?" Possibilities of fearful catastrophic gravity come up on the horizon with these questions. Since man's own freedom, his good will, is counted upon in the process of his becoming man, since man must always himself bring into operation through his positive attitude the grace that is destined for him, it is possible for this "becoming-man" to be wrecked by man's unwillingness to co-operate. Then he would be abandoned as an unfinished attempt. "Unserviceable for becoming man." The casting off found here in the Psalm is not meant to imply such fully tragic gravity. But nevertheless we will keep in mind the apocalyptic import of what is here not actually intended. The Psalmist feels himself to be "one of the damned", he feels as if he were in an inferno. Yet he lifts his soul again to the prospect of divine grace.

*"O send out thy light and thy truth:
Let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill,
And thy tabernacles.
Then will I go to the altar of God.
Unto God who is my exceeding joy:
Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee,
O God, my God."*

Deliverance comes because the Godhead sends down to us something of its own being. It is like an emanation, an outflow of the divine essence in the direction of man. "Thy

light and thy truth." Both words appear in the I-Am words of St. John's Gospel where Christ declares the nature of his own being. "I am the light of the world." "I am the way, the truth and the life."

These divine essential forces "will accompany me and will make me come (literally) to the hill of thy holiness". This accompanying is in no way a carrying, but it presupposes the participation of man's own forces for progress.

The attainment of the goal, the bringing home of the exiled man from the strange land to the centre of divine life is presented in three stages. The holy hill—the tabernacles of God—his altar.

The holy hill is in general the figurative expression for an exaltation into a higher world. It begins with the raising of fallen man to the high mountain-world of divine holiness.

If a man has climbed the holy hill, he finds there above the "tabernacles of God". Is a picture of the "dwelling place" only a childish way of carrying earthly things into the divine realm? Perhaps the reverse is true: that our dwelling at a particular place is only an earthly image of the fact that the higher world too, although non-spatial, has differing realms and regions in it. "In my Father's house are many mansions." One can think, too, of the various cells of the pious hermits mentioned in Faust's ascent to heaven, where "the highest, purest cell" of Doctor Marianus is after all only the expression for a definite super-spatial place in the supersensible world. "Thy dwellings" (plural in the original) are the various realms forming the home of these higher beings in their infinitely rich and manifold differentiation, in whom God reveals himself in countless ways. To this extent they are the dwelling places of God.

Finally, the third and last state is in the heart of heaven,

the inmost kernel of the divine world: the Altar of God, where the love-offering is accomplished—his imparting of his own being. All earthly altars are symbols of this loftiest mystery of the divine sacrifice. Man is called upon to participate in the divine service of the cosmic sacrifice. As man he is called to the priesthood. "And I will approach the altar of God." He takes this step from the prompting of his inmost being. Then the divine leaders, light and truth, are no longer merely beside him, giving help and guidance—it is as though they have entered into him and taken part in his own decision. Ultimately, notwithstanding all the gracious help given to him, to approach this altar is man's free and independent act.

To participate thus in the divine service of cosmic sacrifice is at the same time the highest blessedness—"to the God who is my joy and my delight." A being who has received into himself the divine sacrificial gift, now becomes a being who himself may give, may sacrifice, thus giving back in changed form to the world what he has received. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." That, speaking broadly, is the ultimate programme of the whole of human evolution. The "heavenly bliss" of man does not consist in the indolent enjoyment of a sort of Utopia, but in being permitted to share in the creative sacrificial deeds of God.

"Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee." The human being has now become "resounding", all the false notes and dissonances of his nature are overcome; he is a walking song of praise. Our soul-life always resounds in some way in the higher worlds, seldom harmoniously, generally quite the opposite! The Christ-filled man must develop his soul with all its powers of resonance to become the harp of God. The Apocalypse of John sees the redeemed as playing on the harp (Rev. 14; 2).

This reference to approaching the altar of God is like an apocalyptic vision of the future. But now the Psalm leaves this future vision to return to the present and at last to exorcize the despair and unrest of his suffering soul through words of spiritual consolation:

*"Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and art so
restless within me?"*

*Hope thou in God, for yet will I thank him that he
is the help of my countenance and my God."*

THE GLIMPSE INTO THE SANCTUARY

Psalm 73

“Nevertheless, I am continually with thee. Thou holdest me by my right hand. Thou guidest me with thy counsel and at last receivest me with honour. If I have but thee, I ask nothing concerning heaven and earth. If my flesh and my soul languish, yet thou, O God, art the comfort of my heart and my portion for ever.”

THESE verses (73, 23-26) have always been regarded as one of the finest passages of the Old Testament, in fact of the religious literature of all time. One must see them in connection with the entire Psalm in order to give them their right value.

The composer of the Psalm speaks first of how for a long time he was oppressed by a tormenting problem. His difficult destiny led him to the question: How is it that evil is so often successful, that so little of the divine justice appears? And on the other hand one so often sees the life of a man who is striving with all his power to do what is right run its course insignificantly and full of pain.

The first sixteen verses are devoted to the presentation of this problem. They describe in vivid and picturesque language the triumph of those who do not trouble about godly things and then in contrast to this his own sorrowful, afflicted life.

"However much I pondered to understand this, it stood tormentingly before my eyes." (v. 16).

He sometimes felt tempted to doubt the existence of divine justice, but something always held him back. This passage in the original text reads, "If I were to say that I would talk like these (the godless) lo, I should betray the generation of thy sons." The generation of thy sons—we shall meet in Psalm 24 with the expression, "This is the generation of those who ask after him, who seek thy countenance, thou God of Jacob." Those who are earnestly seeking and striving form a community. It even seems to imply a definite kind of order or group formed by those who strove for a more penetrating experience of the divine in the Old Testament sense. Those who, as true followers of the Jahve religion, wrestled consciously with something of ego-force for the experience of the divine "I Am". It was because the Psalmist stood within this race of Sons (for through the ego-force we are not only children but sons of God) that he had so far been preserved from doubting, although he came no nearer to the solution of the problem. Until one day something unusual happened to him. His faithful efforts towards clarity, his steady endurance of bodily pain (v. 14) his struggle for purity and consecration (v. 13) and assuredly also the fact that he belonged to the community of the Sons of God—all this had made him mature enough for an initiation experience.

"Until I entered into the sanctuaries of God."

This verse 17 is the decisive passage in the 73rd Psalm. Biblical criticism has puzzled a good deal over it. People have wondered about the plural "the sanctuaries" of God,

which would imply that it was not the Temple which was meant. And yet it could only refer to the Temple? It is our belief that the sentence only becomes comprehensible when one accepts the fact that here we are concerned with a supersensible experience. One can really only picture "the entry into the sanctuaries of God" as being one of those events where the "wall" of the sense world seems to open and behind it a world is revealed which previously had been completely outside our consciousness. A world, in fact, worlds of divine life in manifold ranks and stages—"the sanctuaries of God". An entry into the Temple and an observation of the sacrificial ritual may have brought about this supersensible experience. The Psalm occasionally points to this power of ritual to release supersensible vision; for the Temple is the place "where thine honour dwells", thy *gloria*, thy revelation of light.

The problems and questions of the one so severely tested now receive a new light. He has a glimpse into coming things. He beholds the relativity and transitory nature of earth existence. A life, the external conditions of which are fortunate and happy, now becomes unimportant for him in view of the way it ends. That an evil earthly life flows out into vain emptiness is henceforth a deeply inner knowledge for him.

"As a dream whose vanity we know when we awake."
(v. 20.)

Even the word "awake" possesses here the peculiar colour-tone of mystical experience. The earthly life formerly accepted as conclusive and "taken seriously" in a false way is felt to be a dream from which one awakes into an actually real world.

In the undoubtedly mystical sense of such an awakening

of consciousness the same word "awake" appears in the highly significant expression of the 17th Psalm: "I will behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." (17; 15.) Even beyond the "beholding of the face" the intuitive perception of the form of God leads here to a "being fed" supernaturally, to a communion. It does not merely mean likeness, but the rare word used here means the essential form, as it were the ego-contour of God, to behold which, according to Numbers 12; 8, was permitted to Moses alone. Only a most sublime "awakening experience" can lead to such an experience.

After this awakening—to turn back again now to Psalm 73—man looks at his earthly being as it has been hitherto, seeing it from outside and feeling deeply impressed with its incompatibility with the divine. "I was a fool without knowledge, a beast was I before thee." (v. 22.) So too, the particular nuance of these words can only be rightly valued through a mystical understanding. It now becomes clear to the Psalmist that his earlier, earth-bound efforts to think must in any case remain helpless and without power to grasp divine reality. He now looks back at his uninitiated human state as something that was actually still subhuman and animal-like.

Only now the Psalmist rises to those words of deep meaning quoted at the beginning. They only gain their full significance against the background of the hypothesis which we have brought forward. If we reproduce the Hebrew text in our modern way of thought it reads somewhat as follows:

*"My ego—for ever with thee!
My right hand hast thou grasped.*

*Thou guidest me by thy counsel.
And one day—into thy glory thou takest me.
Who else in the heavens is the creative archetype of
my ego-being?
And united with thee I confront what is earthly in
freedom.
Then may my body pass away.
May my soul pass away likewise.
For evermore is God the rock foundation of my
heart and my destiny."*

These verses are so unusual because they are the fruit of an initiation experience, a gift from the world of the divine sanctuaries.

The sentence, "A beast was I before thee" had preceded them. Now the Psalmist feels himself for the first time in his true Ego, as actual human being. Only now has he become aware of his true Ego. He knows that his true Ego is henceforth united indissolubly with the Godhead. "And my Ego—evermore is it with thee." This union with God unfolds in three demonstrations of the divine. They are: reaching out the hand, the wise guidance, the fulfilment.

Reaching out the hand: There are Egyptian figures of the Sun-God, where the rays of the sun terminate in hands. In this reference to the divine hand which grasps our hand one should not see a childishly primitive anthropomorphism but rather consider that man, on his side, is theomorphic, that divine secrets are revealed in his form. This is especially the case in the marvel of the hand. That God grasps our right hand is not spoken accidentally. Man is more conscious and awake on the right side than on the left. Man must find the contact with the divine through his conscious personality.

The guidance: This grasping of the hand which establishes the conscious relation is now further perfected in the wisdom-filled leadership. The Psalmist is no longer restless at his difficult destiny. An initiation does not mean that his path ceases, as it were, to be full of thorns, but he can now see it in another light. He has trust in the divine guidance which has led him to his destiny with a wisdom that surpasses all human understanding.

The fulfilment: The distant ego is seen from afar—"At some future time"—"At last". The original text here speaks quite simply and concisely of a "taking"—"thou takest me". To take—this is used in the same sense in the mysterious short oracular sentence in Genesis about Enoch (Gen. 5; 24). Since he "walked with God", God "took" him.

The Godhead has once for all released man from its own original substance and set him free to lead an independent life. But this releasing and setting free is for the sake of becoming one again at a higher stage. Man must so shape his freedom that one day he stands with his independence not without but within the Godhead. The Godhead let man go free in order to take him back again in love into its kingdom. When someday in the far future man will have utterly permeated himself with the Christ, then in his whole nature of spirit, soul and body he will be membered into the heavens. This ascent into heaven was prophetically prefigured in the far past in the figure of Enoch. In grand and monumental words Genesis says of him that God "took" him.

There is not only the Communion in which the human being takes the divine into himself, but someday when evolution has come to an end there is to be a communion in which man will be received into the God-head. This will come about when man has utterly and entirely,

through and through, become ripe for eternity, when he can be received by the world of his origin without loss of substance through the survival of earthly remainders and residue. What the 73rd Psalm expresses as a kind of presentiment is this great "becoming received" that awaits man, his becoming absorbed into the divine world. "In glory"—that does not mean only with honour, but the Hebrew "*kābôd*" points to the gloria, the light of transfiguration into which man enters when he is received.

Psalm 49; 16, is another parallel. First comes the impressive description of how the godless are in "*Scheôl*", in the world of the shades (*Hades* for the Greeks). "Death tends them." In contrast to this the Psalm expresses the assurance, "Yet God will deliver my soul from the hand of *Scheôl*; for he will take me." Apart from Psalm 16, which we have still to consider, 73; 24 and 49; 16 are the only passages in the Psalter which venture to say with such boldness that man shall be preserved throughout eternity.

The words, "If I have but thee I ask nothing of heaven and earth" are slightly different in the original Hebrew. They read, literally, "who to me in the Heavens? And with thee I have no pleasure in earthly things." What does this mean, "Who to me in the heavens?" The human being finds himself in the higher world, looks round on all sides and seeks among the hosts of the spirits and their spheres for his special spiritual home. There in the higher worlds in creative activity are to be found the divine archetypes of the crystals, the plants, the animals. But where does the human being find the region which for him as man has a corresponding archetypal significance? Where is his own, his human heavenly prototype? Where does he find—to use the words of the Michaelmas prayer in the Act of Consecration of Man—the actual God

of Man? "Who to me in the heavens?" The dative "to me" points simply and expressively to the nature of this divine being who is sought by man and who shall be inclined to him and allied with him. So we can translate it, "Who else but thee, the God of my I-Am, is the creative archetype of my human nature?"

"When I am united with thee I have no pleasure in earthly things". That means I am no longer dependent on the terrestrial, I feel myself sovereign as regards earthly things. Man is then no longer bound to the earth through the enslaving chains of possession and desire, he faces the earth freely as a king.

The Hebrew text does not contain that note of estrangement which one glimpses in certain translations. Is the human being really in existence in order not to ask about heaven and earth? Is it not well that he should take a devout interest in all that his God has brought forth in nature and the world of Spirit? To seek God without taking note of heaven and earth leads only too easily into a subjective, ultimately an egoistic religiosity which is not truly Christian. So it is a relief to know that this lack of interest in the world is not based on anything in the original text—though certainly the inner independence is there.

To have become independent of the earthly leads the Psalmist out beyond the problem which embittered his former life when he still took the perishable sense-world for the final reality and was a "beast before God". The sovereignty which has been gained is shown in the cry, "And even if my body and soul should pass away!" Inner ascendancy lies in this "and even if". Linked with the God of his humanity he can look complacently on the passing away of his earthly bodily nature.

But we are concerned here not only with the flesh but also with the soul—in the original text, "heart". The

following words, however, show that the inmost core of man's being does not mean by this the heart that perishes: "Thou art the comfort of my heart for ever." Here in connection with the passing away, the mortal heart is meant, the soul-life in so far as it is bound to the earthly body and is determined by the ups and downs of the bodily nature. The Psalmist sees even in this soul-life bound to the transitory body something whose eventual passing away is viewed with equanimity. He knows through his awakening that our relation to God must be anchored much deeper than in the fluctuating and changing feelings of the superficial soul life. There is a more solid anchoring, independent of recurring moods and fancies. Religion cannot be built upon frames of mind alone. There are situations in life where, as one says, a man "loses his nerve", where his soul-life, until then well adjusted, is overwhelmed through the excessive pressure of a catastrophe. As we shall see in Psalm 42, a man must be able to stand outside these moods of harmony and disharmony, these doubts and depressions, at any rate with part of his being. If he has found this "outside" standpoint then he knows that though perhaps he cannot always be immediately successful, nevertheless he is on the way to have done with these disturbances in his soul life. The transitory nature of our body, its becoming ill and old, and hence, too, the transitory nature of a considerable part of our soul-activities, must all be regarded with tranquillity, in view of man's eternal consequence.

The Psalmist knows that in spite of his great experience of God, he must yet pass through deep valleys. But he is no longer fettered to the world of appearance. "God is the rock of my heart and my portion in eternity." The heart here is not the transitory soul nature but the immortal heart, through whose powers of faith man finds his

firm foundation on the eternal rock of the Godhead. "And my portion"—the allotted share of man's life is to be God himself. One who can speak in this way has become independent of fears and anxieties, heedless of whether one has one's due share of earthly life, of whether life allots to us the amount of good fortune, comfort and satisfaction that we think we are entitled to have. So in the past God said to Abraham, "I myself am thy exceeding great reward." The value of an earthly life in the long run only rests upon whether the divine itself was the portion of the human being which he carries away as his life's fruit, as the sum of his existence. Anything else that falls to man's lot as joys or sorrows passes away.

Of all the problems of well-being or hardship, there finally only remains for the Psalm this one alternative—nearness to God or distance from God.

*"For lo, they that are far from thee perish.
Thou givest to non-existence him who breaks the
covenant with thee." (v. 27.)*

This is no revengeful action of an offended God, rather is it a kind of higher law of nature here taking effect. He who gives up his relation to God delivers himself of his own accord to a condition of nothingness.

"And I—the nearness of God is my good." (v. 28.)

The nearness of God is "the" good, the value of values.

In the concluding verse 28 there occurs for the first and only time in this Psalm the Jahve name, intensified still more by the addition of "*adon*", Lord.

*"I have taken my refuge with the Kyrios, the God of the
I-Am."*

Who belongs to me in the heavens? Where is the divine background whence the true being of man can proceed? The "*adon Jahve*", the *Kyrios*, the God of the I-Am—he in truth is the God of Man.

THE PATH OF LIFE

Psalm 16

THE 16th Psalm plays a special part in the history of Christianity. It is to be found, together with other passages from the Old Testament, in the sermon of Peter at Pentecost; it belongs therefore to the very earliest proclamations of Christianity. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit had for the first time opened the mouths of men to speak publicly of the Christ event, the Mystery of Golgotha which they had experienced.

In this original proclamation of Christianity Peter supports his statements by three passages from the Old Testament, corresponding to the three distinct parts of his address. At each stage his appeal to his listeners widens until it reaches the universally human. ("Ye men of Judea and ye dwellers in Jerusalem"—"Ye men of Israel"—"Ye Brethren", Acts 2; 14, 22, 29.) In the first part (2; 14-21) Peter represents the outpouring of the Spirit as the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel. It is here only a question of the Spirit and its workings. The transition to the second part (2; 22-28) is made where in the last verse the *Kyrios*, the Lord, is called upon. The contents of this second part is the world of the Son, inasmuch as it speaks of the coming of the Nazarene, of his Death and Resurrection. The third part (2; 29-36) passes from the Resurrection to the Ascension, to the sitting on the right hand of the Father, and here the Melchisedek Psalm, 110, serves as a help to the understanding ("The Lord

said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand"). This third part, therefore, leads to the sphere of the enthroned Father-God. It is significant how this very first Christian announcement takes its form from the mystery of the Three in One.

Thus the second part, which proclaims the fundamental Son-Mystery of Death and Resurrection, rests upon the 16th Psalm. Peter has to convey to his hearers the incredible content of his message, and bring it nearer to their understanding by quoting the 16th Psalm, "For David speaketh concerning him . . ." (2;25).

According to Luke, who, as we know, also wrote the Acts of the Apostles, the Risen One Himself, in his forty days' teachings after Easter opened the understanding of his disciples for the ancient sacred scriptures. (Luke 24; 44.) And here Luke expressly mentions the Psalms in addition to Moses and the Prophets. After these teachings the sacred texts of old appeared to the disciples in another light and one may well believe that the teachings of the Risen One continue to work in what Peter proclaimed at Pentecost. This justifies us in reading the Hebrew text as "allowing for growth", in looking upon its formations as left open towards the future and as bearing a content that goes far beyond what could become conscious to its inspired author at that time.

*"Preserve me, O God, for in thee I take my refuge.
I spake to Jahve: thou art my Lord.
I know no good thing but thee."*

This opening is lightly overshadowed by the mystery of the Trinity. First the sheltering, the taking refuge—a Father experience. It deals with the sheltering of his own threatened existence, freezing in its isolation, within the

all-embracing being of the Ground of the World, from whom proceeds the "preserving", the maintaining in essential life.

But the Psalm does not stop here. It does not only seek the state of being hidden in the Father. It is aware of the fact that man is not only to be "child" but also "son". So now in his maturity he approaches the Godhead with independent decision of devotion. If the act of seeking refuge was still something of an instinctive nature proceeding from a higher ordering, so now the conscious relation to God of one who has become mature finds vent in the words, "I spake: thou art my God". The devout man as spiritual personality stands face to face with the Godhead and makes his free decision for the divine—a "Son" experience! This speaking is a deed out of the centre of one's own being, a solemn protestation, "Thou art my Lord. Thou shalt direct my being."

The third sentence, "I know of no good thing but thee" has again a different character. It is a process of consciousness that reaches out still further than the momentary standing face to face and the protestation. The consciousness surveys the whole territory of man's experience of values and lifts itself to a verdict based on knowledge. It delivers a judgment on the scale of values, it distinguishes, chooses and passes sentence—inasmuch as it utters the words, "I know no good thing except thee". The value of the divine being whom the Psalmist has acknowledged as his higher Ego, his Lord, is measured by comparison with other "good things". And discernment makes it known that the Kyrios, the bearer of the higher Ego, is not only the highest good, "summum bonum", but plainly and simply "the" good. Everything else that is good can only be so named, if it is in union with this *Kyrios*.

From the childlike hiding oneself to the free protesta-

tion and to the conscious giving of account before the perceptive consciousness—here we may see prefigured the way from the experience of the Father to the experience of the Son and finally of the Spirit.

*“In the saints which are upon earth he glorifies himself,
All his delight rests on them.”*

This is perhaps the way we must read the somewhat uncertain words of the Hebrew text.

In the saints he glorifies himself. From afar resound the words of the High Priest of Prayer: “I am glorified in them.” The early Christians called themselves “saints” although they were aware of their human imperfections. They indicated in this way that they felt they were touched and permeated by the forces of salvation.

His delight is in them. Again we feel ourselves reminded of the fulfilment in the New Testament: “My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” “In whom I discover the true reflection of my own being.” “In whom I see myself actually revealed.”

A negative path is also possible, in contrast to the path taken by those who desire saintliness and salvation:

*“A heavy destiny they bring upon themselves,
Who dedicate themselves to the other one.”*

Those would be the men who do not open themselves to the higher Ego, but surrender their nature to demonic powers.

In these demons there works the Adversary, the “other one”.

“I desire not to offer their blood sacrifice.”

In the cult of the gods of ancient times we are concerned with realities. As the Twilight of the Gods advanced, the beneficent beings drew back who had stood behind the figures of the ancient gods, and to some extent demons and spectres took their place. Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of the demons." (1 Cor. 10; 21.) In the ancient rituals in their decadent state, men formed a connection with the demons. The early Christian martyrs were right in believing that if they sacrificed to the gods as was required of them, they would have nourished demons and they were therefore relentless in their refusal.

Although those old cults no longer exist, it does not mean that the words of the Psalm no longer apply and have only an historical interest. Demons existed both before and after, and even without a definite ceremonial ritual it is possible to nourish them through our offering and to drink from their cup. With every emotion that is not good we feed these evil spirits and strengthen them. They come to it as flies come to refuse. Our blood which takes up the finest emotions of our soul is truly the "special fluid" upon which the Devil has designs. One who opens his inner being to evil, at the same time grants power over his blood to beings opposing the divine. Whether or not he is aware of it, he offers them the blood sacrifice.

"Their names shall not come upon my lips."

Here again is a truth that still holds good to-day, even though the rituals have ceased to exist in which the names of demons were called upon in ceremonies of a magical nature. One conjures up evil spirits if one uses bad words. Swearing, for example, is quite concretely a "negative ritual".

We will now leave this cult of the demons—to be ignorant of their reality would not have been possible in the past—and turn again to what is positive.

"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and my cup."

In Psalm 116; 13, it reads: "I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord", words which have been adopted in the ritual of the Christian Mass. This is the counterpart of the blood-offering and calling upon the name in the service of the demons. The other picture, that of the portion of inheritance, is taken from the apportioning of the land. The "apportioning of the land" is itself an image of how every human being establishes himself "in a separate corner of world-existence". Thus the devout man will settle down in the spiritual region of the ego-bearing God and make himself at home. He is then content with the lot that has befallen him, even though he perhaps runs short in the great distribution of earthly goods, which is determined by destiny (cf. Psalm 73; 26).

After speaking of the cup the Psalm passes over from the use of the third person to that of the second person—the direct personal address:

*"Yea, thou shalt be my lot for ever,
The lots fell to me in pleasant places; I am well
pleased with my portion."*

*"I will praise the Lord, who has given me counsel.
My inner parts summon thereunto in the night
seasons."*

He has counselled the pious, he has let his inspiration flow towards him. The inner parts of his being summon him in the night to grateful songs of praise—literally, “the kidneys”, the “reins”. The “reins” often appear in the Old Testament as the seat of the inner emotions. The organs hidden in the inner part of the body were generally used also as expression of the inner soul-life. The Greek word “*splangchna*”, literally “bowels”, which is often used in the New Testament likewise means the inner emotions of the soul. (In many parts simple country folk use the word “innards” for the intestines.)

The voice of conscience becomes inwardly audible in the night, calling for gratitude to the powers of destiny.

We have now reached the point in Psalm 16 where the quotation in Peter’s Pentecost sermon begins.

*“I have the Lord continually before mine eyes,
For he is at my right hand and I shall not be shaken.”*

The turning towards the divine which has been described hitherto gradually becomes a state where God is continually before one’s eyes, a “walking in the uninterrupted sight of God”.

The picture of “having before one’s eyes” speaks of a relation to the Godhead which belongs more to the nature of consciousness, the other picture of having at one’s right hand more to the nature of the will-forces. Feeling God’s perpetual presence preserves us from being shaken, that is to say, from losing the assured cohesion, the solid structure of the uniform ego-being.

An entirely new feeling of life follows from this intensified relationship to the divine.

*"Therefore my heart is glad
And my Light-soul rejoiceth,
My flesh also shall dwell in trust."*

The three steps of this statement pass from the inner to the outer nature of the human being. They begin at the heart as the inner centre. The most external to which they penetrate is the flesh—the physical body. In between stands the enigmatic word which the English version translates by "glory". It is the Hebrew *Kābôd* which met us at the beginning in the 8th Psalm as the Hebrew correspondence to "*gloria*" and "*doxa*". The Hebrew scholar Kautzsch honestly admits that *Kābôd* in connection with our Psalm is not properly translated. "My glory rejoiceth"—what is that supposed to mean?

In the Greek text Peter's discourse follows the reading of the Greek Septuagint translation. The difficulty is circumvented there by simply using "tongue" where *Kābôd* occurs. In the pre-Christian age of the Alexandrine Septuagint translation it was obvious that the Hebrew word at this place was no longer understood. Modern translators often render it by "soul" out of a feeling that something of that kind must be meant.

Let us bring forward other similar passages. In Psalm 57; 9 and 108; 2 we find, "Awake my glory! Awake psalter and harp! I will awaken the dawn."

"*Kābôd*" is "*gloria*" and is for the most part used for the revelation of the Light-radiation of God. But man, too, has a "light-radiation" which surrounds him as a fine supersensible member of his being. Man is not always aware of this out-raying light-being of his. In prosaic everyday consciousness he knows nothing of his finer etheric and astral sheaths. His awareness of this finer organism can be loosened through music. So the awaking

of psalter and harp is at the same time the awaking of the "*gloria*" consciousness. "Awake, my *gloria*! Awake psalter and harp!" There is the question as to whether the succeeding words of the "awakening of the dawn" do not also point to experiences of a mystical nature. One should only reflect that the dawn (*Aurora*) in the language of mysticism was always the image of an inwardly experienced process, from the Rishis of the Indian Vedas—who "awoke the *Ushas* (dawn) with powerful magic mantra"—to Jacob Boehme's "*Aurora*".

Another very illuminating passage is Genesis 49; 6. The dying patriarch Jacob blesses his sons. He says in regard to Simeon and Levi, whose crime in Shechem he censures, "may my soul not enter into their counsel, nor my *gloria* into their assembly". The dying man says this. He can no longer be considering entering their counsel and assembly in his physical body. He looks towards the approaching time after his death in which he can no longer be present with his sons in the flesh, but continues to be active supersensibly. When they hold counsel together, when they assemble in a solemn way as sons of their father, then according to ancient knowledge the dead can "be among them", not indeed in the physical body, but as an etheric soul-form in the fine light-organism of the "*gloria*".

In the 16th Psalm the "*gloria*" stands between the "heart" and the "flesh", that is, between the ego-centre (in Psalm 22; 27 it says, "may your heart live for ever") and the physical bodily nature. The Psalmist can only have had something supersensible in mind, which was no longer accessible to the experience of later times.

In the heart of man arises the joy of God. "Your heart shall rejoice," says Christ when he took leave of his disciples in the last talk.

The joy of God is carried over from this centre to the fine etheric-astral organism of the "*gloria*"—"my glory rejoiceth", and from there to the bodily nature. That which originates internally, finally takes hold of the periphery of man's being. The paths of God end in the bodily element. "My flesh also shall dwell in trust in the spirit." If the inner impressions of God are strong and lasting then not only the finer supersensible organism is affected but in the end the physical body too. Other Psalms as well speak of this experience of God which affects the entire man. Psalm 63; 1—"Early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee." Psalm 84; 3—"Body and soul delight in the living God." The body is also to be included in the redeeming and transforming. "My flesh, too, shall dwell in trust" does not merely imply that the pious man pays no attention to his bodily welfare. It is more an anticipation of the resurrection of the body, a foretaste which the early Christians had when they experienced the Communion as the "medicament of immortality".

Here again the Psalm passes over to the direct address:

*"For thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades,
Thou wilt not suffer thy godly one to see corruption."*

Hades, in the Hebrew, *Scheól*. *Hades*, *Aides*, the non-beholding, the soul-darkness. The men of antiquity still knew to a great extent that death did not make an end of everything, but they saw before them only a dimmed-down, lowered shadow-existence, a "second-class existence" in an underworld, which was rightly so-called. Souls have lost their original inborn heavenly brightness, their divine entity, and find themselves after death in a feeble twilight shadow-existence. This is magnificently

described in the 11th Book of the Odyssey, the *Nekyia*. Those were no empty fancies. To the degree in which souls established themselves in earthly existence and the human being became a wide-awake earthly personality with his own forces, existence after death lost its luminosity. It was only by virtue of Christ's descent into hell, his appearance in the kingdom of the dead, that a complete change came about in this evolution. The Creed of the Christian Community says, "In death he became the helper of the souls of the dead who had lost their divine nature."

Let us turn again to Psalm 49 which has already been quoted. The souls appear in *Scheól* like a "flock" devoid of will. "Death pastures them." "But God will free my soul from the power of *Scheól*"—49; 15 and 16.

Holy Saturday brings new light into the kingdom of the dead. It fulfils the promise: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in the kingdom of shadows." And now from the soul realm the effect of the Resurrection passes over on Easter Sunday to the physical realm. "The last enemy to be overcome is death." Thus the sentence in Psalm 16 about *Scheól* is followed by the words, "Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." Peter refers to these words as being fulfilled in the Resurrection of Christ. David, seeing this before, had spoken of Christ's Resurrection (Acts 2; 31).

But although it is really these words with which Peter is concerned, he begins his quotation from Psalm 16 with words that come earlier, with "to have ever before one's eyes". What is the reason for his introducing this preceding verse into his address before the actually conclusive sentence about the Resurrection? By so doing he shows that the Resurrection which he proclaims has already been assumed! Thus it is no isolated, incomprehensible miracle, but with all its miraculous character it is nevertheless the last link in a process of many stages, the result

of previous development. It begins inwardly, with the heart's intimate decision of conscience. From this it goes onwards to a condition of uninterrupted consciousness of God. The Inner Easter is first transmitted to the finer sheaths, that vibrate in sympathy, and comes finally to the corporality. It is not purely for external and historical reasons that the Resurrection appears at the end of the Gospels. An understanding of it would be the ripe fruit gained by real inner work on the whole of the preceding chapters, the result of which would then be the insight of Peter: "Him hath God caused to resurrect, loosing the birth-pains of Death (Greek original text)—because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (Acts 2; 24).

Peter continues his quotation still further. He adds the words about the path to life and about the fullness of joy before the countenance of God. "Way", "path" is a technical expression in the old mystery language for the evolutionary process of initiation. It is a significant fact that the First Psalm places the picture of the two ways, to death and to life, right at the beginning of the whole Book of Psalms. The Sermon on the Mount also speaks at the end about the broad way and the narrow path that leads to life. Finally Christ says of himself, "I am the Way." He in his own person has become Initiation itself. Peter in adding the sentence about the way, once more underlines the fact that the Resurrection of Christ was the organic end of a path, and that it can be attained by us, too, if we tread the path.

*"Thou shalt show me the path of life.
Before thy face is fulness of joy;
At thy right hand fulness of grace in eternity."*

Thus in the Hebrew text the Psalm ends on a three-fold note. The "path to life", rightly understood, includes the Mystery of the Passion and the Cross. The fullness of joy before God's countenance belongs to Easter. "At thy right hand" points to the Ascension, "the fullness of grace" is like a presentiment of Whitsuntide. This last is, literally, "lovelinesses" (plural), "demonstrations of kindness", "graciousnesses". The right hand of God is not a blind and mighty power of will, although the epitome of Allmightiness, but a will to creation which brings forth beauty, "worthy of love" in the sense of the Latin "*gratia*" or the Greek "*charis*". Both words mean grace, as well as pleasantness, charm. They mean beauty full of grace. Christ after his Ascension to Heaven is, as it says in the Creed, "the Lord of the heavenly forces on earth and lives as the fulfiller of the deeds of the Father, the Ground of the World". He mediates the creative activity of the right hand of God, and as administrator of the creative forces he also sends the Holy Spirit whose outpouring is solemnized at Whitsuntide. Whitsuntide, the "lovely festival", falls in a time when nature is revealed in a blossoming splendour of every colour, which should be an earthly image of what the spirit is to bring about at a higher stage.

The Old Testament does not only know the sternness of the divine law. The 16th Psalm begins to have a feeling for the world of the Holy Spirit, who through grace makes the flowering garden of the higher life bring forth its blossoms. "Lovelinesses at thy right hand in eternity."

The last word is eternity. At the beginning stood the prayer "preserve me". This preserving now gains its full comprehensive meaning: "Take from the being of man in its totality, in the sum total of its members, the corruption that threatens."

The Creed of the Christian Community speaks of those “who feel the healing power of Christ”, and says of them that they may hope “for the overcoming of the sickness of sin, for the continuance of Man’s being and for the preservation of their life destined for eternity.”

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Psalm 23

THE Psalm of the Good Shepherd is one of the best known of all the Psalms. Its position in the Psalter is a significant one. It can be said of the whole Psalter that the manifold emotions of religious feeling radiate from it in all the rainbow colours of the soul's life, but this is especially true of the trio, Psalms 22-4. The 22nd Psalm, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" is the Psalm of the suffering of the Messiah. It belongs to the dark side of the colour-bow. The night of forsakenness lightens to the blue of longing hope, to the priestly violet of the great sacrifice. The bright side of the rainbow shines in Psalm 24. It radiates as in red and gold, it breathes Resurrection and Ascension: the Lord of Hosts, the King of Glory, is to make his entry. In between the darkness of Psalm 22 and the brightness of Psalm 24 there stands the Psalm of the Shepherd. An element of restfulness and benefaction, of peace and healing streams from it, as from the green that lies in the centre of the coloured bow.

The 23rd Psalm is a perfect work of art in itself despite its brevity. In its short concise sentences it possesses something all-embracing, something formulated for all time.

In the Old Testament it belongs to the passages where there is the greatest nearness to Christ, and then in changed form flows into the tenth chapter of St. John's Gospel. "I

am the Good Shepherd." We do the text no violence if we understand it as Christian. In doing so we put it for the first time in its proper light, as in fact so much in the Old Testament—we see it again and again—can only disclose its true depth and beauty in the light of the Christ-revelation.

"The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall lack nothing."

A "Shepherd" is one who bears in himself the spirit of a community. The great leaders of mankind were called in ancient times "Shepherds", because they did not egotistically shut themselves up in a private life of their own ("Shall I be my brother's keeper?"), but let the destiny of others live in their hearts. One who met such a "Shepherd" had the feeling: I am not coming to someone who is a stranger, but to myself. What is best and most individual in me is at home in him.

The godly man of the Old Testament recognizes his shepherd, the guardian of what concerns him eternally, in the God who bears the might of the I-Am. Professor Hermann Beckh has for this reason translated the first verse of the Psalm: "He who speaks the I in me is my Shepherd." This God, the true "God of Man", appears in Christ. "I am the Good Shepherd".—"I shall lack nothing." In all "lacking" the one great lack should be brought to our consciousness, the one from which the soul has suffered since the Fall, when it was cut off from the stream of the infinitely rich life of the divine. In speaking of the Good Shepherd Christ says: "I am come that they may have life and have it more abundantly." (John 10; 10.) The rest of the Psalm now unfolds the work of the Good Shepherd upon man in a classical series of pictures.

"He leadeth me to green pastures."

The soul has descended into earthly life in order to gain something there. When man moves about on earth and through his earthly experiences finds some nourishment for his eternal nature, when he "gets something from it", then—speaking in the primitive yet deeply penetrating picture-language of old—the earth becomes a "pasture" for him. The Christ too in the Chapter on the Shepherd speaks of "finding pasture" (John 10; 9). He leads us to the true "abundances" of our earthly existence, there where the earth provides us with something, where she does not allow us to be famished in our deeper being. The "green pastures" may also remind us of the green turf where Christ made the people sit down beside the lake for the Feeding of the Multitude.

If, however, the good Powers do not guide our earthly way, the earth becomes for our eternal self a grey wilderness, a dead and stony desert. Then we are "like a beast, led round in a circle on a barren heath by an evil spirit, and round about lies beautiful green pasture". These words really apply to all those who can only find a materialistic relationship to the earth. That is indeed the paradox, that the materialist in the deeper sense "gets nothing" from matter since he experiences it devoid of spirit. He may live in the richest luxury, his soul remains desolate and poor. When he dies he has to leave all his riches behind and over there he is truly a "poor soul". One who finds the spirit in terrestrial things takes his earthly experiences as a veritable possession with him over into the realm of eternity.

II

"He leadeth me to fresh water."

We in our temperate climate scarcely guess with what elemental force the sunbaked Orient experiences the divine in water. To be sure, on a hot summer day after long wandering in burning heat and dust we are a little open to the magic sound of the words "water of life". Or one has an inkling when one waters thirsty flowers, how "in, with and under" the water the mysterious life-forces are streaming in. These, having themselves something of the flowing, the fluid element, need the watery element akin to them before they can make their way into matter.

In the original text it is literally: the water of rests (plural) "*menuchôth*". It is rest as a "pause in creating", where what has been exhausted is built up again in the flowing and streaming of etheric forces.

III

"He restoreth my soul."

Very true are the words in Faust: "Thou hast not yet attained refreshing, before it wellesh forth from thine own soul." But it actually needs divine intervention before our soul is attuned to harmony and this inner fount is made to flow. We know the feeling that our soul is being transformed when we are near someone whom we revere, that in their presence we experience a kind of "well-being". And so the nearness of the divine Shepherd becomes known

through an inner quickening, welling up in the soul. The soul is no longer a burden to itself, as happens when there is disharmony. The paralysing ill-humour disappears, the soul regains its elasticity and pleasure in living.

IV

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

The Psalm has touched upon the realms of physical earthly existence, of the life-streams, of the weaving of the soul element and now reaches as the fourth stage the sphere of the truly human in the ego.

"His name"—the name is the expression of spirituality of an I nature. God's name is the "I-Am". In the name of man God's name is to appear, in the I of man shall the I of God be manifest in a reflected image. The I name has been misused and dishonoured by man, the use of I has taken on the colouring of the egotistic and bad. And so we pray: "Hallowed be thy name." Our goal is to bring to light in our ego our true eternal being, and not some egotistic-demonic caricature. We are only on the way to this. We must go through our destiny in the right way for the sake of the growth of the I, for the sake of the eternal name. "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness—for his name's sake."

Our true eternal name by which God called us into existence has not yet reached realization and hovers over our earthly form. It is written in the heavens, it may be read in the stars but as yet it does not stand upon our brow. The star-names of all men dwell simultaneously in the name of Christ. We find ourselves when we find him,

the "Shepherd". He leads us along the path of destiny in the right way, in the sense of an eternal righteousness, for his name's sake and thereby also ours. When the goal of our way is reached he will write our star-name on our brow.

v

But this way of destiny "for his name's sake" goes through the gloomy haunts of the adversary. Even when man lets himself be rightly led by the good Shepherd, yes, precisely then. No soul is spared this passing through the vale of darkness.

"And though I walk through the dark valley, I fear not evil; for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

The dark valley is a classic picture for the experiencing of materiality, which prevents a free outlook and confines us on both sides like the pressure of a nightmare. The soul whose home is in the bright widths of heaven must enter the temporal-spatial narrowness of earthly existence. Fear of existence grips it. Narrowness becomes "anxiety". The child of light shivers in the sunless hollow, in the dark gorge. Cold death breathes on it, the hand of evil stretches out to seize it.

How many people have already uttered these words about the dark valley in their prayers! These words from the Psalm are like a vessel into which hundreds, thousands have poured their fears and anxieties.

We must notice how a subtle change is here shown in the text. From the "third person" of the reflective state-

ment ("he leadeth me") we pass over to the direct "thou" of the "second person". If it read just now, "He leadeth me upon the right way", so now it reads, "for thou art with me". The reverent observation "He" now becomes direct address, talking "face to face". It is only when man enters into a still closer, still more inward relation to the divine Shepherd, that he can overcome the anxieties and dangers of earthly existence, can attain to fearlessness as regards the sinister power of evil. The divine Shepherd now becomes something like the higher Ego of the human being.

Now that the sphere of the higher Ego has been reached, the "thou" remains throughout the following verses. At the same time the Psalm finally abandons the pictures of Shepherd and beast and passes on to another series of images which are taken purely from human existence. The last picture relating to the Shepherd is the staff. "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." But just as the Shepherd-staff of Moses became after his call the powerful Staff of God, the kingly sceptre, so here too in the Psalm we may perhaps see more in the comforting staff than just the ordinary shepherd-crook. The outstretched arm is a gesture of command, a current of force proceeding from man. If the hand grasps the staff the authoritative gesture becomes still more expressive. The staff of Moses awoke the life-fountain from the dead stony rock. The pictures in the Catacombs show how Christ performs the same miracle on Lazarus: his staff pointing the direction to world-powers touches the stone death-chamber, and Lazarus comes forth to new life. It is comforting to look upon the "staff", upon the "healing power" of the divine Shepherd, who now reveals himself increasingly as "King".

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil, thou fillest full my cup."

After the awakening of Lazarus, he took part in the solemn repast in Bethany: "Lazarus was one of them that sat at table with him." (John 12; 2.) If a man has found the "good Shepherd" as his higher Ego, the essentially Divine nearness of whom vanquishes evil, then he is summoned to the Grail repast. He "sits at the Lord's table". But this mystery of the repast has as its necessary counterpart the rule of the anti-divine powers. The Grail Castle is unthinkable without the opposing power of Klingsor. The Feeding of the Multitudes by the lake occurs against the background of the death of John the Baptist whose head lies in the charger. Judas into whom Satan entered leaves the chamber of the Last Supper and goes out into the night. Thus here too the taking of nourishment from the holy life-forces of the Higher Ego takes place "in the presence of mine enemies". One cannot come to Christ without having also looked the adversary and his hosts in the face. Without the conscious coming to grips with evil no higher development is possible. The composer of the 23rd Psalm may quite well have only thought of his enemies in the ordinary everyday sense. There is no need to set aside this obvious meaning through a kind of allegorical explanation which does violence to the text and puts something into it which is foreign to it. What we have been saying was not meant like this. The obvious meaning must not be explained away, one must only take it deeply enough. There is no necessity to read any-

thing foreign into what is there; but the transitory is symbol, and behind all that is in the foreground, in the distance appears the immense, the cosmic. So too a man's earthly opponents who oppress his life are only the representatives of much more dangerous opposing powers who can kill more than the body. One divines the deeply inward law upon which this Psalm was constructed, for it sees the Communion-mystery of the Holy Table in connection with the experience of the adversary. The Act of Consecration in communicating the chalice speaks of the Adversary, whose power is taken from us through Christ. St. John's Gospel says further of Lazarus who sat at the table of Christ in Bethany, that it was sought to kill him. (12; 10.) The men who sought after his life were only the reflection of the powers that would like to bring to death again the divine life newly-born in man.

"Thou anointest my head with oil." One who partakes of the holy repast goes through a consecration, is anointed as priest and king. The head in which the egotistic-earthly self-consciousness, imprisoned by death, has built its stronghold, is made of service to the divinely spiritual. "*Christos*" the Greek translation of the Hebrew "*Messias*" means in fact "the anointed one".

"Thou fillest my cup" is literally "my cup runneth over". To the partaking of food is added the mystery of the cup. It is filled full—"I am come that they may have life in abundance."

VII

"Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

Goodness and mercy appear here as something essentially real that accompanies the man who has pressed through to the higher Ego. "Goodness" is the innermost germinating force of existence, in "mercy" this inner substance radiates outwards like the sun.

Orestes felt himself pursued by the Furies. Each individual has his invisible following that accompanies him in evil—and in good. The Apocalypse says of the redeemed: "For their works follow them."

Feelings of eternity stream through the soul of the Psalmist. A presentiment of Easter shines through his words: I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. The Christian looks towards the Resurrection body that he is to receive, in which he will "abide", "dwell", "survive", as in the true temple, in the house of the Lord. Man who is still a slave of the powers of sin must take leave of his body again and again in death. "The servant abideth not in the house for ever" (John 8; 35). Not until he is delivered through Christ, the "Son", from the dominion of Sin, can he dwell continuously in the Resurrection body.

No doubt the Psalmist means no more than a wish that it be granted to him to dwell in the Temple of Jahve "to the end of his days". We find a similar wish expressed in the 27th Psalm: "One thing have I desired of Jahve, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of Jahve all the days of my life, to behold the gracious beauty of Jahve and to meditate in his temple." The 84th Psalm is also a document of Old Testament Temple piety: "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of Jahve. My heart and also my earthly body rejoice in the living God. The bird hath found a dwelling place and the swallow her nest where she can lay her young: thine altars, O Lord of

Hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they praise thee evermore."

The Temple was the expression of the fact that God builds a "house", it was a prophecy of the future indwelling of God in an earthly body. "But he spake of the temple of his body" (John 2; 21). The pious wish to be able to dwell in the house of God for ever was, in veiled form, the wish ascending from the depths of the human being to dwell in the Resurrection body, which in its permanence is the prototype of the earthly house of God.

THE HYMN OF THE SOUL

Psalm 103

I

*"Praise the Lord, O my soul,
And all that is within me praise his holy name!"*

RUDOLF STEINER once pointed out that it was more than a figure of speech when Homer begins by calling upon the Muse, "Sing to me, O Muse . . ." The Muse at that time was really an inspiring spiritual being and the poet was conscious of its co-operation. On the other hand, Rudolf Steiner drew attention to the way in which Klopstock's *Messiah* begins with the words, "Sing, immortal soul, of the redemption of sinful mankind!" The poet of antiquity summons the Muse that is still external to him. In the case of the Christian poet the depths of his own soul, touched by the Christ mystery, must begin to resound.

Psalm 103 also belongs to the ancient world, yet it already stands in a spiritual current that leads to the Christian current with its ego-character. So here, too, the innermost being of the Psalmist's own soul is to become sounding in praise of the Lord. The whole inner being ("all that is in me") with all its powers and possibilities shall give resonance to the Holy Name. The holy "Name" is the God in so far as he is known, in so far as he manifests himself. The recognition of God and acknowledging his holy name in prayer, as well as the Hymn that this calls

forth, demand the full compass of the power of the Soul. Even though the confluence of all man's inner aspirations and feelings, in order to give the full echo of the soul to the holy Name, still remains a far-off goal.

The spirit recognizes the Name of God, the soul attunes its feelings to this knowledge and merges with it fully. This feeling becomes inner music and then finally audible song. It becomes the Hymn in the welling up and overflowing of the powers of the soul set in motion through the experience of such precious worth. In like manner on Ascension Day, looking back to the now completed Christ Drama, the Act of Consecration speaks of the Song of Praise that shall stream out of our hearts.

"Praise the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his benefits."

People are much tempted to notice what is disagreeable, but what is good they accept as a matter of course, without thought and hence also without thanks. Unless we cultivate gratitude consciously we make no progress on the path to the divine.

In the following lines the abundant benefits coming from God are stated one by one and placed with honour before the grateful consciousness.

*"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thine infirmities;
Who redeemeth thy life from the grave;
Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender
mercies,
Who satisfieth thy longing with good things,
And reneweth thy youth like the eagle."*

The first three statements relate to a negative condition that is overcome through divine assistance, sin—sickness—death.

Sin working in the inner being is the root of all ill. Bringing the soul into order is the starting point for a comprehensive re-establishment of the whole threatened nature of man.

The result of sin is sickness. What was at first purely of a soul-nature encroaches on the region of the finer formative-forces and makes them "sick". This is not meant to imply that every illness is therefore a direct result of sin. That would be a short circuit, a primitive mode of thought which takes no account of the complex relationships of human destiny. That this individual must suffer precisely from this illness may arise from quite a different course of destiny. But that disease in general is possible to mankind, that sickness and disease find access to man at all—that is the result of sin. But how some individual has come to inhabit a body that is stricken with this or that illness is a matter of individual destiny and quite another question. It may be connected with his own sin (in this or an earlier life). But it may also be only the stepping back before undertaking something great and positive. St. John's Gospel gives an example of both these possibilities. "Sin no more lest a worse thing come upon thee." (5; 14.) "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God may be manifest in him." (9; 3.) But even the illness not due to guilt is after all by its very existence derived from sin, without which sickness would have remained remote from human nature.

The next step on the path of sin's realization, its becoming part of the world, is Death.

This is why the order of these statements in the Psalm is so organically right. To begin with, the forgiving of

sins, which brings the inner life into order. After that the healing of infirmities. Just as Christ first forgives the palsied man his sins and after that makes him whole. In the third place, the overcoming of death. They are words which stand wide open into the future Christian times and have an enduring, even an intensified value, far beyond their special application in the destiny of the Psalmist. They are words which become increasingly right and true with the advance of Christian development.

The word "*goêl*" in the original text has a special sound: "Who redeemeth thee from the grave". The same word occurs in the significant passage in Job: "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

After sin, sickness, death have been disposed of the positive element appears and this, too, is unfolded in a trinity of statements.

The "crowning with loving kindness and tender mercies" has a prefiguration in what was anciently called in the Orient "the lifting of the head". The man who was subdued and broken now, as a risen-one, ranges up with his head into the higher worlds again, and their light sinks down upon him in blessing. (Cf. remarks on Psalm 8.)

After the crowning of the head which restores the majesty of the man who is raised up, the Psalm turns to man's feeling nature at the centre. "Who stills thy longing desires with good things." The deepest longing finds its fulfilment. (Cf. remarks on Psalm 42.)

The working of grace in man penetrates lower and lower. "Who reneweth thy youth like an eagle." Ancient wisdom saw in the eagle the symbol for the transformation of the sinister Scorpion powers. The "Scorpio", which also works in the desire nature of the lower man, is a death-bringing force. When it is spiritualized, however, then man presses forward to the "Eagle". John the Evangelist,

who went through death in the figure of Lazarus, stands in the sign of the Eagle. He is the first to experience resurrection as the festival of world-rejuvenation. As the centenarian of Ephesus, he is, on the other hand, in a special sense the disciple of Christ who experiences in himself the force of renewal. "Behold I make all things new." (Rev. 21; 5.) The forces of childhood and youth are regained on a higher level.

This Johannine Eagle-Mystery is also to be found in Isaiah: "The youths become faint and weary and the young men fall. But they that wait upon the Lord acquire new strength, that they mount up with wings as eagles, that they run and are not weary, that they walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40; 30, 31.) The forces of childhood and youth derived solely from nature sooner or later fall into decline, they must be found again in the spirit. Spiritual rebirth alone rescues us from senile old age.

II

*"The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment
For all that are oppressed."*

With these words the Psalm leaves the sphere of the personal and the experience of individual salvation and praises the work of God on a wider scale. It has often led to impossibilities when Old Testament piety all too narrowly supposes that the sway of justice is to be found in one and the same life-span. That often leads to absurdities, to a forcing of facts; for as a rule the upright man is not rewarded with good things and the evil man punished. The fundamental intuition of the justice of God is, however, not refuted on this account. We must only view things

from a wider standpoint by considering the repeated earthly lives through which man passes. It is only in the great panorama of all our earthly courses that we shall be able to see how destinies are controlled in justice by the highest hierarchies in their fullness of love and wisdom.

It was this God, ruling with his justice the great course of the world, who gave Moses insight into his ways.

*"He made known his ways unto Moses,
His acts unto the sons of Israel.
The Lord is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger and plenteous in mercy."*

The Psalm is here doubtless remembering especially the unique hour of revelation which was granted to Moses as the Lord passed before him, and proclaimed to him his great Name in the fullness of its contents (Exod. 34; 5-7). The words, "Merciful and gracious is the Lord . . ." are a direct quotation from this revelation to Moses.

*"He will not always chide,
Neither will he keep his anger for ever.
He doth not deal with us after our sins,
Nor reward us according to our iniquities.
For as the heaven is high above the earth,
So great is his mercy toward them that fear him.
As far as the east is from the west
Doth he remove our transgressions from us."*

"Wrath" is not the first state and will not be the last (cf. notes on Psalm 90). Moses experiences, even in pre-Christian times, the will of the Godhead to forgive and to heal. Although it is a God of justness, a guarantor of the

law of sowing and reaping, yet "he doth not deal with us according to our offences". We already spoke of this in connection with Psalm 51. If there were merely a rigid, automatic justice, striking back mechanically at the doer, then man would be destroyed by the consequences of his deeds, "die in his sins". Then all the wrong that he had done to the world would just simply annihilate him in its repercussion. But the Godhead adds something from its own substance, it gives a great, unending, effective Divine Sacrifice as a new additional factor, through which everything takes on a different appearance. Christ does not cancel the law of cause and effect, he does not overthrow the karmic law of destiny, but he graciously brings a quite new cause into the circumstances, by binding himself in free deed of sacrifice to the destiny of mankind and inserting himself "into the currents of Karma".

The Law is not thereby set aside, for precisely by virtue of this law of cause and consequence the Deed of Golgotha has itself its far-reaching effects.

What is said of the righteous God who nevertheless does not allow us to be destroyed by the consequences of our deeds will only become fully comprehensible in the light of Christ. The God who does not reward man according to his iniquity is no capricious Sultan who arbitrarily seizes the reins of justice, but the God who is in process of consummating the Christ-sacrifice for humanity.

The lofty heaven of grace arches over man. And since this is so, one is not obliged to see the human being merely in his earthly aspect, as an imperfect man of earth—one would then have to give him up and be doubtful of his future. But to the totality of the phenomenon "man" there belongs, too, the lofty heaven of God that arches over him, full of promise and pregnant with the future. It is no merit of man that this is so. The universe only

suffers him for the sake of his Christian possibilities in the future. He is only "justified through belief in Christ" because in the course of his becoming Christianized he will bring the world-scales of eternal justice back into equilibrium.

This in no way affects freedom. The over-arching high heavens of grace which would fain be realized in earthly man are only productive for those who "reverently fear God". One condition must therefore be fulfilled on the part of man before the grace intended for him can be put into operation. He must be conscious of his position, he must have reverent fear. In the New Testament this one condition means: he must believe in Christ, he must turn towards him. Otherwise the high heavens of grace vaulted over him cannot reveal themselves, and in the last resort he must "die in his sins". The factor of redemption cannot then be inserted into his destiny's account.

"As far as the rising is from the setting." We belong through our sins to a world which is going down, setting. Grace unites us with a new morning of the world. Through grace a fundamentally different world rises in us, separated from the world of our sins by inconceivable distances.

We see man in great dimensions: man as he has the high heaven of grace over him, and as he belongs to a cosmic morning, while his sins go down into a cosmic evening.

The following sentence also has a New Testament sound:

*"Like as a father pitieth his sons
So the Lord pitieth them that reverently fear him."*

The Godhead who sends the Redeemer sees our frailty.

*"For he knoweth our frame;
He remembereth that we are dust."*

*As for man his days are as grass:
As a flower of the field so he flourisheth.
For the wind passeth over it and it is gone;
And the place thereof shall know it no more.
But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to
everlasting upon them that fear him
And his righteousness unto children's children,
To such as keep his covenant
And to those that remember his commandments to
do them."*

The "dust of the earth" element, transitoriness, is inserted into man. Not as if the whole man were on the way to become mere dust. That doubtless sometimes comes to the front in the Old Testament. But the Old Testament also knows of the Breath which God breathed into man and it tells of a creation of man (Gen. 1; 27), long before the transitory, earthly form was allotted to him (Gen. 2; 7). Man, through his share in the eternal, is able to make a covenant with God. His fidelity to the supersensible raises him above the merely transitory. "Fidelity" assumes that there is a lasting element in us, it is a function of the ego.

III

The Psalm begins with the Hymn of the Soul. It ends with a Hymn of the great Universe. What began in the inmost circle is now carried out into cosmic distances.

*"The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens;
And his kingdom embraceth the universe.
Praise him, ye his angels,*

*Ye heroes of strength that do his word,
Praise him all his hosts,
Ye exalted servants that accomplish his will."*

The heart's song of praise unites with the song of sacrifice coming from the hierarchies. The Act of Consecration of Man speaks of this at Christmas, giving the names of the nine angelic orders. The divisions of the ranks of angels is lightly touched upon, somewhat as in Psalm 104. There are first the Angels, who as in the Greek (*Angeloi*) are simply called the Messengers. They are the mediators between spirit and spirit. "Heroes of strength" has a sound of "sun heroes" and indicates perhaps the middle hierarchy, who are particularly connected with the Sun. They hearken to the Sun-word and carry it powerfully into the world. The word "hosts" (*Sabaoth*) points rather to the star-nature of the highest Hierarchy. "*Sabaoth*" is occasionally used for starry hosts, for instance, (Jeremiah 33; 22) "hosts of heaven" that cannot be numbered. To this highest hierarchy belong the "exalted servants" (cf. remarks on Psalm 124), the *Liturgents*, as they are called in Greek. They live in the immediate substance of the divine world. The Psalm says: they make manifest his Will.

Now finally the gaze is turned to the whole sum of creation:

*"Praise him all his works,
In all places of his dominion."*

The multiplicity of the "places" is, as we saw earlier, the image for a topography of the invisible worlds, which are mirrored in the manifold details of sense-existence spread out in space.

The concluding sentence turns back once more to the beginning. But in the meantime the soul has widened and made the whole universe its interest. The soul's song of praise now resounds with the Hymn of the Worlds.

"Praise the Lord, O my soul!"

THE FUTURE OF THE EARTH

Psalm 37

THERE is a song by Paul Gerhardt, very familiar to German Protestants, "Commit Thy Ways". This is based on the 37th Psalm. People have even occasionally spoken of a "Commit-Thy-Ways" Christianity, and meant to depict by this a distinct brand of evangelical Lutheran Christianity. They wish to point to the one-sidedness of a religiosity which no doubt is deep and intense and devout but which does not enter into the affairs of the world. It is a religiosity which circles round "God and the Soul" but loses sight of great world crises.

If one examines Psalm 37 more closely, however, it is true that one finds "Commit-Thy-Ways" in the original text, but one finds nothing of the one-sidedness. In fact there is a mood of an entirely different nature. One must naturally take into account that a certain something in Paul Gerhardt's wonderfully beautiful song which has given comfort to so many hearts could only have come in through Christianity, and that on the other hand definite nuances in the Psalm flow from the pre-Christian Old Testament basis. It is to be noted nevertheless that wide perspectives of a distinctly apocalyptic pattern are to be found in the Psalm, to which Paul Gerhardt's song does not do justice.

The Psalm begins with the admonition not to spend the forces of the soul in the hatred of what is evil.

"Be not inflamed against evil-doers nor be over-zealous against the workers of iniquity."

How much soul-energy is lost in this way! There is no doubt a great temptation to be annoyed from morning to night over one thing or another that is not what it ought to be. But righteous anger with which to fire our energy is only in place where we can intervene in a positive way and improve things. This is primarily in the sphere of self-education, where we have to do with our own failings. Beyond this, however, being inflamed and over-zealous soon becomes unfruitful. Here lurks the danger that important forces of our soul—needed in a positive direction—are used up to no purpose.

We should leave the bad to its own lack of reality. At any rate do not let us share in the picture of the world possessed by many persons of an Old Testament outlook. They imagine that the futility of the inferior must become strikingly evident even in this life. We take broader views, yet all the same the early concept remains right in principle, namely, that evil has its judge after all. The energies of the soul should flow towards the divine, not destroy themselves in fruitless anger.

*"Trust in the Lord and do good,
Inhabit the land and strive for faithfulness."*

Into this expression "trust in the Lord" we may as

Christians read all that our relation to Christ can be. This relation of faithful confidence strengthened by forces of the heart can then also give rise to the capacity to bring good into active realization.

Psalms 37 circles continuously round the word "*erez*", the earth, the land. To begin with, in this case, quite concretely the land of Israel, the Holy Land. Theological interpretation explains the Psalm as showing the antithesis of the pious, the *Chasidim*, to the others who fell away from the Jahve-religion and became accessible to foreign influences. The conflict centred round the Holy Land, and which of the two parties should control it. The Psalm acquires its significance however from the fact that this particular conflict between two groups of men, long since relegated to the past, can be a symbol of a much greater problem. Behind the contest of the pious, among whom perhaps many narrow-minded fanatics could have been found, and the so-called "godless" to control the land, there appears a much greater and more significant fight: the fight of the good and evil powers for the leadership of the earth. The devout are then the men of the future who serve the Christ and their adversaries are the powers of anti-Christ, and "*erez*" is then not only the land but the earth. (The word "*erez*" means, in fact, both.)

The actual theme of the Psalm is the Apocalyptic contest for the earth. That will become still clearer in what follows.

"Inhabit the land and cultivate faithfulness." It was right for Abraham to depart from his fatherland and his friends. Whether a man travels to distant lands or remains at home his whole life long, differs for each individual according to his karma. The Psalm is not intending to decide this question. It is concerned with who is to possess the land. It knows that in this fight for the Holy Land it

depends ultimately on the inner qualities, the inner character of the man; for this fight for the land certainly means more for the Psalm than merely a political affair. Apocalyptic horizons are already lighting up in it. So it gives the admonition, "Inhabit the land in the right way by keeping faith with the spirituality which thou servest."

And now more than ever we may realize that the Apocalyptic-eschatological background revealed in this Psalm is what gives it lasting importance and its actual quality. But then this sentence, freed from its temporal, historical limitation, reads, "Inhabit the earth in the right way. Acknowledge the fact that thou art not an inhabitant of heaven to whom the earth is strange, but—although of heavenly origin—thou hast been placed upon the earth by the wise powers of destiny. Affirm this fact! Cultivate the right loyalty to the earth and thereby serve the spiritual worlds in devotion."

This only becomes quite comprehensible from the Christian standpoint. Nietzsche had in mind a distorted Christianity escaping from the world when he uttered the warning cry, "Remain true to the earth!" The meaning of these words is only realized in connection with a rightly understood Christianity. The Christ has Himself sought out the earth. With the Resurrection He has created the germ of a transformed, spiritualized earth which is linked with heaven in a new way. "We are engaged in a mission; we are called upon to transform the earth." These words of Novalis are genuinely Christian. In the idea of transformation man keeps faith both with heaven and earth. He brings the two together so that the great apocalyptic marriage may come about. The Christian cannot simply wish "to enter" Heaven—he must bring to heaven the earthly element, purified and transformed. He cannot

merely wish to possess the earth—he must carry the spirit into it.

The 37th Psalm already indicates this standpoint. It combines fidelity to the earth with fidelity to the spirit.

II

We must not overlook the fact that the following verses, so very well known, come immediately after “Inhabit the land in true fidelity.”

*“Find thy blessedness in the Lord!
He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.
Commit thy way unto the Lord
And trust in Him. He shall bring it to pass.”*

“Delight thyself in the Lord.” The expression “state of beatitude” expresses what is meant. We are treading here on the sacred ground of the deepened inner life of the mystic. We see that the Old Testament does not merely recognize obedience to the Law. It is also aware of the inner blessedness which is vouchsafed through communion with the divine presence.

There is a deep connection underlying the fact that the transition to the petition, to the desires of the heart, is made precisely from this spiritual delight. There is a widespread idea in Christianity that in religious life it is above all a matter of requesting God for this or the other. Many people only remember God when they need something, when they want to have something, when they want to be relieved of some affliction. The Psalm stands at a very different altitude. It knows that the first essential in religion is worship, meditation, the blessedness of gazing

upon and experiencing the divine in forgetfulness of self. Only one who returns to himself again from a selfless adoration of the divine may now also utter his petitions. In the Lord's Prayer there is first the apostrophe, which rightly understood really denotes just such a sinking of oneself in the Godhead. Proceeding from this meditation are three great wishes which are not as yet related to man's earthly needs, but are wishes as it were in the interests of this Godhead—as truly "pious" wishes which are characterized by "thy"—"thy name", "thy kingdom", "thy will". Only then, cleansed and purified by what has gone before, may we come to our earthly affairs, "our daily bread".

And so the first sentence speaks of the state of beatitude which we shall find in the Lord. Then follows the second, "He shall give thee the desires of thine heart". It can then no longer be a foolish request and egoistic desire for getting something in which we should like to interest the Godhead, so that the divine only signifies a subsidiary line in the picture of our selfish plans. True prayers, worthy of being heard, come from selfless worship; only then are they really desires of the "heart". That is indeed a different thing from what one generally connects with the ordinary phrase "what thy heart desires". Only one who is touched by the experience "that thou alone delightest, such livingness, such pureness" is able to desire out of a pure heart. In the Christian prayer fulfilment is promised when it is uttered in the name of Christ. This does not mean to say that we should always precede our petition by the formula "in Christ's Name". This "in Christ's Name" much rather means that we should first completely permeate ourselves with his being. Out of this substantial uniting with him "Ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you", for then this "what ye will" has taken on a

different character; then it will truly be desire of the pure heart.

A mystical experience like this is the source of the well-known words which now follow: "Commit thy way unto the Lord" ("way" is singular in the original text). It is the way of destiny, to tread which thou hast been sent to earth by the wisdom of the higher worlds. Surrender thyself with confidence to divine guidance. The words "trust in him" (as in verse 3) are once more repeated. "He shall bring it to pass." He will do it. These words imply no invitation to passivity. Such words must not be isolated. They are preceded by "Trust in him". Do good. Inhabit the land in true fidelity. Find thy delight and blessedness in the divine. This all points to ample activity on the part of man. For even "beatitude", which is the state of finding delight in the Spirit, is something that must be sought for. With inner striving towards self-training, wrestling ever with the hindrances of an agitated and threatened existence, we must keep up a perpetual fight to free a place for it. It is only through inner activity that true and healthy tranquillity results. "Commit thy way unto the Lord. He will bring it to pass. He will do it." We only set divine intervention really in motion through our right surrender, just as in the Offertory our united giving, surrendering, precedes the Act of Transubstantiation, where the Godhead "brings it to pass" and "does it".

*"And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light,
And thy judgment as the noonday."*

Christ says, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. 13; 43.) Nothing is lost that was well and truly done, even though

it may seem at first to have no results. Nothing is squandered in a meaningless way. With all that we accomplish of real value we are building a future world. What is now an inner morality will one day become "nature". The right that was done on earth will one day quite concretely illumine a coming world just as the sun shines upon us to-day. The fact that goodness will one day be rehabilitated and honoured is the wider perspective of these words of the Psalm, passing beyond the meaning that lies in the foreground. This will come about in its most sublime form when in the future the inner light will shine forth from man and become world-light; for Christ's words of the sun-like shining of the upright, and the destiny of his disciples to be the light of the world ("Ye are the light of the world" Matt. 5; 4) cannot be understood concretely enough.

"Incline thy silence to the Lord and hope in Him."

Be still to the Lord. Keep silent to Him. Again words that let one guess at a whole world of self-training and mystic blessedness. "Let all that is in us be silent and bend most fervently before him." (Tersteegen.) Such a silence is no mere dumbness that comes from dullness and obtuseness. We must grasp this dative case correctly. Keep silence to the Lord. This silence is no brooding in oneself, it is an inner training towards the divine. We bring all else in us to rest and hold the soul, emptied of all other contents, like a chalice to the divine, so that it may enter into this emptiness and fill it. We incline the cup of our soul to the divine that it may pour in its divine life—that is the meaning of this dative.

Wide horizons are given to the Psalm by the fact that it weaves together these two themes: the inner mystic state of beatitude and interest in the great events of the world.

*"Be not inflamed against him who prospers in his way
although his acts are strangers to God.
Cease from anger, forsake wrath,
Be not inflamed; it only leads to evil.
For the evil-doers go to their downfall.
Those that wait upon the Lord
They shall inherit the land."*

We are here directly reminded of one of the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount, into the formulation of which the words of the 37th Psalm quite distinctly flow, for Christ lived in the Psalms. "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." (Matt. 5; 5.) "The meek, i.e., those who by conquering their elementary passions have become master of themselves, have attained to the meaning of the earth. The ego can only be experienced as the silent power of conscience which transforms the raw material of the soul's instincts and inclinations into calm and collected human nature." (E. Lenz.) Hence meekness is here not an inner slackness and weakness, but rather the inner conquest, the calming of the waves of the soul-ocean. The meek are those who, in the sense of Psalm 37, keep in check the soul-forces which want to dissipate themselves in fruitless heat and irritation, those who can actively restore silence in the soul. What has come about inwardly produces an effect in the world itself.

"They shall inherit the earth." The "earth" (*gē*) as it reads in the Beatitude is the very word "*erez*" in the Psalm. In the Beatitude it no longer has the narrow meaning of "the land", there it is already the earth as a whole, the earth as a world. The inner conquests and achievements of man ultimately decide the destiny of the earth-planet. Moreover the Beatitudes are immediately followed by the words: "Ye are the salt of the earth." It is a question of the earth as such.

In the end the earth will not belong to those who have only made it into an object of gain from which to obtain their pleasures and desires. Such men have nothing from the earth in the truest sense of the word. It is a basic piece of knowledge that it is just the materialist who, in a deeper sense, possesses nothing of the earth. Only one who confronts the earth in a spiritual way can inherit it and really get something out of it. For instance, a man may "own" a park without having an eye for the beauty of the trees and the green of the meadow. Another, to whom this does not belong by law, can open himself to all this beauty and take it into his heart. Which of the two inherits the park, which gets something out of it as the real owner? He who has taken it into his inner being! He carries the terrestrial, spiritually transfigured, over into the other world and saves it in his own immortality. The other only possessed it externally. When he dies he can carry nothing away from it but must let it remain. He has had nothing from his possession and over there he is an impoverished soul.

The earth as a material globe is scattered into dust. But of its true being we must carry over something into eternity. Those who would snatch and grab for themselves obtain nothing from the earth that it could actually bestow on them; they lose the earth in possessing it.

The expression "inherit the earth" which was held worthy of inclusion in the Beatitudes is continually found as a recurring verse in the 37th Psalm, in manifold forms:

Those that look to the Lord in expectation shall inherit the earth (v. 9).

The humble shall inherit the earth (v. 11).

They that are blessed of him shall inherit the earth (v. 22).

The righteous shall inherit the earth (v. 29).

We can make these four different aspects somewhat more concrete if we look at the four parts of the Act of Consecration of Man which follow each other according to the same inner law.

The first: to look towards the Lord in eagerness, in anticipation—that is the mood in which we listen to the Gospel.

The second: the humble, literally, the bowed down—these are they who are capable of sacrificial devotion to the divine.

The third: those whom he has blessed—the Transubstantiation is the great experience of blessing which, as the love from above, descends upon the earthly and transfigures it.

The fourth: the righteous—these are not the self-righteous who want to "do works before God" and display to him their deserts, but it is those into whose own being the divine righteousness is graciously poured.

One who receives the Communion in full reality becomes thereby righteous, he brings the great cosmic scales which were thrown out of balance by the Fall into equilibrium again.

The following sentence stands between the third and the fourth:

*"Depart from evil and do good.
Thou shalt dwell in eternity."* (v. 27.)

This "dwell" is something similar to the Johannine "abide". It is realized when the Resurrection body has appeared and the earth itself has been transmuted into the heavenly Jerusalem.

The theme of "earth" is concluded in the comprehensive sentence:

*"Fix thy attention upon the Lord and keep his way,
He shall exalt thee to inherit the earth."*

Keep his way, which leads thee to the earth, inwardly acquired through the humility of the Offering, through the blessing of Transubstantiation, and through the Communion of righteousness.

It is to be noted that the song of Paul Gerhardt which we spoke of at the beginning, ends with the word "heaven". "So assuredly do our ways lead to heaven." The word earth does not occur. On the other hand the word "heaven" is lacking in the Psalm and in the emphatic recapitulation the word "earth" occurs again and again. The song deals only with one aspect of the Psalm—the submissive, quiet waiting and trusting. The other theme comes off badly. The time has now come to see that just this "earth theme" gets its rights and to grasp the fact that in that particular Beatitude it is not heaven that is promised to the meek, for they already have their share in that through their meekness. It is not heaven that is set before them as their goal, but the conquest of the earth.

The Beatitude of the Meek has a certain relationship with the Beatitude of the Peaceable, literally, the peace-makers. We find something in the 37th Psalm which has a foretaste of this Beatitude too. It is in the well-known sentence, "Remain devout and keep to what is right, for with such it will go well at last." (37; 37.) The original text could be literally translated in this way:

"Preserve the right and cultivate uprightness; for a future belongs to the man of peace."

Future, in Hebrew "*acharith*"—"that which is after". As the "coming after" it means concretely the descendants, and many commentators see in this sentence only the well-known ancient Jewish high esteem given to bodily fertility. But even if the Psalmist had only meant that "the devout man has posterity whereas the posterity of the wicked perishes" (v. 38), yet something is contained in this concept which is both real and symbolic and points to something that lies still deeper.

The man of antiquity experienced the future in a concrete way in the children that were born to him; he experienced future possibilities of mankind in general. He divined that there was something beyond the mere continuity of the family. Children with all their actuality are nevertheless but an image of the fact that in the depths of his being man has a presentiment of a future. He feels how a future stirs within him that will one day come to light, that will come after, when the human form in which he now appears will have passed away. That which stirs in our depths as belonging to the future is the "Son of Man", our true human form which is maturing and which, since it is created out of the divine may likewise be called the Son of God. "The seed of God is within us." "It hath not

yet appeared what we shall be." (1 John 3; 9 and 3;2.)

When the Psalm says that the posterity of the wicked will be exterminated, that need not always be a physical reality. But the deeper truth holds good: evil is without a real future and is "humanly unfruitful". On the other hand, "A future hath the man of peace."

What promise does the Christ make to the peacemakers in his Beatitude? "For they shall be called Sons of God." The ancient world would have said—for they will acquire sons.

It is doubtless not necessary to point out that in Christianity, too, it is of course a high and holy task of man to pass on life. In the New Testament the inner application is stressed: the man of peace is to become fruitful in himself, he must increase towards his true human form as bearer of the divine forces of the future. "For they shall be called the Sons of God."

ADVENT

Psalm 24

*"To the Lord the earth and its fullness
The round world and they that dwell thereon!
For He hath established it upon the surging seas,
Above swelling floods hath he confirmed it!"*

ATERSE and majestic style is characteristic of this Psalm. "To the Lord the earth." This is primarily an assertion. The earth belongs to him. It belongs to him by right, for he has created it, has founded it in solidity. The earth was not always so hard and solid. The hardness of its rocks is not an obvious matter of course. It had quite a different physical condition in primeval ages. From a supersensible origin it advanced through fine etheric modes of existence to a density becoming ever more material. The finer the substance of which the earth once consisted, the more actively alive it still could be. Pulsed through by streams of life, breathed through by divine stirrings—that was earth's condition in primeval times. Even as rigid ice forms out of the moving water that answers each lightest breath of wind with delicate ripples, so, too, did the earth pass from flowing life to a state of rigidity in order then first to be really "earth". For its name, with deep significance, is derived from the solid element (cf. remarks to Psalm 104). Its densification has reached its limit, it can never become harder than stone. It is no longer the living Mother Earth of for-

mer days; the state of life that it once possessed as a whole is now continued in the separate living creatures. The hardening of the earth came about for the sake of man. Called to self-reliance and freedom, a man needs the hard resistance as the hammer needs the anvil, in order to be able to possess himself inwardly as an ego-being. The forming of the solid ground for man was the work of the ego-willing God.

But with the solidifying of the earth a certain possibility arose. The world was no longer filled by direct divine life and man could thus become a stranger to his heavenly origin and accessible to the inflowing of the powers of the adversary. Thus through a humanity which was increasingly making itself independent of heaven, a kingdom could gradually arise upon earth of the un-god-like, in fact of the anti-godlike. To such a degree that Christ himself described the adversary as the "Prince of this world". Had not the Tempter said in the wilderness, "All this power (*exousia*) will I give thee and all glory, for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou wilt worship me, all shall be thine." (According to the account in Luke 4; 6 and 7.) Man has made himself independent on earth, and the adversary, by way of the human beings he has drawn into his influence, tries to gain ever surer control of the earthly world and break off the whole human-terrestrial kingdom from the divine in order to make it his own. As yet he has had no final success but this whole process of gradually separating out a world estranged from God is at work. It rests with man as to whether the adversary attains his purpose or not. Divinity has appeared anew upon earth in Christ that he may, in love, win man's freedom for him, and through man reconquer earth, too, for the heavens. The Psalm only receives its full meaning through Christ. The sentence

"To the Lord the earth" is then no longer just a declaration, merely an assertion that it belongs to him. Rather is this something that must be newly brought about. The earth is to be brought back again to the divine element from which it has so largely fallen away, through those human beings who offer their worship to the true God and not to the "Prince of this world".

That the earth is no longer the property of God as ostensibly as are the heavens, is not a foreign concept to the Psalms. In Psalm 115; 16, it reads, "The heavens of the heavens (belong) to the Lord but the earth hath he given to the sons of men." These words are quoted in C. F. Meyer's novel, *Jürg Jenatsch*. On the point of betraying Duke Rohan, Jenatsch says, "He (the Duke) doesn't want to spot his pious wedding garment. Yet I too have some words of God for myself. Mine is the vault of the heavens, says the Lord—but the playground of the earth I leave to the children of men."

Against this background the first sentence of the 24th Psalm is no longer the substantiating of an undisputed fact; rather, it acquires the character of a wish. "To the Lord the earth!" then becomes a dedication, a consecration, an offering. Man, to whom the earth was given for a "playground" places again this playground of his independence at the disposal of the Godhead in freely resolved sacrifice. He will help through his surrendered offering to re-establish the kingdom of God and snatch the earthly sphere from the adversary. All sacrifices rest fundamentally upon this knowledge: the world is God's from the beginning, it belongs to him, and yet again it does not belong to him; I use my human freedom to make him again the full possessor of his own possession in that I bring him his own as an offering.

Here the Psalm seems to make a direct break and to turn to a completely different subject with no real transition. But the spiritual bond of unity lies in the unspoken. If we see a dedicated offering in the sentence, "To the Lord the earth!" it assumes that the earth no longer belongs as a matter of course to the kingdom of God and this means the Fall of Man has taken place. The human being, filled with longing, strives once more towards the divine from his fallen state. The second part of the Psalm speaks of this striving:

*"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?
Who shall stand in his holy place?"*

All "exaltations" of man to God were originally partial overcomings of the Fall. The mountains soar upwards as symbol of "exalted human states". Such mountains as helped the man who ascended them to these exalted states were the holy mounts, the mounts of God of which all religions are aware. Thus Moses was able to meet God on the holy mount and receive his revelation. Similar solitary great individuals were the teachers of pupils who sought their guidance to leave lower things behind and ascend to the "hill of God" and the "dwellings" of God to be found there. "This is the generation of them that ask for him, that seek thy face, thou God of Jacob." (v. 6.) Psalm 73 uses the expression "the generation of thy sons" and in a similar way it speaks here of the generation of those that seek God's countenance. These men form together something like an Order. They are in reality an invisible community spread over the earth, a com-

munio sanctorum. Since the place of his holiness is on the heights of the holy mount, the man who will lift himself to this experience must satisfy certain conditions, must be purified in thoughts, words and deeds. It is not enough to find the strength to ascend. Having reached the heights man must now also be able to "stand" before God's face—which means, however, with-stand, endure. Without the previous purification, he must needs be reduced to nought before the divine, he could not maintain his own consciousness. It is only "in Christ" that man will be able fully to maintain his transmuted, Christ-permeated ego in the divine world. He then possesses an ego-consciousness not only when he lives on earth in the isolated cell of the material body, but he may also carry it into an existence as "spirit among spirits".

The question, "Who shall ascend . . . ?" has a parallel in the 15th Psalm. It says there, "Lord, who shall be guest in thy tent? Who shall dwell on the hill of thy holiness?" "Tent"—one should remember the tabernacles, the "tent of his presence"—is the expression for the direct, almost to be sensed as "densified", presence of God. With the "being guest" is connected the being fed "at the table of the Lord", the mystery of the Communion, and the "dwell" corresponds to the Johannine "abide". That is more still than the temporary state of being a guest. The man who dwells on the holy hill (Peter speaks on the Mount of the Transfiguration of building tabernacles) has now again become a citizen of the higher worlds. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of this (12; 22): "Ye have found entry to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the fully assembled church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, to God the Judge of All, to the Spirits of just men made perfect,

and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant. . . ."

In this questioning and answering theological commentators have rightly glimpsed an echo of the ancient ritual of question and answer at the portals of the sanctuaries. The Priest as "guardian of the threshold" gave such answers to one who came to a temple and desired admittance. In such ritualistic usage we may see the shadow thrown by the actual procedure in the Mysteries. The answer to the question, "Who shall ascend . . . ?" runs:

*"He that hath clean hands and a pure heart,
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity nor sworn
deceitfully,
He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
This is the generation of them that ask for him
That seek thy face, O God of Jacob."*

He who satisfied the demands and is pure in thoughts, words and deeds (pure heart, no deceit, clean hands) shall obtain the blessing and the righteousness. This blessing is the love from above that crowns the aspirations striving up from below. The efforts for purification are answered by the ray of grace from above, even as the Transubstantiation follows the Offering. The "righteousness" here is obviously not an expression of the purity of his being, the moral qualities which are already brought with him by the one who enters the sanctuary. It must be present to a certain degree, but it is always something that is incomplete, awaiting completion through the love from above. The "righteousness" here is the grace-filled endowment with the very being of goodness. Experiences of purification, of "*catharsis*" in the sense of the mysteries, the Offering in the Act of Consecration conceal themselves in

the challenging words of the stern Guardian of the Threshold. Experiences of the Transubstantiation and the Communion are the content which we may now, from the Christian realization, give to the words "blessing" and "righteousness" as they occur here in the Psalm.

A particular note is sounded in the words, "the generation of those that seek God's face", coming as they do at the end of the second part of Psalm 24. He who has found the way to the holy hill and its gifts of grace, no longer stands alone but knows that he now belongs to a spiritual community. The old communities were formed through ties of blood, determined through the body. To "ask" after the divine and to seek God's face—that places one in a new community, which has its bond of union in the spirit.

The Psalm is still restricted to the God of Jacob. But that does not prevent us, in the manner of the early Christians, from thinking of the "true Israel" of the Christian Church, which was built on the twelvehood of the Apostles and was to include men stamped with the impress of manifold stars. We may remember, too, that the God of Jacob is the God who revealed himself in the sublime hierarchy-dream where the angels ascend and descend on the heavenly ladder, and in the prayer at the wrestling scene by the ford ("I will not let thee go except thou bless me").

The dream was dreamed at Beth-el (House of God), the fight was fought at Peniel (Countenance of God). Our Psalm has as its theme the finding of the way to the house and to the countenance of God.

III

The concluding part now follows, and again with no apparent transition:

*"Lift up your heads, O ye gates!
Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors!
The King of glory shall come in.
Who is the King of glory?
It is the Lord, a mighty hero,
The Lord mighty in battle."*

Commentators see in these verses a festival liturgy, perhaps an alternating chant of two choirs at the solemn reception of the Ark of the Covenant returning from victorious battle. That may have been the historical motive for the composition of the Psalm. A more far-reaching truth, however, is expressed in it.

The Psalm celebrates the entry of the approaching God. An important apocalyptic motif is thus introduced. How can the God "come"? Is he not already the omnipresent, filling all things? How then can he come when he is already there? Or is he perhaps after all not completely there, on the earth?

What we have said already about the first part of the Psalm gives the key to this problem. We saw that the earthly realm no longer belongs unequivocally to the divine. That was, of course, not to imply that God is not present on earth. He is everywhere. But there is something like differences of intensity, degrees of his presence. This presence of God is, so to speak, "more condensed" in the heavenly sanctuaries of the upper world than on earth. Where a crime is committed, for instance, God in a certain sense is not there; for if he were completely present no thought of a crime could ever arise. "The earth hath he given to men", he has to a certain degree left it and deprived it of his full presence in order that man might have space for his freedom. Such an assumption makes it possible to speak of a "coming of God".

This re-entering of God into the earthly sphere already fallen into the possession of the Prince of this world, began with the appearance of Christ. This appearance was of a special nature, occurring in such a way as not to impinge on man's freedom. The Cross is the mystery of the "impotent God" who unfolds, however, precisely through renouncing the power of compulsion, a "might" of another order, through the love-power of his sacrifice. The power issuing from the Mystery of Golgotha does not bring about redemption in an automatic fashion. Men are not redeemed through it whether they will or no. In every instance man must set his redemption in motion through his free "yes"; in other words, for redemption to become active the "faith" of man is required. The gradual re-entering of the divine into the earthly world begins in the sphere of growing Christendom. It is a process that has its halting-places. The "coming" began with the becoming-Man of Christ. It continues with the becoming-Christian of mankind. From our century onwards men are gradually to become capable of beholding the Christ in his etheric Light-form. He himself gave the promise that he will come again in majesty, in *gloria*—that is to say, in the radiant etheric light. This coming is an ever-increasing realization of the presence of Christ on earth which was established through Golgotha. This presence becomes "denser" and more to be felt, until finally it is directly perceived supersensibly. This "second coming" in the supersensible etheric world (in the clouds of heaven) which begins gradually and comes to realisation through long epochs of time, brings with it a judgment. As the reality of Christ becomes increasingly undeniable and evident, it places men more and more seriously before the question as to what use they will now make of their freedom, whether they will react to the Christ with "Yes" or "No",

whether they will serve Him or the Prince of this world.

This coming of God into the earth world is already divined in the Old Testament. There is a series of seven Psalms which all centre round the theme of the re-established kingdom of Jahve (47, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99): "the Lord has become King". That the divine prevails again in the realm of the earth is proclaimed in prophetic anticipation. So it reads in Psalm 95, "O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord. . . . To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart. . . ." Psalm 96 begins with the apocalyptic motive of the "new Song" (cf. Rev. 5; 9 and 14; 3). "Sing unto the Lord a new song . . . say among the peoples: the Lord has become King." All creation rejoices with him in union with the higher worlds: "Let the heavens rejoice, the earth be glad. Let the sea roar and the fullness thereof. Let the field be joyful and all its creatures. May all the trees of the wood exult before the face of the Lord; for he cometh, he cometh to judge the earth. . . ." The sentence "*Jahve malakh*" which is to be found in all these seven Psalms, does not mean "The Lord reigneth" but "He has become King". It is not a matter of expressing something that has always been there. It means rather a changing of the world situation which shall bring a completely new turning point and is prophetically represented as having already entered. Theological commentators have supposed a festival celebrating Jahve's mounting of the throne at which these Psalms would have been sung. That is possible, but then this feast would in fact have had an apocalyptic character of prophetic anticipation and the farther-reaching significance of the truth of these Psalms would suffer no injury through it.

In the Book of Revelation these words stand: "The

kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev. 11; 15—at the sounding of the seventh trumpet). And the Elders fall down before the throne and say, "We give thee thanks . . . because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast become king." All this has only a meaning within the framework of a mighty world-drama which has for its purport the calling in question of God's rulership on earth and its re-establishment. The time has come to recognize that this world-drama is not the mythology of childish peoples, but the only possible interpretation of the actually existing world-reality.

It is only with this train of thought that we are in a position to do justice to the 24th Psalm.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates!" (Thus literally in the original.) The gate presupposes a dividing wall. The higher world is separated as if by a wall from the hardening earthly sphere, shutting itself into itself. And therefore we are not immediately able to "see" and "enter" the kingdom of God (John 3; 3 and 5). But here, too, there are gates through which the separated spheres may yet come into a united relationship. One speaks of the "gate of birth" and the "gate of death", where the threshold is crossed both hither and thither. So the Psalm speaks here of the portals of eternity. One must perhaps reproduce the Hebrew "*pitheche olām*" quite exactly with "primeval, æon-old portals". That would not change the sense, for the entrances to the higher worlds can be compared to age-old temple portals; one knew of them since the beginning of Initiation Centres reaching back into the hoary past. These doors, which mediate between the two worlds, are to lift themselves up—it is as if a lofty figure wishes now to pass through them. The King of Glory, "*kābôd*"—this word already met us in the nature-Psalms.

The king of splendour of manifestation, of the ether-light. The "king"—in the symbology of the cult—was the earthly representative of the divine "I-Am", which is the prototype of all royal bearing and dignity. "Thou sayest that I am a king" (John 18; 37). The king of glory who will draw into our earthly realm through the portal of eternity—that is the Old Testament's prophecy of the coming Christ.

The proclamation of his coming is answered by the question, "Who is the King of Glory?" The question had to arise for the clarifying of man's consciousness. It is a matter of discerning the spirits. Lucifer, too, can show himself as an angel of light. There is an old phrase—"*Christus verus luciferus*"—Christ is the true Lightbearer. That which is glittering, illusory light in the case of Lucifer is with the Christ the Light of Life (John 18; 12). The search for discriminative knowledge lies in the question. The Psalm indeed spoke already of the generation of those who "ask" concerning him.

In response to the question the voice proclaims: "It is the Lord, a mighty hero, a hero of battle." The Lord, who speaks the I-Am. A hero of battle? Are we not here still involved in old Israelitish times when one hoped for victory in battle for Jahve? The Psalmist may, in the first place, have meant this in this old sense. But that does not hinder us from releasing the abiding truth from this historically conditioned encasing. Christ is assuredly not a fighter in the sense of an external unfolding of power to overpower others. Indeed he even appears as the "impotent God". He would allow no consuming fire to come down upon the inhospitable village of the Samaritans (Luke 9; 54). He lets the adversaries scoff: "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." But in all his powerlessness he waits for man to recognize through

it all his mightiness of another order, which works in fact in the offering of love, in the "white magic" of love. That is the nature of his fight against the Prince of this world. He does not fight in the way in which fighting could formerly alone be conceived. He says to Peter, "Put up thy sword into the sheath." And yet he is in the highest sense a fighter, a "hero of the battle". He confronts the brutal "might of the adversary" who uses compulsory powers with the "saving power" of his Love-Offering. The confronting of these two powers is the greatest fight in existence. All other conflicts are but allegory. "Powerful and strong is he who was born at Christmas", sings an old song. So, rightly understood, the Christ is after all the great fighter, the great Sun-hero. In St. John's Gospel he sums up his work in these words: "I have overcome the world." (*Nenikēka*; "*nike*"—the victory.) This word "overcome" occurs right through the Apocalypse. "Even as I also overcame . . ." (3; 21). "Behold the Lion hath prevailed . . . and I beheld and lo, a Lamb . . ." (5; 5 and 6). He is the Sun-hero, the Lion, but in the figure of the Lamb which sacrifices itself. In the First Epistle of John, the Apostle of Love summarises the work of Christ in the monumental words, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3; 8.) And in the Creed we say, "Then he overcame death . . ."

What follows, therefore, has its full justification, "It is the Lord, a mighty hero, a hero of the fight".

The knowledge of the Coming One cannot be assimilated with a single proclamation, so it is again repeated as question and answer:

*"Lift up your heads, O ye Gates!
Be ye lift up, ye portals of eternity!*

*The King of Glory shall come in.
Who is this, the king of glory?
It is the Lord of Hosts
He is the King of Glory!"*

We notice a slight alteration in this repetition. This time it does not say "a mighty hero, a hero of the fight" but "the Lord of Hosts". The returning Christ who becomes manifest in the ether-light at the same time brings with him a new knowledge of the concrete supersensible worlds in all their manifoldness. The consciousness of man widens again into the supersensible. Together with the Christ the kingdoms of the angels, of the hierarchies, enter again into perceptive consciousness. This is plainly expressed by Christ in his promise of returning, ". . . when he (the Son of Man) shall come in his own light of revelation (*Doxa, Gloria*) and in that of the Father and of the holy angels" (Luke 9; 26). "But when the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all angels with him . . ." (Matt. 25; 31.) In the words, "Ye shall see the heavens open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John 1; 51). Christ promises the return of Jacob's dream of the heavenly ladder in the form of a new beholding of the angelic worlds.

Twice does Psalm 24 make the announcement of the Coming One. In cases of Hebrew poetic parallelism the same thing is often repeated twice or more in different words and, as we have it here, the second time can show a slight change of meaning and an advancement. The first time it is "the hero of the fight". This is fulfilled above all through the Deed of Golgotha, the overcoming of death, as it is called in the Act of Consecration. The second time it is "the Lord of Hosts" (*Sabaoth*). This second wording is true especially for the second coming in the etheric light

which is accompanied by a new revelation of the angelic hierarchies. As indeed Anthroposophy, which proclaims the return of Christ in the etheric world, brings at the same time a new definite knowledge, in keeping with our age, of the nine angelic orders.

We can now review the whole Psalm. It consists of three parts apparently disconnected. Part I speaks of the establishing of solid earth—which presumes the human problem at the same time, though this is not expressly stated. But it rests already in the dedication “to the Lord the earth”. Part II speaks of man become estranged from God and his striving to reach again the holy heights of the Godhead. “Who shall ascend to thy holy hill?” Part III is filled by what comes from above to meet the striving man. If in Part II the movement went from man to God, Part III is ruled by the powerful movement of God towards man which at the same time is a new approach of the hierarchies to man, as a consequence of the Divine Deed. Man’s search for God meets the divine search for man. Thus the interconnection of the three different parts is brought about as if from a hidden core.

If it reads at the beginning, “To the Lord the earth and the fullness thereof!” its answer is found at the end in the proclaiming of the Lord who is on the way to man together with the hosts of heaven (*Sabaoth*).

In Psalm 8, which we considered first of all, the question arose, “What is man?” This question finds a complement in the apocalyptic question regarding the coming of Christ, “Who is the King of Glory?”

