

The Birth of the True Self in the Human Being

The Message of Jesus for Our Time
in the Gospel of Luke

Konrad Dietzfelbinger

Translated from German

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Die Geburt des wahren Selbst im Menschen – Die Botschaft Jesu für unsere Zeit im Lukasevangelium

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Cover picture: “Christ Pantocrator,” encaustic on panel, St. Catherine’s Monastery, Egypt

“This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many..., and
to be a sign that will be opposed ...”

(Luke 2:34, NRSV)

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Introduction

Who Was Jesus?

In the course of time, countless answers have been given to the question of who Jesus was. He has been counted as a revolutionary, as a great ethical teacher, and as a representative of a trend friendly towards women in a patriarchal society. Some saw him as psychically and mentally ill; others believed and believe in him as the Son of God, at the same time human and divine. For them he was a man filled with divine mildness and great tolerance; the man of sorrows, but also the divine victor who overcame death; the redeemer; the good shepherd, who on assignment by God, his father, voluntarily and as a substitute for other human beings took the wrath of God upon himself and thereby redeemed them from the wrath of God. Artistic representations render these interpretations: the divine, innocent child on Mary's lap; the mild, compassionate shepherd; the tortured on the cross; the most noble, beautiful human being; and the imperial world judge.

But still all these interpretations do not do justice to Jesus, if one looks more closely at the text of the gospels. In Luke is written, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed ..." (Luke 2:34, NRSV). From this follows that Jesus was seen by the evangelist Luke—and he spoke here also in the sense of the other evangelists—as the great and generally valid standard against which all persons ("Israel" stands here for humanity) are measured and can measure themselves. He represents a type of person, a prototype, who signifies the fulfillment of being human. He is the realization of a possibility inherent in every person: the fulfillment of the purpose of humanity. Those who are directed to this possibility will grow towards their purpose—and "rise." Those who are not directed to it and choose other standards for their life will not correspond to their purpose—and "fall."

Can this possibility of fulfillment embodied by Jesus be characterized? The gospels are a description of this possibility. They describe it by means of the words and deeds of Jesus. It belongs to a spiritual dimension, the "kingdom of God," in which other laws govern than in the ordinary world. People living in this

dimension are free of the motives that determine the ordinary life: free of ambition, hunger for power, and striving for possessions, but also free of the striving for possibly great humility, virtue, and piety. They are free from setting idealistic goals in the realm of art, science, religion, and politics, but also free of hopes for an eternal life for mortals in the beyond.

Such people rest in the forces and structures of the spiritual world, the kingdom of God. They are filled by these forces and *are* love, power, goodness, freedom, and justice. They do not need to strive for these values. They do not need to cling to any scientific or dogmatic world conception, for they *experience* the spiritual world of which they are part. The laws of the transitory world are also revealed to them there.

This possibility of fulfillment, inherent in all people but hidden to them because they are generally totally captured by their egocentric motives and ideas, is embodied in Jesus in full development. Jesus develops it in the course of his life, and the gospels are representations of this development.

Jesus as the embodiment of the true self that is waiting to be born in everyone provokes the altercation with this possibility. It wants to become conscious and to be realized, but through countless prejudices, people do not recognize it and bring to the altercation with it only these prejudices: "... so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed." One only needs to look at the pictures of Jesus of so many artists, which express exactly these prejudices. Divine mildness is not soft sympathy but the flowing forth of a mighty spiritual power that fills the true self and allows it to see through, understand, and endure all the imperfections of the world. Divine endurance is not a slavish submission to the dictates of a tyrannical God or a moral effort to forgive others. The true self is love and therefore cannot experience any retribution, revenge, or violence. This love is like water that nourishes and sustains everything. Divine judgment is no triumph of being right, reward or punishment, but the influence of the spiritual law that is inherent in every human being. That which agrees with it remains eternally; that which does not agree with it perishes: a resurrection or a fall. This absence of all motives and prejudices, the still, unshakable tranquility resulting from this, and the spiritual power, consequence, and intelligence active in this tranquility, artists should bring these to expression in Jesus' face. With this they would have grasped his essence, which is also the hidden

essence of every person: the true self, which is usually overlaid and hindered in its consciousness and influence by the small, humble ego or the proud, noble ego.

What Is the “Kingdom of God”?

What was and is the kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed? To this question, the most various answers have been given. The Gospel of Luke answers, “... the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21, KJV). It is the state of a person who has realized the true self and the state of a community of persons who are realizing their true selves. For the true self is the absence of all egocentric motives and at the same time the presence of the spiritual world that has become conscious and active in the person. This consciousness encompasses all things and beings. It recognizes the structure of the imperishable world and is filled by its forces. It recognizes from this perspective also the structure and essence of the transient world. A person with such a state of consciousness can say, “All things have been handed over to me by my Father [the spirit]; and no one knows ... who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Luke 10:22, NRSV). In such a state of an individual or a community, it is not a matter of short-lived ecstasies and euphoria. It is a structural matter. The true self, a reality normally unconscious, has taken form as life and consciousness. It is a consciousness and being without egocentricity or a drive for self-maintenance; it is a pure execution of the laws and forces of the spiritual world. It is the true, limitless identity of the human being in contrast to the limited ego-identity that is tied to the drives for power, self-importance, and possessions, and the drive for self-maintenance of the physical body.

All social and political relationships, even the best organized, build on mortal human beings with their limited possibilities and motives. The kingdom of God, however, is the expression of the true self of the human being and a corresponding community. The true self means absence of every striving for power, self-importance, and possessions. Thus, the kingdom of God stands outside every social and political organization that rests on human drives for power, self-importance, and possessions.

Then what did Jesus want? Paradoxically one would have to say that he *wanted* nothing. For wanting is an articulation of the striving for power, self-importance, and possessions, for

happiness, security, and self-realization. The true self does not have these motives. It is especially characterized by their absence. It is a state of not-wanting in relation to all the goals of the ego. The activity of the true self is the execution of a necessity. It is the expression of a consciously recognized lawfulness, an expression of the structure and forces of the spiritual world. Therefore, Jesus' actions are of a quiet, irresistible consistency. A higher "will" has taken form in him and acts through him. Thus, Jesus says in Gethsemane, "Father ... not my will but yours be done" (Luke 22:42, NRSV). "My" will: the striving for power, success, happiness, and possessions is no longer present. It was dissolved in the course of life and replaced by the "will" of the Father. The "will" of the Father is the inner lawfulness of the true self that Jesus admits into himself and allows to work. He does not submit to any authority outside his being but listens to his inmost essence, which is identical with the laws of the spiritual world.

Why was Jesus active among human beings? "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" (Luke 12:49, NRSV). Did he have motives after all? The state of the person determined by ordinary motives is the state of the suppression of the true self, the state of an imbalance. The fire of the spirit in the human being still glimmers weakly under the thick layer of ash of egocentricity. This is a secret pain in the person, a pain in humanity, a secret pain in the universe. This pain is striving to dissolve itself. The imbalance tends towards balance, to the state of the true self in which the fire of the spirit again burns inside and determines activities instead of the egocentric motives doing so. The purpose of the person, humanity, and the world is to live out of the structure and force of the spiritual world. As long as they do not fulfill this purpose, a secret unrest and force work in them in the direction of this purpose.

In Jesus, this imbalance was removed. The purpose of the human being was fulfilled in him. But because he was a part of humanity, his true self suffered from the imbalance that was in other human beings. It was necessary that the fire burning in him kindle again the extinguished fire of the spirit in others and liberate their true selves. No imbalance in nature can maintain itself in the long run. The tensions will one day lead to the reversal of the incorrect circumstances. The fire in Jesus urged towards this reestablishment of balance, to the fulfillment of the purpose of all human beings. He worked together with this fire. He fulfilled

this necessity.

“For the Son of Man came to seek out and save the lost” (Luke 19:10, NRSV). That which is lost is the true self that has wasted away under egocentricity, the almost extinguished fire under the ashes. Those in whom this fire burns again can kindle the fire in others alone by their presence. Thus their true selves seek the true selves of others under their egocentricity, kindle the fire, and save the lost. This follows out of necessity from the circumstances. Whoever recognizes the folly of the present circumstances will cooperate in removing this folly.

The Influence of Jesus

After many misunderstandings, Jesus’ pupils gradually recognized the structure and power of the kingdom of God and realized it as their true identity. Jesus became for them the cause for rising. For his opponents he became the cause for a fall. They misunderstood the kingdom of God as paradise on earth, as ideal political and social circumstances. They therefore understood Jesus as a threat to their theological and political possessions and killed him driven by their egocentric motives.

Jesus unfolded the true identity of the human being and dissolved the ego-identity in his own being. In him the fire of the spirit came into the world and aroused positive and negative reactions. When his inner process of change, the dismantling of ego-identity and the building up of the true identity, came to an end, the reactions of the environment also reached their culmination. The fire was kindled and anchored in his pupils. In his opponents, it called forth inextinguishable hate that led to Jesus’ execution.

This execution was also a necessary part of the events, and Jesus accepted this necessity. How could he have opposed it, as the state of the true self is characterized by the absence of the striving for power, importance, and possessions and therefore by the absence of every necessity to defend any possible possessions? The reality of such an inner constitution shows itself above all in a life-threatening situation. Jesus’ behavior before his opponents was not weak yielding, not enraptured martyrdom, nor humble submission to a higher power. It followed from his conscious unity with the kingdom of God, which could no longer be disturbed by earthly motives. If Jesus had reacted in defense against imprisonment and execution, then he would have lost the unity with the spiritual world at the same moment. But he remained in

the unity—and did not defend himself.

Exactly because he maintained this state, decisive effects could also reach his opponents. Whoever tries to influence such a state in hostility thereby irrevocably admits such a state and becomes infected by it. In this way the spiritual world stamped its traces also into the souls of his opponents. The true self of the human being had shown itself to them. It became a fall for them, as they reacted negatively to it. From now on the picture working in them of the true identity would more and more remove the ground from under their ego-identity. In the long run, they would thereby also be able to come to a positive reaction, to the resurrection of the true self.

Thus Jesus anchored the possibility of the birth of the true self in the soul organism of humanity. He enkindled the fire of the spirit in his pupils who reacted positively to him. He bequeathed to his opponents, who reacted negatively to him, the inextinguishable traces of the true identity of the human being, which would in the long run also enkindle the fire of the spirit in them. Thereby a process was set in motion, at the end of which could be the birth of the true self in all cells of this organism, the fulfillment of the purpose of all of humanity. One cell, the central one, functions in a different way. It anchors this function in the whole organism. Even when its physical existence is extinguished, its new structure continues to work as information in its friends and in its opponents.

According to the declarations of the Gospel, this is all possible because Jesus' true self was connected with the kingdom of God in a special way from the beginning. As in John the Baptist, who was "even before his birth" "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:15, NRSV), the "holy spirit," the power of the spiritual world, also worked in Jesus from birth. After some time he was "anointed" with this power, that is, he became conscious of it and could use it consciously. He was the "Anointed" with the powers of the divine world, the "Christ," who could go his spiritual path in these powers and work in the world as a pattern on which the spirits divided.

Christianity—a Spiritual Path

The permeation of the person with the spirit, the "kingdom of God," the dissolution of the old egocentric structures, and the birth of new structures from the spirit—this is the redemption of

the person from the rule of matter over the spirit. Redemption is therefore nothing other than the spiritual path. Every person who wants to be redeemed—in other words, who wants to bring the true self to birth within—has to go a spiritual path. Redemption is not an intervention from the outside, but a revolution from within aroused and carried out by the “kingdom of God” that begins to work in the person. The redemption of humanity is not a one-time historical act carried out by Jesus. Redemption is an ever-repeating process, the soul-spiritual lawfulness of a timeless path that must be walked ever again, by ever new people. Although Jesus himself lived the spiritual path, redemption, as an example, this does not mean that thereby his pupils were then or human beings today are already redeemed. They had and have to live redemption themselves by going the spiritual path that was lived exemplarily and cleared by Jesus.

Ordinary persons who want to achieve redemption cannot produce the necessary forces themselves. They need the help of others who went ahead of them on this path. Jesus went the spiritual path connected in a special way with the spiritual world and therefore was endowed with special spiritual powers. He thereby forged a path on which others could follow him.

Every psychic, spiritual, and material deed executed by a human being continues to have an effect in the soul-spiritual organism of humanity. All people are connected psychically and spiritually, which is why effects are carried from every individual to all others. The more so is this the case when such a deed—for example, the spiritual path completed by Jesus—is carried out with the help of mighty spiritual powers. Also, people who went this path in the centuries after Jesus again actualized the path and cleared it of obstructions. If it had not been so, it would have been distorted past recognition. The pattern of the spiritual path has been stamped ever anew through the centuries according to the respective circumstances. It is also stamped in the present in new forms and can therefore be gone by everyone who is receptive and prepared for it.

Therefore it is clear that redemption on the one hand means independent, inner soul work, but on the other also dependence on forces that enable this soul work and that cannot be produced by people themselves. The spiritual path is “self-redemption” as well as “redemption through others.” It is “self-redemption” because individuals go the path in self-responsibility and by their

own decision. It is “redemption through others” because they can only go the path by opening to the powers of the spirit and allowing them to work in them.

Luke himself wrote in his Acts of the Apostles various times of the “way” of the Christians (for example, Acts 19:9, NRSV: “When some stubbornly refused to believe and spoke evil of the Way before the congregation” or Acts 24:14, NRSV: “according to the Way, which they call a sect”). This “way” does not mean the same as systematic methods by which some strive for their own redemption, the birth of the true self, under their own direction. It is a series of inner states that follow one another organically when individuals open themselves to the spiritual forces and consciously work with them. It is the spontaneous reaction of individuals to the spiritual forces, which become active as new insights, feelings, impulses, and actions and which change them from the ground up. Their own accomplishment thereby is the conscious cooperation with the spiritual forces and the conscious acceptance of the dissolution of egocentricity that opposes the spirit. But they are only capable of accomplishing this because the spiritual forces enable them to.

Christianity is therefore a path, not a belief in the historical deeds of a son of God, which redeemed humanity once and for all. When Jesus’ pupils “believed” in him, then this meant that they recognized him as someone in whom the state of the “kingdom of God,” the true self, was realized; that they felt that this state was also their purpose; and that they opened themselves to this possibility. It did not mean that they felt redeemed by Jesus’ death and resurrection. In their first meetings with Jesus, these events in any case still lay in the future. Faith was for them the beginning of the spiritual path that Jesus enabled but which they still had to walk on their own. With what difficulties and with what “failures” they walked this path becomes quite clear in the Gospel of Luke. They were not redeemed from the beginning by a faith in deeds of salvation. They had to realize their redemption themselves through a problematical spiritual path in the powers of the Redeemer.

Neither is it true today that the “faith” in a redeemer and the supposed redemption carried out about 2000 years ago would redeem humanity. Faith in the sense of accepting certain historical facts and their significance for humanity as true is not redemptive. If faith has significance for redemption—and it has an eminent

significance for it—then it is only in the sense of openness for the possibility and necessity of the spiritual path.

Faith is an inner clarity that the purpose of human beings is a totally different life than the one they presently lives. Faith is furthermore the courage to go on such a spiritual path. It is the motive power, the longing and determination, that holds the pupils to the path and lets them overcome all obstacles. They are nourished by the example and the power of others who have gone this way and whose new characteristics tangibly represent the life as a citizen of the “kingdom of God.” This means faith in Jesus: the feeling or recognition that in this person something manifested in a prototypical way, which is also one’s own purpose. From this feeling comes the power to also go the path.

Redemption in the sense of the Gospel of Luke is growth of the “kingdom of God,” the birth of the true self, within the human being, a complete, radical renewal, not in the form of a conversion to a “faith,” but through the walking of the spiritual path. Redemption as a path, as a consequence of soul-spiritual changes, has to begin already before death and can lead to the birth of the true self before death, which is why Jesus said, “But truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:27, NRSV). Those in whom the conditions for entry into the kingdom of God are fulfilled through the spiritual path can already see and experience the kingdom of God in life.

Position of the Modern Reader

When readers of the Gospel of Luke have recognized what the text actually says, they will stand before the question of whether they should accept the world conception of the gospel as true, should make it their own, and accept the resulting consequences.

Depending on their biography, modern human beings face special difficulties with this. The opponents of Jesus of that time were after all convinced of the existence of the “kingdom of God,” the dimension of the spirit. They lived with the self-evident background of the Old Testament and waited for an “anointed one,” a “messiah” from the kingdom of God. Their problem was only whether Jesus was this “anointed one” and embodied the kingdom of God or not. Some, Jesus’ pupils, recognized him step-by-step as an embodiment of the true self and followed him.

Others did not recognize him—either because they really had another idea of the messiah and his kingdom or because they quite suspected the truth about Jesus but did not want to bow to its demands. This would have meant a declaration of bankruptcy of their former life and the loss of their privileges.

Today's materialistic human beings do not possess this conviction of a dimension of the spirit. They first have to occupy themselves with the question of whether there even is such a dimension. Acquainted with scientific thinking, they could at least accept it as a hypothesis, however. Then it will not be difficult for them to understand the statements of the gospel about this dimension and its effects and claims. And perhaps its lawful, timeless effects as they are described in the gospel convince them of its existence and the justification of its claims.

Those brought up in a Christian church have it more difficult than the contemporary materialistic person. True, they believe in a higher world, in God, in Jesus, in the resurrection, in redemption—but they have often not thought about what they believe. They have taken up a tradition without question. They read the gospels with the background of this tradition and quickly stop to question when something does not fit this background. Regarded superficially, the statements of the gospels seem to agree with the conception of the believers that God is a person and their “father,” that Jesus is the bodily son of this father, and that Jesus has redeemed sinners through his death and resurrection.

But in no way do they agree. The exact reading of the gospels brings totally different circumstances to light. To recognize this creates enormous difficulties for believers because the traditions are rooted so deeply and have the authority of institutions and centuries. The readers of the gospels who are seeking for truth will nevertheless have to change their habits. The gospels represent Jesus, the kingdom of God, and the influence of Jesus differently than what they are used to. Their task is to look at what is actually written in the gospels without prejudice and then to decide if they want to follow its declarations or not.

The modern materialists face the difficulty of having to set aside their materialistic world conception when they want to understand the gospels. The modern believers face the difficulty of setting aside their old habits of seeing and of beginning to see in a new way what is said in the gospels. Both can then test if the statements in the gospels are true. For the gospels make this

demand: They invite us to test if they are true; indeed, as “good message”—that is the translation of “euangelion”—they even claim to show humanity a way to the solution of its difficulties and to life fulfillment. This solution does not consist of the salvation through an outer redeemer, however, but of the following in Jesus’ footsteps. “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23, NRSV). The gospels in no wise claim to be the only texts that describe this way. And when Jesus says in the Gospel of John, “Nobody comes to the Father but through me,” then he means thereby: Nobody will enter the kingdom of God, unless they find themselves in the same state as I, in harmony with my state—namely the conscious unfolding of the true self—and go the same way as I; I enable their state and way by having realized them myself.

Relationship of Christianity to Other Religions

Many others have gone this path already, not just within Christianity, for a timeless pattern of soul-spiritual lawfulness can always and everywhere express itself. Every such expression is time-bound, however, and therefore unique. Certain historical personalities or groups are carriers of the lawful events, and these occur in unique historical circumstances. The symbols used by those concerned to describe their experiences are adapted to the historical conditions. The *one* soul-spiritual lawfulness of the spiritual path is expressed in the different religions. Regarded purely with the senses, from without, it is sometimes difficult if not impossible to recognize that their often very different symbols and historical garments are only hints to one and the same soul-spiritual reality and experience.

When, for example, Gautama Buddha is enlightened and sends out shining rays that also enlighten others, then for the eyes of the senses, this seems to be something completely different than Jesus’ transfiguration on the mountain. For the spiritual eye, however, which recognizes soul-spiritual facts in outer events that are empirically perceptible, what is happening is the same. As with Siddhartha Gautama, Jesus’ thoughts, feelings, and will impulses, in Luke called the “garment” (of the soul), were transmuted, renewed through and through, and brought into movement by the spirit so that his “garment” became “shining white.” His thoughts,

feelings, and his will, along with his new consciousness, his “face,” radiated the spiritual forces to the outside. When Buddha speaks of “nirvana,” this is a symbol for a reality: a soul state free of the darkening of egocentric thoughts, feelings, and will impulses; a state that is in harmony with the spiritual world and reflects its forces and rays. Jesus’ “kingdom of God” describes this reality in a similar symbolic way.

Seen from without, it is a matter of difference, and ever and again theologians of all religions try to assert a difference at all costs between what is described by the symbols in order to emphasize the uniqueness of their religion. In regard to its original core, no religion is unique, and the two symbols “nirvana” and “kingdom of God” describe the same soul-spiritual reality and experience when seen with the inner eye. It would be surprising if the representatives of the one humanity who approach the highest spiritual reality, are permeated by it, and testify of it would have completely different experiences. The “Tao” of Lao Tse, for example, or the “En Soph” of the Cabbalists would then describe still different experiences. No, all these expressions are symbols for one and the same experience, one and the same reality to which humanity with its various cultures and peoples stands in relation.

Nevertheless, there are also differences between the religions in a soul-spiritual sense. For a soul-spiritual lawfulness or fact tends to manifest more or less completely depending on the state of development of the person and the culture in which it becomes active. The kingdom of God reveals itself layer by layer, so to speak, depending on a person’s ability to comprehend. At first the spirit just lights up in the religious experience; later it manifests in its totality. The spiritual path that Jesus walked had the goal to change the whole human being, including the material body, by the forces of the spirit. The “transfiguration” showed that thoughts, feelings, and will, the finer aspects of the human being, were already permeated and irradiated by the spirit. After this, the last step began, however: The essence of the material body also “died” in the forces of the spirit, and a new, immortal spirit body could resurrect. In this way the whole human figure was included in the spiritual process of change. The spiritual world could not only manifest in the finer aspects of the human being but also in the coarser—changed—material body. God’s depth in its whole abundance could communicate with and work through the human

being.

This is the specific task of Christianity; thereby it differs from the previous religions. It goes further than these and lays the basis for redemption through the spirit of the material body also and of matter in general. A new heaven *and* a new earth arise. Since this soul-spiritual impulse was anchored in the world through Jesus, other religions have also taken it up.

Thus all of humanity is in a process of development—the spirit is manifesting in it ever clearer; ever deeper layers of the spirit become conscious depending on the receptivity of a person or a people. In the Gospel of Luke, as also in the other gospels, this soul-spiritual lawfulness of a stepwise development is taken into account in that the events are narrated against the background of the Old Testament. The Old Testament with its prophets prefigured in symbolic form the various persons and sequences of events along the spiritual path of Christianity. This path itself, however, is possible for only a few in the Old Testament and only in a preliminary form. It is not yet presented as a possibility for all of humanity as in Christianity. It is only promised through the prophets. The fulfillment of this possibility, the actual birth of the true self, is described in the New Testament. John the Baptist is the last and greatest prophet in whose person the old revelation culminates one more time. It is the basis for a new revelation that continues and surpasses the old.

Structure of the Gospel of Luke

Seven Phases of the Influence of the Spirit

The structure of the Gospel of Luke is marked by milestones in which the influence of the spiritual dimension becomes directly apparent.

The **first milestone** is that the redeeming power of the spiritual world *touches* the earthly world. An angel, a clear messenger out of the spiritual world, announces to Mary the birth of Jesus, the birth of the true self that will be named “Son of the Most High.” This touch through the redeeming power is also prepared: A touch of the world through the power of repentance (remorse), which is also a divine power, precedes it. This is represented in the Gospel of Luke by the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist, the preparer of the way. Here also an angel, a

messenger from the divine world, appears.

The **second milestone** of the Gospel of Luke is that the redeeming power of the spiritual world *connects* with the earthly world. This happens at Jesus' birth. The true self of the human being, embodied in Jesus, is born in the earthly world. The heavenly hosts accompany this event with their songs. "Heaven" has opened. This connection of the redeeming power of the spirit with the world is also prepared: John the Baptist, embodiment of the divine power of repentance, is born in the earthly world. The divine power of repentance connects with the world.

The **third milestone** is Jesus' baptism through the Holy Spirit. After his baptism with John the Baptist's "water," he is baptized with the "fire" of the Holy Spirit. Again "heaven" is open; the spiritual world is active in a concrete way. The true self, embodied in Jesus, has developed so far that the spiritual world can become *conscious* and active in him. From now on Jesus consciously recognizes the order of the spiritual world and acts as an "anointed one" in its powers.

The **fourth milestone** is the "transfiguration" of Jesus. Again the spiritual world manifests directly and clearly. The effects of Jesus' activity in the world on himself are shown: His whole personality—thoughts, feelings, and will impulses, the "sheaths" of the true self—is illuminated and *changed* by the spiritual forces. His "garment" is shining white.

The **fifth milestone** is Jesus' resurrection after the crucifixion. Messengers of the spiritual world, "two men in dazzling clothes" (Luke 24:4, NRSV), report that Jesus has left the dimension of the earthly world, the "tomb," and *has entered the dimension of the spiritual world*. This entrance into the kingdom of God, this becoming one of the true self with the spiritual world, has become possible because in the crucifixion, egocentricity and the drive for self-maintenance, the cause of the entanglement in the transitory world and with this also the cause of death, were overcome and because a new means of expression for the true self, a "spiritual body," was built up.

The **sixth milestone** is Jesus' "*ascension*." Again "heaven" manifests clearly in a concrete way, and Jesus, the true self, connects himself definitively with the dimension of the spiritual world.

The **seventh milestone** is anticipated in Jesus' discourse on the "end times" (Luke 21:5–36). Jesus' true self, which has become

one with the dimension of the spirit, is working from this dimension into the earthly world and can be perceived and taken up by human beings receptive to this, his pupils. This influence of the true self from out of the spiritual world is illustrated as the *coming of the Son of Man* “on the clouds of heaven.”

Seven Phases of the Spiritual Path

Thus the seven milestones of the influence of the divine world in the earthly world are marked in the Gospel of Luke. Simultaneously they also designate the phases of the individual spiritual path, not only of Jesus but also of every other person who unfolds the true self with the help of the spiritual world. That which Jesus, the exemplary embodiment of the true self, experiences as a historical figure in the earthly world is experienced by the true self of everyone who goes the spiritual path in other life circumstances. Therefore the clear, historical stations of Jesus’ life path can also become pictures for the phases of everyone’s spiritual path. The outer historical figure of Jesus and its destiny embody the inner unfolding of the true self and its destiny.

The **first phase** of this path is the annunciation of the birth of the true self in everyone who is open to such a birth. Regarded psychologically, this is the phase of *faith* on the spiritual path: the openness and receptivity for the potential of a new spiritual life. The human being reacts to the “annunciation” of the potential new life with openness. Repentance (remorse) precedes this openness.

The **second phase** is the birth of the true self in all persons who, open to the potential new life, earnestly strive for this life possibility. Thereby the spiritual forces anchor themselves in them and begin to circulate in them. It is the phase of *inner work* on the basis of faith and repentance through which persons bind the spiritual forces received to themselves.

The **third phase** is the *becoming conscious* of the spiritual forces circulating in the person, which thereby become active in a new, much more demanding way. It is at the same time the bestowal of the spiritual forces on the true self, the baptism with “fire.”

The **fourth phase** is the *new influence* of the spiritual forces. Coming from the true self, they illumine and change the personality according to thinking, feeling, and willing. They

“transfigure” the “garment” of the true self, the personality.

The **fifth phase** is the entry into the kingdom of God through the final dissolution of all egocentricity and the drive for self-maintenance. Both are voluntarily “crucified” while the true self consciously “resurrects” and becomes one with the spiritual world. It *enters the dimension of the spirit*.

In the **sixth phase**, it experiences its “*ascension*.” It now lives definitively in the dimension of the spirit. And in the **seventh**, it works, provided with a new possibility of expression, together with the “*Son of Man*” from the dimension of the spirit into the earthly dimension.

The Spiritual Path: Historical and Timeless

Thus the concrete experiences of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke are processes that are at the same time experiences of everyone on the spiritual path—as an outer and inner reality. Jesus is the personified or prototype of the true self of the human being. That which Jesus experiences as outer and as inner reality—his annunciation, birth, baptism, transfiguration, resurrection, ascension to heaven, and return on the clouds of heaven—the true self of every human being that goes the spiritual path also experiences, partly as an outer, but always as an inner reality. In the gospels historical persons are at the same time expressions and embodiments of spiritual and soul forces and principles. Relations between persons are expressions of the relations between spiritual and soul forces. John the Baptist, for example, represents the power of conversion; Jesus the power of the spirit; his pupils the aspects of consciousness that open to the power of the spirit; the scribes the dogmatic, doubting, aggressive mind and self-righteousness; Pilate the worldly authority; the high priest the religious authority—and the relations between these persons show the lawful relations that exist between the forces and principles embodied by them.

The same forces and principles and the relations between them are also found in the individual person. In every individual the power of repentance, “John the Baptist,” can begin to work; the power of the spirit, “Jesus,” can speak; certain aspects of consciousness, the “pupils,” can open to the power of the spirit; the powers of the mind, the “scribes,” can close themselves to it; the ego as worldly or religious highest principle of organization—

as “Pilate” or “high priest”—can fight against the power of the spirit. The same power plays between life principles thus occur on the level of a people, of humanity, or of the individual. Whoever reads and understands the gospels with this in mind will be able to understand this play of powers that occurs on the spiritual path—in a community or in an individual.

As it is a matter of power plays that are always valid, that have a timeless lawfulness, they can become historical, outer and inner reality again and again. They became historical at the time of Jesus and expressed themselves in the garment of his time and the Palestine of that time. They took on the color of the culture and world conception of that time. They can also become historical today, however, and thereby take on the color of the present. They can manifest among people of the technological age under the conditions of mass culture, for also under these conditions, there are people who are filled with the power of repentance or of the spirit like John the Baptist or Jesus; people who react consciously to these forces, be it positive or negative—like the pupils and opponents of Jesus; and people who represent the political (Pilate) or religious leadership (the high priest). Under these modern conditions, there are individuals as well in whom all the powers active on the spiritual path become noticeable and who induce a new spiritual development.

The events described in the gospels are with this in no way to be taken purely symbolically. Jesus, for example, is not only a symbol for certain spiritual forces, a myth without a historical background. On the contrary, the events described in the gospels are often concrete, historical, outer reality. They are always, however, expressions of inner reality. Inner reality is also historical, only not directly empirically perceptible. Whether outer or inner historical reality, however: Outer and inner history is always an expression of soul-spiritual lawfulness that can always recur. It can manifest more or less clearly and in ever-new forms. Its manifestation in Jesus’ time and its representation in the gospels are especially clear and exemplary.

Timeless soul-spiritual lawfulness that is presented pictorially is usually designated as myth. As timeless soul-spiritual lawfulness is manifested in time and space in the gospels, one could say: Here myth becomes history. Since the historical events—understood in the sense of outer or inner reality—are also exemplary pictures for timeless soul-spiritual lawfulness, however, one could say: Here

history becomes myth. Jesus himself walks the spiritual path marked by the aforesaid milestones. His pupils are confronted with the same tasks in phase shifts and fulfill them poorly or fail. Jesus' opponents, on the contrary, react from the start with hate. At first there are opposing depictions of the different forces and dimensions of reality as embodied in Jesus and his pupils on the one hand, and in his opponents on the other. Then the hate of the opponents mounts until the execution of Jesus while in parallel the spiritual world reveals itself ever clearer in Jesus and as the inner reality of the resurrection triumphs over the outer reality of the execution.

All details in all the gospels, scenes, conversations, parables, speeches, and "miracles," are ordered into this development and are its expression. Each particular detail represents an event, an experience, or insight of the pupil on the spiritual path and is always found at exactly the place where it belongs in the organic unfolding of this development. The gospels are neither biographically, chronologically, nor geographically accurate accounts in which the ethical instructions or theological doctrines of salvation are embedded nor accidentally arranged episodes held together in a makeshift way in the frame of a biography. They show rather an in all details logical, organic unfolding of outer events and inner experiences on the spiritual path. The moments in Jesus' life in which the world of the spirit is brought clearly to expression are the milestones on this path. The events in between illustrate the steps in the respective phases.

Methods of Representation of the Evangelists

The evangelists want to bring soul-spiritual facts and lawfulness to expression. They do this partly by means of outer historical events in which these facts manifest and partly by means of pictures. At one end of the spectrum of their methods of representation are therefore historical descriptions, at the other end, pictures—which does not mean that the soul-spiritual facts represented through pictures are any less real. Thoughts, motives, and aspirations, even when they are not expressed and therefore not perceived by outsiders, are nevertheless historical. They have their place in space and time and are at any rate very clearly perceptible to the person experiencing them.

Furthermore the representations of the evangelists, also where

they choose the historical garment as the method of representation, are in all cases not exact records but summaries and condensations.

For example, one can take a conversation of Jesus with the scribes, such as the one about the relationship of rank of Christ and David (Luke 20:41–44). Seen historically, Jesus surely had many conversations on this subject. In this one conversation that the evangelist represents, however, all conversations on the subject are summarized. The evangelist—or his source—has worked out the core content of these conversations and brought it in the briefest possible form. Thereby the structure of the argumentation and of the discussed facts becomes clear in an unsurpassable way. A dramatist who condenses altercations that perhaps stretch over a long period of time into a single pregnant scene proceeds in the same way.

The “historical” conversation brings soul-spiritual fact to expression now, however. It characterizes the nature of Jesus on the one hand and of the scribes on the other. From the nature of the scribes, who embody the understanding mind, follow their hair-splitting questions and limited capacity to understand. From the nature of Jesus, who represents the truth of the spirit, follows the spiritual perspective from which the relation between Christ and David can first be really understood. On the hand of the figures of Christ and David, Jesus exemplarily represents a timeless, ever-valid relation of rank between the spiritual and the highest aspects of the earthly world.

Here events that could in principle be ascertained empirically, Jesus’ conversations with the scribes, are fit to represent soul-spiritual facts; for the latter are expressed in the former.

It is questionable, however, if, for example, the “cleansing of the temple” by Jesus was a recordable, empirically ascertainable historical event (Luke 19:45–46). It is unlikely that Jesus would have acted in that manner in the situation of that time. In spite of this, a soul-spiritual truth comes to expression in this—historical or unhistorical—garment. The evangelist—or his sources—chooses a picture that is possibly historical in order to represent a soul-spiritual fact with this. What is demonstrated by this picture? The Jewish religion—its symbol and epitome is the temple—has become the booty of merchants. Jesus as the embodiment of the true self filled by the living spirit chases away the merchants who misuse their religion for the amassing of possessions and purifies

the religion. The seeming or possible historical event becomes a picture for soul-spiritual facts.

Thus firstly, the living spirit in the form of Jesus purifies the rigidified and corrupted traditional religion in which he has been born. Secondly, the living spirit will *always* purify corrupt religion no matter in what form and in which historical moment it appears. Thirdly, this purification refers not just to a people or all of human history but also to every individual in whom a new spirituality awakens and clears away the old convictions of faith that are only used for the amassing of material or psychic riches. The picture used by the evangelist is perhaps not historical in the sense of outer reality, but the soul-spiritual facts expressed by it are certainly historical in the sense of inner reality. Indeed, they are timeless and can ever and again become historical as inner reality.

Moreover the picture of the temple as a den of thieves is already prefigured in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 7:1-15). It could be that the evangelist—or his source—created a dramatic scene with Jesus as the protagonist out of the words of the Old Testament—which would give an insight into the origin of various stories in the New Testament. Perhaps Jesus also consciously carried out the words of the Old Testament—if the scene was historical in the sense of an outer reality.

The third method of representation of the evangelists is that they use pictures that are surely not historical in the sense of an outer reality, that are even impossible in the concrete world of the senses. The “miracles” are such pictures. When Jesus and his pupils pass out bread that multiplies in a miraculous way and is inexhaustible, then this is a symbol for soul-spiritual facts. In the Gospel of Mark, in the textual neighborhood of the “feeding of the 5000,” the “leaven of the Pharisees” is spoken of. The “leaven of the Pharisees” is unambiguously a picture and is explained by Jesus himself. The pupils are to beware of the “leaven of the Pharisees,” namely of their hypocrisy and false teaching. This already shows that the “loaves” in the story of the feeding must be pictures, namely for the truth, the right teaching of Jesus. When someone filled with the truth conveys this truth to others who are receptive to it, then this truth is not diminished thereby, on the contrary, it multiplies. This lawfulness is expressed in a picture in the story of the multiplying loaves. The picture is not historical in the sense of an outer reality. No concrete loaves were distributed that endlessly multiplied. The depicted soul-spiritual fact of Jesus’

pupils conveying a truth to those receptive to it and of this truth not becoming weaker thereby but gaining more power than ever is historical in the sense of an inner reality. Always when at any time people pass on a spiritual truth to others, then the soul-spiritual lawfulness depicted in the multiplying loaves becomes historical. It precipitates in the outer and inner reality. The lawfulness could just as well have been formulated conceptually, and often also such conceptual formulations appear in the gospel. Another possibility is the representation in a picture, however, which makes more of an impression than a concept.

Whoever has learned to think in symbols and pictures will immediately recognize these methods of representation and understand what they express. When a soul-spiritual fact was clothed in a figurative event by Luke that is impossible as a historical occurrence taking place in the sense world, then readers who think in pictures let this impossibility stand. It is clear to them that it is not a matter of magic or a miracle. The miracle consists for them in the soul-spiritual fact itself. In the example of the “feeding of the 5000,” the astonishing fact is that the truth does not become weaker or less when conveyed to those receptive to it while normally in the sense world provisions diminish when shared with others. The readers recognize that other laws rule in the spiritual world, and through the paradox of the picture, they are the more emphatically made aware of the different nature of the spiritual world.

The readers who are used to taking the texts as empirical reports, however, think just the opposite. Only the outer events are important for them. By reason of this attitude, they take the stories of the evangelists, whether outwardly historical, seemingly outwardly historical, or symbolical, from the first as perceptible events in the sense world and so come to completely wrong conclusions and even have to laboriously consider the possibility or impossibility of “miracles.” They close themselves off from access to the soul-spiritual facts whose expression the events and pictures are. If they would recognize the attitude and the literary process of the evangelists, things would be much simpler. The evangelists *always* start from inner, soul-spiritual events and see outer events as expressions of the inner ones, and when inner events do not manifest outwardly or can only be determined or described with difficulty, they use pictures or parables that express what is wanted, whether possible or impossible in the sense world.

Thereby the evangelists make clear that both are important: the soul-spiritual facts *and* their expression in the historical reality of time and space. The soul-spiritual facts only have an influence, after all, when they also express themselves in the world of time and space. The “Word” has to become flesh. It can and must ever and again become flesh, however. It became flesh exemplarily in Jesus and his historical environment. It can and must become flesh in every historical epoch in other people and in other circumstances.

Four Gospels: The Special Nature of the Gospel of Luke

It is not a coincidence that four gospels have been handed down to us. They correspond to the four great soul faculties of the human being: acting, willing, feeling, and thinking. Each evangelist depicted the spiritual world but emphasized in each case a particular perspective. Mark emphasized the level of life energies, of willing. His gospel is the oldest and stands in direct proximity to the esoteric traditions of Judaism, for example, the school of prophets. Thus his gospel often still contains elements of earlier mystery schools, such as the so-called laws of silence, which are less prominent in the other gospels. As the basic processes on the spiritual path are carried out consciously or unconsciously in the human will, namely the transformation of the life energies and their permeation by the energies of the spiritual world, the Gospel of Mark renders the basic structure of the spiritual path.

The Gospel of John represents the same spiritual path from the perspective of intuitive thinking. On the basis of the structure of the spiritual path, John reported explicitly the insights and the changes in intuitive thinking that occur on this path. Matthew had in view the effects of the spiritual path especially on the physical world, on human activity. Thus he emphasized the traditions of Judaism and the anchoring of the spiritual forces in the human “blood.” Finally Luke focused his attention on the feeling side of the spiritual path. On the basis of the structure given by Mark, he described the feelings that accompany the spiritual path and that change under the influence of the world of the spirit.

Apart from the common basic structure of their gospels, when the four evangelists each presented content not found in the others’ gospels, then this is a matter of their perspective. The one

wrote from “life,” the other from “thinking,” the third from “acting,” and the fourth from “feeling.” In this way they complemented each other and in their totality grasped the events that occur on the spiritual path in all four realms of the human soul. When there are seeming contradictions between the different gospels, then this is also because they present different sides of one and the same process. For example, Mark reported that Jesus’ transfiguration occurred “after six days” (Mark 9:28, NRSV); in Luke is written “about eight days after these sayings” (Luke 9:28, NRSV).

Here one has to again let go of the idea that the evangelists were historians who wanted to report events in the world of appearances. Expressions like “after six days” or “eight days later” rather are turns of phrase with a soul-spiritual content. In ancient Judaism “six” is the number of decision, of judgment after a longer development. One can check this in the Old Testament, such as with the twelve sons of Jacob. In a development there is always the point in time where the old is “judged” and relieved by the new. Dan is Jacob’s sixth son, the “judge.” With the expression “after six days,” Mark wanted to show that Jesus’ development up to now is at an end. “Eight,” on the other hand, is the number of the breakthrough to something new. After a cycle symbolized by the number seven, a new cycle on a higher level begins with eight. Luke wanted to say that with the “transfiguration,” Jesus’ activity begins anew on a higher level. From the “transfiguration” Jesus journeys to “Jerusalem,” the city which embodies religion as the precipitate of the spiritual into the earthly world (and also the degeneration of religion). This corresponds to Luke’s general tendency to emphasize the breakthrough to the new and the overcoming of the old that occur due to Jesus’ presence. Such polar opposites are characteristic for Luke and stand in connection with the contrary structure of the feeling realm. The human being can exult with joy but also be mortally aggrieved.

Therefore in Luke’s Gospel, joy, gratitude, and compassion as positive feelings, but also the bitter human feeling of being a “sinner” stand in the foreground. As deeply as the unredeemed persons have fallen into the transitory world of the living on this side and of the dead in the beyond, so highly the redeemed persons rise out of the entanglements. As narrow as their imprisonment in the egocentricity of the transitory world is, so wide their freedom reaches in the spirit. The deeper the

entanglement in the earthly, the greater the joy when the torment of this entanglement is dissolved but also the greater the darkness when the light of freedom appears and no one reacts to it.

This corresponds to the polar structure of the feeling realm. The feeling realm is the location of motives. Individuals can prove to be receptive to spiritual influences and the spiritual path or close themselves off from them; they can react positively or negatively to the spiritual world. Therefore Luke underlined ever and again the radical alternatives of, on the one hand, the old being bound to the world of the living on this side and of the dead in the beyond and, on the other hand, of the new being in the “kingdom of God.” Both are unbridgeable opposites. Those who are bound to the laws of this world and the beyond and expect their salvation from the transitory world have no access to the world of the divine spirit because the state of their souls precludes such access. Those who aspire to the realm of God and allow its lawfulness in themselves, however, will also be able to orient their lives in the transitory world to this. As soon as the possibility of a life in the spirit appears in the present, embodied for example through Jesus, people will react differently. Some grasp this possibility and aspire to a life in the spirit; others only feel repulsed by it because of their love of the transitory world to which they cling even more intensely. Jesus, prototype of the human being living in the spirit, is set for “the falling and the rising of many.” Everything or nothing.

As yielding as persons who love the earthly world are towards its offers, so consequently persons on the spiritual path take their leave from them. They do not do this by forcing themselves and through asceticism, or by morally bettering themselves and therefore making themselves fit for the spiritual realm. True, moral aspirations are necessary on the spiritual path, but they become an obstacle if they do not spontaneously arise from the experience of the new possibility of life. So it is valid that the more stubbornly persons hold to their methods of moral self-improvement and techniques of “redemption,” the further they are from the state of the kingdom of God.

Thus in the Gospel of Luke, the behavior between these two possibilities always stands in the foreground—the choice between the transitory world and the spiritual-divine world. Only those who experience the new possibility of life and also answer it with deeds that grow out of this experience will experience the state of

the kingdom of God in themselves and, through action, fix and seal it in their own beings.

Antitheses as the theme of the Gospel are also shown on the social level, which is expressed more by Luke than by the other evangelists. With him the “social” is also above all an expression of soul-spiritual facts, however. It serves to demonstrate the composition of the spiritual world and its effects in the person and in the world. Ever and again, through the influence of the spiritual world, the socially low is “raised” and the socially high is “humbled.”

Finally the fact that women play a greater role in Luke than in the other gospels corresponds to the plane of feeling. One only has to compare the nativity stories in Matthew and in Luke to discover that they are represented from the point of view of the woman in Luke and of the man in Matthew. In Matthew, Joseph is the main character, in Luke, Mary. Perhaps the circumstance that only two evangelists tell nativity stories rests on the fact that there are only two sexes, male and female. The female embodies the side of imagination and feeling—more the province of Luke; the male embodies the side of will and activity—Matthew concentrated on the events in the material world in so far as they express soul-spiritual facts.

The insertion of two great sections of texts (and several smaller ones) in the frame given by Mark is thanks to Luke’s special interest in the feeling side of the spiritual path. The “childhood stories,” the first great added section, describes among other things the role of the woman, the principle of receptivity for spiritual forces, which is closely related to the feeling realm. The second great added section, the “journey to Jerusalem,” shows above all the attitudes of feeling of the pupils on the spiritual path and, as the case may be, of those who emphatically reject the path. Conversely Luke deleted a great section of Mark and several smaller ones that do not correspond to his specific perspective. They are the passages in Mark that deal specifically with the becoming conscious of the spirit and the consequences that follow from this.

As with the other gospels, the Gospel of Luke presents a specific possibility of life: the spiritual path. Luke presented it in his manner in that he concentrated on human feelings. In the view of the evangelist, the spiritual path is not one possibility of life under

many others but the possibility of life that in the end is the purpose of the person and of humanity. Human beings presently live as a mortal personalities stamped by egocentricity and the drive for self-maintenance. Their purpose is to unfold their true identities, however, which are immortal and belong to the world of the divine spirit. If they want to unfold it, then they have to consciously dissolve their egocentricity and drive for self-maintenance and build up from the true self a new, immortal personality that is its means of expression.

Jesus was for Luke and the other evangelists the prototype of the human being who goes the spiritual path whereby he is specially connected to the world of the spirit. Jesus does not represent the mortal personality, but, as the “Anointed” with the spirit, represents the immortal true self of the human being. This true self goes the spiritual path in that it frees itself from the determination through egocentricity and the drive for self-maintenance of the mortal personality, consciously lives out of the spirit, and thus builds up a new, immortal personality. Connected in a special way with the forces of the spirit, Jesus himself went this path and as exemplary true self also enabled others to go this path—or provoked their resistance.

The Gospel of Luke places this possibility of life in front of its readers. It describes the lawful process of the spiritual path with its protagonists clothed in the garment of the circumstances of that time. The same path with the same laws is also possible in the modern world, however, and in Luke’s view, is also the purpose of the modern human being. It only needs to be translated from the circumstances of that time and from the roles of the protagonists of that time for the modern world. The protagonists of that time are symbols for principles that can become active in all times in every other protagonists or altogether in one individual person. This book is such an attempted translation into the concepts of the modern world.

Foreword of the Gospel of Luke

***Luke 1:1** Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, ²just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, ³I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an*

orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. (NRSV)

The other evangelists may also have had their own special reasons for composing their texts, perhaps also their special addressees. If preambles or dedications existed for their texts, they have not in any case been added to their gospels. Luke, however, has unambiguously composed an accompanying text that has been transmitted as part of his gospel. Although it does not belong to the actual gospel, it allows us to gain clues for a better understanding.

Luke has been designated as the “historian” among the evangelists especially because of this preface and because of certain historical facts that are only reported in his gospel. When historians write reports, then one will search behind their accounts for nothing other than outer facts and perhaps also their evaluation and interpretation. The Gospel of Luke, however, takes historical facts only as the expression of soul-spiritual facts. They are important to him as this expression, not as events as such.

Luke was also always regarded as the “writer” among the evangelists because of this preface and because of his polished style. When he tried to describe the events handed down to him as clearly and smoothly as possible, it was in the service of the task and not to shine himself.

His “account of the events” is thus neither a historical report nor an artistic novel that wants to put the abilities of the author in the right light. It is the artistic transmission, oriented to the truth, of soul-spiritual facts that precipitated into the world of space and time in an exemplary way at the time of Jesus.

Luke also did not mean to give a salvation-historical meaning to his reported facts: that God sent his Son into the world, let him take on our sins and be killed, resurrected him, and thereby gave redemption to all those who believe in Jesus. This is a construction that was read into the text later and which it nowhere supports.

Nevertheless there is a sense of “salvation history” in the Gospel of Luke, not in a theological sense, but rather in the sense of spiritual experience. The “eyewitnesses” mentioned by Luke have had spiritual experiences. They met someone equipped with special spiritual powers who lived the spiritual path as an example. The “kingdom of God” took form in him and drew near to them. A

new state, a new possibility of life, met them, and they themselves began to go the spiritual path in order to realize this “salvation.” When Jesus through his special spiritual powers healed and cast out demons, when he himself was as unselfish, compassionate, and consequent as described in his teaching, then they experienced this as the influence of the true self and felt pressured to become the same. When Jesus was crucified, it seemed at first like a decline. They learned, however, that the “kingdom of God” has nothing to do with the transitory body, but that it built up in Jesus a new body that could not be touched by death. This was their great, not-easily attained insight: The spiritual path leads to the resurrection of the true self *and* a new body in the world of the spirit, and neither can be touched by death. Furthermore the crucifixion was for the “eyewitnesses” the sign that someone on the spiritual path always attracts the enmity of the earthly world.

Thus these are the “eyewitnesses”; this is what they had seen and experienced. If they had seen the crucifixion, then they may have seen it with earthly eyes, for only the earthly body was killed. If they had seen the resurrection, however, then they could have done so because their spiritual eyes had been opened on the spiritual path. With these new eyes, they saw that which is immortal in the human being: the true self and spiritual body permeated by the spirit.

When they then became “servants of the word,” as Luke called them, this means that they themselves obeyed the spiritual lawfulness described by Jesus’ words: They went the spiritual path and also could describe their experiences on it and pass them on to others. They themselves could formulate words that corresponded to their experiences and stimulated others who were receptive to them to have similar experiences.

Luke himself was not such an eyewitness. He only had the events of the spiritual path passed on to him by “servants of the word.” He lived according to these “words,” however, and by obeying and passing them on to others in his gospel, he became a “servant of the word.”

He has gathered all the reports he could reach, checked them, and ordered them according to the stations and conditions of the spiritual path. This is what was important to him: to describe the spiritual path and its conditions by means of the outer events that became known to him and numerous figurative and conceptual formulations.

He therefore turned to a highly placed personality who apparently had already earlier been instructed more or less accurately about Jesus' deeds and destiny, that is, his path and the path of his pupils, and had opened himself to this possibility. Perhaps the name Theophilus, one "who loves God," is also not coincidental. It could be exemplary for every open person to whom the gospel is directed. One "who loves God" is a human being who feels drawn to the "kingdom of God" because the true self within wants to unfold. The forces in one that love the "kingdom of God" comprise the true self that is not yet born and has not yet taken form. On the spiritual path, it is born and takes form, however, and one "who loves God" takes this path drawn by the love for the "kingdom of God" and in the power of this love. The gospel is directed to such people as Theophilus; only such people understand it, and only such are worthy of it since they also seek to realize it.

Ever new aspects and insights into the path whose basic lines he has already experienced or foresees open through the gospel to the one "who loves God." One's own still vague experiences are confirmed; one's premonitions are articulated and become insights. Thereby the things about which one was instructed become ever "more reliable." The reliability that is created when something already heard is confirmed by new details, connections, and similar reports is not what is meant here. This would only be a confirmation of knowledge through outer information. In the case of Theophilus, however, it is a matter of a confirmation of his own premonitions through the description of spiritual experiences. That about which he was only instructed up to now but that seemed plausible to him because it agreed with his innermost premonitions, this now becomes more conscious and clearer because it is formulated exactly in the gospel. It is confirmed for him.

The World Conception of the Gospel of Luke

The actual Gospel of Luke begins with the annunciation of two births. First the birth of John the Baptist is announced to Zachariah and Elizabeth; then Jesus' birth is announced to Mary and indirectly to Joseph.

The Purpose of the Human Being

Humanity, peoples, and all individual human beings have a purpose. They carry a plan in themselves that wants to be realized: like a latent formula, a true and original self that urges to unfold. The unfolded true self and the community of human beings in whom it is unfolded are characterized in the Gospel of Luke as the “kingdom of God.” When in the gospel ever and again there is talk that the kingdom of God “has come near,” then what is meant is that the spiritual world directly influences people and individuals in order to stimulate their spiritual plan to growth. What it also means is that human beings have the possibility to react to this stimulation and to allow the spiritual self to unfold. They can realize the state of conscious life in the world of the spirit when they fulfill certain prerequisites.

Today as in the past, humanity, peoples, and most individuals do not fulfill their purpose. They live out of the world of appearances in which they are anchored with their ego built up of sense impressions, mental operations, and memories. This ego, like the world of appearances in general, is oriented to the struggle for existence. The world of appearances, the visible world with the thoughts, feelings, aspirations, and actions directed to it, can be designated as this world.

In the course of centuries, human beings have drastically experienced the consequences of the struggle for existence. They have created norms of living together that aim to make the struggle for existence and its consequences bearable. These norms form the collective super-ego, the collective archetypes. They act like great, super-personal authorities partly to the benefit, partly to the detriment of the individual. These powers are invisible. They are the “beyond” of the visible world and owe their existence to humanity’s struggle for existence. Human “destiny,” the totality of unconscious life experiences accumulated in humanity, also has an influence from the beyond. People experience this beyond as concrete reality after laying aside the physical body. It is therewith also the realm of the dead. Finally the evil “demons” that appear in the gospel are, among other things, super-personal, collective concentrations of human passions and imaginations that have a detrimental influence on individuals, or they are certain thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of individuals that have become unconscious, independent splinters of their conscious egos and that compulsively rule them.

The purpose of the human beings does not lie in this “beyond,” this invisible world of ideologies and collective memories, either. In fact, as it also has arisen from the struggle for existence, it most often hinders their fulfillment of this purpose.

This is the reality from which Luke started and which gives the frame for his gospel. The world of the spirit, the “kingdom of God,” is primary. The demonic world and the world of the senses—or the beyond and this world—are secondary and have arisen from the spiritual world. They would have the task to be the expression of the structure and forces of the spiritual world, but they have cut themselves off from it in their self-maintenance. Though they still owe their existence to the spiritual world—for it is the ground of all things—they stand in the service of their own lawfulness, which is not in harmony with the spiritual world.

Humanity, hopelessly entangled in the sense world and demonic world, would never be in the position anymore to fulfill its purpose, if there were not ever and again impulses from the spiritual world that have an influence in this world and the beyond. They break through the clutches of super-personal, invisible forces and personal interests and help the innermost spiritual plan to unfold.

Spirit-Filled Human Beings Helping in the Fulfillment of this Purpose

One way in which the world of the spirit has an influence is that human beings stemming from it incarnate in the transitory world. They become carriers and organs of spiritual forces and beings that influence humanity through them. John the Baptist and Jesus are examples of such individuals whose special connection to the world of the spirit Luke expressed with the formula that they were connected with the Holy Spirit before birth. John the Baptist is “even before his birth ... filled with the Holy Spirit” (Luke 1:15, NRSV), and Jesus will be called the “Son of the Most High” and “reign over the house of Jacob forever” (Luke 1:32–33, NRSV).

When such people are born in the world on this side and accept a body, they are tied through this body to the earthly world and to the beyond and are exposed to all its influences like ordinary people. With their special connection to the world of the spirit, however, they have the possibility to recognize and overcome these influences. By the spiritual world working ever more

strongly in them, they let a true self and a spiritual body be created in them that are expressions of the spiritual world, not anymore expressions of the demonic and sense world like the limited ego with its mortal body. The spiritual path consists of the overcoming of the earthly world and the construction of a self and a body that are expressions of the spiritual world.

Thus these people go the spiritual path themselves, show it to others, and give them the power to go it as well. In that they go it themselves with their special spiritual powers, they forge the path on which others can follow them. At the same time, they describe the situation and conditions of this path in detail, anchor it in the consciousness of their pupils, and spur them to realization.

From the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, the two dimensions, the world of the spirit, the “kingdom of God,” on the one hand and this world and the beyond on the other hand, are presented in opposition. The light of the divine world intrudes into a gloomy, suffering, proud world in need of redemption, lights up the darkness, and creates a path to the re-creation of the right relation between both worlds. The self-maintenance of the world of this side and the beyond, which have made themselves absolute and thereby cut themselves off from the sole life-giving spiritual world, is broken up allowing the forces of the spirit to shine in. They enable human beings to free themselves from the entanglements of the transitory world; they allow the true spiritual self to unfold and construct a new personality with a new body, which are again oriented to the laws of the spirit world. Thereby the demonic world and the sense world in the person who goes the spiritual path become the expression of the spiritual world again.

Luke left it open in what manner such impulses are prepared and activated in the spiritual world itself. In the modern person reading these stories, questions immediately arise: Who causes these events, the annunciation and birth of John the Baptist and Jesus? Who sends these beings into the earthly world, and who sends the angelic messengers? Everything apparently happens according to a great plan.

If a spiritual world exists, it has to be a comprehensive consciousness, intelligence, love, and energy. It must have a structure that reaches far beyond the imaginative faculty of human beings in time and space. In the spiritual world there also have to be beings who exist according to the lawfulness of their world. Besides this they must be able to influence the world of time and

space in order to help the earthly human beings in the realization of their true purpose to become conscious inhabitants of this spiritual world.

It would surely be mistaken to imagine these beings as anthropomorphic and to compare their mode of existence with ours. It is surely not so, however, that they exist spatiotemporally “somewhere else” than us. Expressed in a modern way, their state and their realm of life may rather simply represent other conditions of vibration than ours, and therefore they are surely present in the same “space” and in the same “time” as us. Their realm of life and they themselves interpenetrate our whole realm of life like invisible radio waves interpenetrate the atmosphere.

For a being that lives consciously, omni-consciously, in the spiritual world, it must be an immense limitation to enter an earthly womb and accept an earthly body limited in time and space. Despite this, according to the evangelists, there are such beings who make this sacrifice in order to help humanity on the path of realizing their purpose. In this sense Paul wrote of Jesus that he did not cling to his godlike state and the life conditions in the spiritual world but took the “figure of a servant.” Jesus accepted an earthly body in order to live the path to the spiritual world as an example for human beings and enable them to walk it (Philippians 2:6–7 and Romans 8:3–4).

The Gospel of Luke describes how the carriers of an impulse from the “kingdom of God” really bring the sacrifice of a material birth in the world of space and time. For a path on which the earthly human beings can free themselves from the entanglements in time and space has to begin in this time and space, in matter. For this it is necessary that the human beings of time and space can freely and consciously hear and react to the teachings of the spiritual path. They can only do this when these teachings are brought to them in time and space.

Therefore John and Jesus made the sacrifice of being born in time and space and met by means of a body other human beings with bodies in a world of bodies. In this manner they were in a position to explain to earthly human beings their situation and possibilities in such a way that they could freely accept or reject these explanations. They were further in the position to overcome the body and the earthly entanglements connected to it in order to make this process possible in others by this example.

First Milestone of the Gospel of Luke: Touch of the Earthly World by the Spiritual World

The annunciation of two births, of John the Baptist and of Jesus, through a messenger from the world of the spirit is the first milestone of the Gospel of Luke. It means the world of time and space being touched by eternity. It is the first radiance of the light nearing the darkness, the beginning of the breaking up of self-maintenance, the falsehood and lies of this world and the beyond through the love and the truth that are of God. Divine love and truth touch world and humanity. A tremendous drama develops from this touch. Those receptive to this touch turn to the light let their true selves grow in love and truth, and build a new life in time and space corresponding to love and truth. They cooperate with the law and the power of the spirit. Others fight against the light and persecute it up to the downfall of its physical carrier. Love and truth expose themselves to violence and enmity, however, and allow themselves to be persecuted and “killed” in order to nevertheless resurrect again. They leave inextinguishable traces in their enemies that in the long run will lead to the opponents’ true selves also gaining in scope and freeing their selves from the dominance of falsehood and the drive for power.

Preparation and Realization

The touch of humanity by the world of the spirit possesses an aspect of preparation and an aspect of realization. The annunciation of John the Baptist’s birth corresponds to the first aspect, and the annunciation of Jesus’ birth corresponds to the second. A general law is expressed in this division into two. All founders of a religion and all originators of a mystery school have a forerunner. The forerunner embodies the spiritual tradition; the fulfiller embodies the new impulse connected to this tradition, which transforms the tradition in the sense of the new.

The fulfiller first goes through a preparatory path in a traditional institution in order to finally realize his own mission, separate from the traditional institution, and to build up a community corresponding to his new task. One has sometimes connected John the Baptist with the Essenes and conjectured that Jesus had

also first been an Essene but had then founded his own community. The relation of forerunner and fulfiller, of tradition and new impulse, would be clearly expressed in this.

As the last prophet, John the Baptist represents the tradition of the Old Testament, the life under the law that prepares for the life in spiritual freedom. The human being can and must at a certain point in time leave this stage of development and enter a higher stage: a life in which the law of the spirit is carried out in freedom. Jesus embodies this new life, this New Testament.

Such transitions from preparation to realization exist not only in individual peoples, such as the Israel of that time, but they also refer to all of humanity and every individual. After living through a period of time in which they were led by outer laws, all individual persons can go on the spiritual path on which they realize the spiritual law of inner freedom.

Thus the phase of the touch that is marked by the two annunciations is also the first phase of the spiritual path of every individual. That which Luke represents by the annunciations of the births of concrete figures, John the Baptist and Jesus, becomes a picture for promises of events in the soul of the individual person. The first phase of the spiritual path is therefore the phase in which the first shimmer of the light of love and of truth appears on the horizon and the pupils opens themselves to it: the phase of faith understood as receptivity for divine love and truth. This phase also possesses two aspects in the individual: the John aspect and the Jesus aspect. Individuals can only begin the spiritual path when they have gone through the time of preparation, a time of inner reversal, “repentance,” the insight that their lives in time and space under the law of destiny do not correspond to their actual purpose. After this preparation they therefore turn inwardly to the life of eternity, to the true self that is waiting to be born in them. The reversal is represented by John the Baptist; the turning to eternity is represented by Jesus.

Annunciation of the Birth of John the Baptist

In the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist, the world of the spirit approaches humanity—or the individual—and demands a change. The inner reversal, the parting from the domination of

the spatiotemporal and the turning back to the eternal, is an effect of divine forces. Thus John the Baptist, although still belonging to the law of the Old Testament and with that to the spatiotemporal, already stands in the light of the freedom of the New Testament. He is still a being with an earthly consciousness but already illuminated by the activity of the eternal true self. Thus it says, “even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Luke 1:15, NRSV).

Conditions and Circumstances

1:5 *In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years. (NRSV)*

The promise of spatiotemporal consciousness and being illuminated by eternity occurs under special conditions and circumstances, which are described in detail by Luke.

“In the day of King Herod...” is not only an indication of time for ordering the described events that follow in history. It is above all an indication of the nature of the environment into which John the Baptist is to be born, the nature of the world in which the impulse from the spiritual world will take effect. Always, in all times, an impulse from the spiritual world will enter a world that is ruled by the “Roman emperor” (Luke 2:1) and by “King Herod of Judea.” The Roman emperor embodies earthly power based on physical force, the aspect of power of this side uninfluenced by religious traditions. Herod, the King of Judea, has a connection to religious tradition; he is only not willing to see this tradition as binding on him. Power is the decisive factor; religious tradition is only the trimming and an instrument of power, an “ideology.” With that, he embodies earthly power linked with the collective unconscious, the aspect of power of the beyond.

John the Baptist, like every forerunner of a spiritual impulse, is embedded in the religious tradition. Luke expresses this partly by the statement that John’s father and mother are from the tribe of Levi. Elizabeth can trace her family tree back to Aaron, Moses’

brother and the first high priest of Israel, and Zechariah likewise. He belongs to one of the 24 classes of priests, which were organized by King David in his time, specifically the eighth (1 Chronicles 24:10). This detail certainly also has meaning, for the number eight characterizes the breakthrough of the new after seven periods of a previous development. Does not John the Baptist lead the breakthrough of the new?

Luke points to a further condition that has to be met before a spiritual impulse can even set foot in the earthly world: There have to be people who are prepared for it. When a being from the spiritual world is to be conceived and born in an earthly womb, the parents have to meet certain minimum requirements. Zechariah and Elizabeth are “righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord.” Does this mean that they lived morally impeccable lives whereby nevertheless evil thoughts, feelings, and aggressions were hidden under outer good behavior? In this case they would not have been “righteous before God.” They were only “righteous before God” if they were attuned and directed to the world of the spirit exactly in their deepest and most secret thoughts, feelings, and will impulses.

Zechariah and Elizabeth are also “getting on in years” and “had no children, because Elizabeth was barren.” It is a matter of characteristics that were familiar to the reader of the Old Testament of that time. Abraham, for example, is 100 years old and his wife Sarah 90, when God promises him Isaac, the special son in comparison with Ishmael, the ordinary son of the maid Hagar (Genesis 17:16). Sarah had been infertile until then (Genesis 16:1). Similarly Elkanah, the father of the prophet Samuel, had two wives: The second, Hannah, was infertile as was Abraham’s wife Sarah (1 Samuel 1:5). Still the priest Eli finally promises her a son, Samuel, who is also endowed with special qualities: someone who is a “Nazarite” like John the Baptist (Luke 1:15). His whole life is dedicated to God. No razor shall touch his head, and he shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants (1 Samuel 1:11). Thus parents of special sons who have a special relationship to God always have special qualities. This is a law already known and repeatedly depicted in the Old Testament.

Is it a case of a “miracle” when parents who are “getting on in years” and with the woman being “barren” still get a child? It is not a miracle. Rather “getting on in years” and “barren” are

pictures for necessary requirements that always have to be fulfilled before the coming of the new, the divine. Only parents who have lived through many spatiotemporal experiences and have recognized the limitation and relativity of everything earthly are suited to open themselves to an impulse from the spiritual world and to give it the possibility to have an effect. Thus, such parents have to be “getting on in years,” and only a woman who is infertile in relation to ordinary, earthly fruit can bring forth uncommon, divine fruit. When Elizabeth is described as barren, this means that she cannot bear any children of ordinary, earthly nature. Only due to her infertility in regard to ordinary, average, earthly children is Elizabeth suited to bear a child linked from the start with the divine world. Parents of such children *have* to be “getting on in years”: have to have gone through and taken leave of all earthly experiences. Mothers of such children *have* to be “barren”: By virtue of their being, they have to be incapable of bearing ordinary, earthly fruit.

Something similar is true for Samson’s mother, the wife of Manoah (Judges 13). She is also “barren” but nevertheless gives birth to a son who is a Nazarite as well and “dedicated to God from birth on.” By the way, here the connection between the qualities of the mother and the qualities of the son is depicted still clearer and in another way. Because the son as Nazarite will drink no wine, the mother also has to beware of drinking wine or strong drink or eating anything unclean (Judges 13:4). Only in this way can she be a suitable vessel for the divine that is to grow in and be born of her.

The Being of John the Baptist

1:8 *Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. ¹⁰Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. ¹¹Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. ¹³But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. ¹⁴You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at*

his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” (NRSV)

What does it mean when an angel appears? Should one imagine an appearance visible to earthly eyes? Or an appearance that is only visible to the eyes of the spirit? The appearance occurs in the temple while Zachariah is offering incense, and the angel stands at the right side of the altar of incense. Thus Zachariah was in a state elevated above his usual disposition—at a “sacrifice” in the “temple.” One can see the outer temple as a picture for Zachariah’s inner temple, as a picture for his “soul realm” in which the events that follow occur. Then the outer altar is the altar of the heart, the place of sacrifice on which Zachariah completely surrenders and “sacrifices” his earthly being to influences of the divine. These influences come from the “right” into the consciousness and engender an insight there (divine influences always come from the “right,” from the right side, that is, via a waking consciousness; demonic influences come from the “left,” from the wrong side via the unconscious).

It is clear to Zachariah that this insight has arisen not from his own earthly thinking but from an unearthly level within him. The impulse to this insight originates from the divine world. It can be personified as an angel, and the insight can be described as the message of the angel. Thus Zachariah in a special elevated state receives his message from within himself. The spiritual world works within him and manifests there to the spiritual eyes and ears. Gabriel is the name of the aspect of the divine power that according to tradition transmits messages—messages directly from the heart of the divine world. Therefore Luke says that it is Gabriel who stands “in the presence of God” (Luke 1:19, NRSV).

The son promised to Zachariah is exactly characterized according to his being and function by the angel, the messenger from the spiritual world. The being and function are expressed in the name “John.” John means “God has shown mercy.” The spiritual world manifests through John and initiates a process of change and renewal first for Israel and later for humanity. This is an action of the spiritual world taken in a merciful turning towards

humanity. It is not a coincidental but a carefully weighed action. The people who carry it out have been chosen for this and have their task exactly outlined. Thus the angel puts such great importance on the son being named “John.” The name expresses the being and the task of John before the whole world. John is a human being connected to the spirit, “great in the sight of the Lord,” and his task is “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord”: to prepare people for the impulse brought by Jesus.

The being and task of John are shown in the fact that “even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit.” How can this indication be understood? In every conception and every birth, two conceptions and births occur. On the one hand the material body and its life are conceived and later born. On the other hand the immortal essence of the human being enters the realm of time and space, connects with the conceived material body, and is “born” together with it.

In the normal case, the immortal essence of a person, the true self, that connects with a material body is latent and as if asleep. Special beings like John the Baptist and Jesus, however, already have a true self living awake in the spiritual world before entering a womb. This is described in Luke as “even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Luke 1:15, NRSV). The activity of this true self is in the beginning blocked as by a thick garment—by the connection with the gross earthly body and the ego. Some time must pass before the true self has made the material body and its ego so pliant that the true self can become conscious in a consciousness tied to a material brain and can express itself therein. Children of this type are spiritually ripe early, however, and it happens early in their life that they show special spiritual wisdom.

To make allowances for this special situation of being “filled with the Holy Spirit even before birth” and to hinder as little as possible the activity of the true self that wants to express itself via the material body and its ego, the Nazarite rules existed in ancient Israel. Wine and strong drink would put the material body and its ego in a state that would be quite a hindrance to the expression of the true self. For the same reason, the “vessel,” the body of the mother in which the material body of a special child grows, must be in as pure a condition as possible, which is why Samson’s mother also could not drink any wine or strong drink. The germ of the true self of such beings furthermore needs a suitable family

environment. For this reason Zachariah and Elizabeth are chosen as parents for John the Baptist. They are “righteous before God.”

So the parents of John represent an environment that corresponds to his true self and offers it a place to live. In this spiritual enclave embedded in the world on this side, John the Baptist as true self and the material body and ego belonging to it can grow up always in connection with and led by the spiritual world. Thus it says, “the hand of the Lord was with him” (Luke 1:66, NRSV). Thus he will later be able to take on his task: “He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God” and “make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” These formulations in Luke lean on the prophet Malachi who says of the prophet Elijah, the forerunner of the “day of the Lord,” that “he will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents” (Malachi 4:6, NRSV). John the Baptist steps into the function of Elijah; he acts with “the spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17, NRSV). Thereby his task as forerunner is characterized again.

Reactions to the Annunciation

1:18 *Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.”* ¹⁹*The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.* ²⁰*But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.”* ²¹*Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary.* ²²*When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak.* ²³*When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.* ²⁴*After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said,* ²⁵*“This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.”* (NRSV)

Zechariah reacts to Gabriel’s annunciation with doubt. As always when in the gospels father and mother appear as a pair, the father represents the active, generative principle of will and the

mother the passive, receptive principle of awareness. In this case the active principle cannot open itself completely to the message of the angel. Although this principle experiences a spiritual impulse—Zechariah experiences it within himself as a vision or premonition of coming events—the principle cannot yet completely surrender to the impulse. The human will is mostly “unbelieving” regarding the impulses from the divine world at first because the will is so strongly penetrated by self-maintenance. For this reason Zechariah was “unable to speak.” He cannot act out of this impulse. “Speaking” here means to translate an impulse into action just as a thought is translated into words. Zechariah is not yet capable of this because he lacks openness. The reaction of the angel to Zechariah’s doubt is thereby not a punishment. The “not being able to speak” is simply the effect of a cause. Because the stubborn will cannot completely open to the divine impulse, the will also cannot translate the impulse into action by “speaking.” Doubt blocks the will’s ability to act; doubt makes it “unable to speak.”

After Zechariah has received the promise through Gabriel, he goes out of the temple into his house, and after a few days Elizabeth becomes pregnant. In accordance with biological laws, she receives from the father the germ of a material body, the basis for a future ego. But simultaneously an awake true self, John the Baptist, voluntarily leaves the spiritual world, lays aside his spiritual body, and connects with the new material body. He enters a womb without thereby in principle losing the connection with the spiritual world.

Elizabeth receives the biological seed of Zechariah and simultaneously the true self of John connected with it. Embryo and self develop in the womb “hidden from people” for five months (five is the number for the soul receptive to the spirit). Elizabeth protects the developing life that came out of the spiritual world, the true self of John, and herself for a period of time from the earthly world in order to offer undisturbed possibilities of development to this self. She knows that not only a material body for a future ego is developing in her body but connected to it a being standing in a special relation to the spiritual world. The “disgrace” of infertility is taken from her. Thus she sings God’s praises with Rachel, the wife of Jacob, who was in the same situation of “barrenness” and “reproach” (Genesis 30:23).

Annunciation of the Birth of Jesus

1:26 *In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."* (NRSV)

After the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist, the birth of Jesus is announced from the world of the spirit: after the annunciation of the birth of the forerunner, the annunciation of the birth of the fulfiller. The birth of the perfect true self of the human being is announced. This annunciation is the second aspect of the first great milestone in the Gospel of Luke.

The angel Gabriel who is sent from God and appears to Mary is not an outwardly visible apparition that could be photographed as was also the case with Zechariah. Gabriel is a power from the spiritual world and especially has the task to give to humanity messages from the divine world and its approaching impulses. Other divine powers, "angels," have other tasks; for example, Michael protects the spiritual world from tendencies hostile to it and destroys such tendencies. Such powers of the spiritual world can become active *in* human beings, and they become conscious of them if they have a special receptivity for this. Zechariah and Mary have this receptivity; after all, Zechariah is "righteous before God" and Mary is "favored." She has "found favor with God." She has a psychic and bodily constitution that makes her suitable to be a vessel for divine powers, even for the highest beings of the divine world. If someone becomes conscious of a divine power that carries contents of the spiritual world, then he can personify it as an "angel" and experience it as an outer reality that directs itself to the senses. In reality it directs itself to his inner, spiritual sense.

When a divine messenger power, an angel, becomes active in someone, then this exceeds his normal power of comprehension. For this reason Mary was shaken and "much perplexed" similar to the way Zechariah was terrified. But strengthened by the divine forces, by the angel, she takes a hold of herself again. She recognizes that here is a call from the divine world that

corresponds to her true being and therefore is not something to fear.

Conception through the Holy Spirit

1:31 *“And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” ³⁵The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her. (NRSV)*

Similar to the case of John the Baptist, in the case of Jesus, it is a matter of two conceptions and *two* births. On the one hand, the seed for a material body with a future ego, which are both mortal, is conceived. On the other hand, the germ of an immortal being, the true self of Jesus, enters the spatiotemporal world, is “conceived” by the soul of the parents who are turned to the spirit, and connects with the earthly seed. Likewise at birth: On the one hand, the child leaves the body of the mother and steps into the world. On the other hand, the true self connected to the child steps with it into existence in the spatiotemporal world. Unlike the sleeping true self of ordinary human beings, however, the true self of Jesus constantly, at conception and at birth, remains in direct connection with the spiritual world in which it had lived until then in an awakened state. After all, it had *voluntarily* descended from this spiritual world into the spatiotemporal world and for this purpose cast off its immortal body in order to take on the “figure of a servant,” a mortal earthly body. In this “descent” and connection with the earthly body, however, the connection of the true self with the spiritual world was maintained. As can be said for John the Baptist, it can also be said of Jesus that he was filled with the Holy Spirit from before his birth on. The forces from the

spiritual world streamed through his true self and endowed it with special potentialities. Only his childhood material body and his ego were not so far developed that they could consciously experience and give expression to the true self. But already very soon the true self would become noticeable as the special wisdom of this child.

Since the true self of Jesus could never be cut off from the spiritual current even with its connection with a material body and the ego belonging to it, from the beginning the spiritual forces were available to Jesus through which he could break the dominance of the material body and the ego, which usually condemn the true self to latency. So in the course of time, his true self could become powerfully effective also in the material body and ego, transform them, and build up a spiritual body that was again the expression of the true self. Thereby Jesus fulfilled the task for which he had taken on a material body.

Mary does not understand the facts of the double conception and birth. The angel speaks of the conception and birth of the spiritual man in her. She thinks, however, that he is speaking of the conception and birth of the material human being. And since she had not “known” (RSV) a man until then, she asks the angel in wonder, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The ignorance regarding the relation between the spiritual world and the earthly world that generally reigns in human beings comes to expression in this question.

Mary does not understand that the angel is speaking of the birth of Jesus’ true self, not of his material body. But precisely through this lack of understanding, Luke makes clear what the angel means: not the conception of a material seed. The meaning of the angel’s answer to Mary’s objection is, “You are mistaken. I am not speaking of the birth of a material body from a material seed. I am speaking of the birth of a true self, of the fact that a true self will connect with a material seed and come into existence with it. This conception and birth become possible through the Holy Spirit, the power of the Most High.” The “power of the Most High” brings the germ of the true self of Jesus into the body of Mary where it connects with the earthly seed of Joseph.

When Luke writes of Mary that she was a “virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph,” this also serves to indicate that the angel is not proclaiming an earthly, biological conception. Such would not be possible under the named circumstances for the time

being. An engagement, a marriage that has not yet been entered into, under the strong Jewish marriage laws and the moral integrity of Mary and Joseph, which is underlined through the characterization of Mary in what follows, categorically rules out a physical connection. Thus, Luke wants to say that here he is speaking of a conception of a different kind, a spiritual conception of the true self through the “power of the Most High,” not of the conception of an earthly seed through the power of a man.

The designation of Mary as “virgin” has still another meaning. A woman who as a vessel is to receive and offer habitation to a true self standing in closest connection to the spiritual world has to be a “virgin” also in the sense that her soul is free of devotion to earthly impulses: impulses of passions, of earthly desires and interests. As Elizabeth was “barren” in the sense that she could not bring forth any ordinary earthly “fruit,” so Mary is “virgin” in the sense that as soul she does not give herself to any earthly power but is only open to the “power of the Most High.” Only then can the “power of the Most High” “overshadow” her, for only then is the path clear for this power. Luke here leans on the prophet Isaiah: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14, NRSV).

Through the power of the Most High, the germ of the true self of Jesus is sunk into the “virgin,” the soul of Mary, which is free from all earthly influences. The true self of Jesus will enter into the vessel receptive to it, the soul of Mary. This is the spiritual conception that the angel Gabriel announces. Beside this will naturally follow also a biological conception through Joseph’s seed. There are several very old translations and manuscripts of the Gospel of Luke in which a conception through Joseph is explicitly talked about. After all, this biological conception of the seed for the physical body does not in any way contradict the spiritual conception of the spiritual being of Jesus. They are parallel acts, related to each other and connected with each other. What speaks against Joseph and Mary having married formally after the annunciation so that a legal biological conception followed?

If like Mary one does not understand this fact of the twofold conception and birth and does not recognize that the angel is actually only speaking of the conception and birth of the true self, then one will arrive at the misunderstanding of the “virgin birth,”

that is, the idea that the Holy Spirit, the “power of the Most High,” conceived a physical body in Mary and that she remained virgin in the biological sense. This is precisely a misunderstanding, however, that Luke wants to prevent absolutely. He precludes it firstly by allowing Mary to succumb to this misunderstanding—she thinks the angel is speaking of a biological conception—in order to then have the angel immediately clarify it. He precludes it secondly by explicitly emphasizing the circumstance that Mary was only engaged to Joseph and was a virgin in a biological sense before the annunciation of the spiritual conception and birth, for both these circumstances rule out a biological conception. Thereby Luke makes unambiguously clear that the angel is speaking of a spiritual conception of Jesus’ true self through the soul of Mary receptive to it.

If one does not understand this fact of the twofold conception or birth and also does not understand Luke’s method of distinguishing the spiritual conception from the biological, then one will take the statements of the Gospel made to prevent misunderstanding for proofs of a “miracle.” Then one believes that Luke wanted to say that the Holy Spirit performed a biological conception. One believes that Luke has underlined this by stating that Mary was only engaged to Joseph and still virgin as well as Mary’s statement, “I am a virgin.” As shown, however, through this statement, Luke on the contrary points to Mary’s misunderstanding, and also by the fact of the engagement and virginity of Mary, he wants to express that the angel’s message refers to the conception and birth of the true self, not to the biological conception of the material seed for a physical body. Far from establishing a dogma of an immaculate earthly conception by Mary (virgin birth), the Gospel of Luke, a fundamental document of Christianity, characterizes this dogma as a misunderstanding and shows that it is the case of an immaculate spiritual conception.

The Being of Jesus

The spiritual being that will connect with the physical body conceived by Joseph in Mary’s womb has the decisive task under the great spiritual impulse that stands at the beginning of Christianity. In comparison with John the preparer, he is the fulfiller. He will be called “Son of the Most High,” receive “the

throne of his ancestor David” from God, “reign over the house of Jacob forever,” and “of his kingdom there will be no end.” All these descriptions and announcements are prefigured in the Old Testament. Psalm 82 (verse 6) calls beings with a special relationship to God, be it human beings, be it “gods,” “children of the Most High” (“sons of the Most High” in the RSV). Every human being—as true self—is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26: “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness...”). This image of God, the true self, the actual identity of the human being, is inactive and hidden, however, covered over and suppressed to unrecognizableness by the earthly identity of the ego, which builds itself up from the experiences of the human being in the earthly world and is determined by self-assertion. It is the identity of the “man from the dust” with a “breath of life” that also the animal has (Genesis 2:7). In contrast, the true identity of the human being is a spiritual structure of powers that corresponds to the power structures of the spiritual world. This individual spiritual power structure of the human being, the image of God, has come forth from the cosmic spiritual power structure, from God, has been “begotten” of God, and is therefore God’s son, son of the Most High. Later, when Luke delineates Jesus’ genealogy, he traces him back to Adam, and Adam is described as “son of God” (Luke 3:38, NRSV).

Like Adam, every human being is in principle a son of God. In actuality, most human beings are not. The human being can become it again, however, when he dissolves his limited earthly ego-identity and allows the true, unlimited, spiritual identity to come to the fore. In Jesus, this spiritual identity is active from the beginning, from the womb on, as he is a being who lived in an awakened state in the spiritual world before he entered an earthly womb. It is only a matter of a short time before Jesus’ true identity penetrates the cover that the earthly material body with the ego has laid over it and comes to the fore in all glory. Thus it says that Jesus will be called a “Son of the Most High,” indeed one who is “great” before the Lord. For also among the “sons of the Most High,” there are “differences in rank,” as Jesus, for example, speaks of the “least in the kingdom of God” (Luke 7:28, NRSV). True, the “sons of the Most High” all possess an unfolded spiritual power structure, an unfolded spiritual identity, but they partake in different degrees, according to their comprehension, in the power structure of the spiritual world and can therefore bring forth

effects of varying greatness.

Jesus will besides this receive “the throne of his ancestor David.” The blood of King David flows in him because Joseph stems from the house of David. Jesus represents the best earthly forces of his people. He is capable of earthly rule. It turns out later that it is not his task to take on an earthly reign, however, rather to establish a spiritual kingdom in which the laws of spiritual world are in force. His task is not only to replace the individual earthly ego in his person by an individual spiritual self. He will also redeem the collective earthly ego of a whole people, yes, further of humanity, through a collective spiritual self of the people, or humanity respectively, which also results in new earthly social structures. In this sense, he “will reign over the house of Jacob forever,” and “of his kingdom there will be no end,” for no earthly kingdom can be eternal, only a spiritual one.

It is Jesus’ function among all the sons of God, those living consciously in the “kingdom of heaven,” to be the first who portrays the true identity of the human being with greatest clarity and power, so that all other sons of God can reconcile their true identity with this pattern. Various places in the Old Testament already point to this function and this eternity of Jesus’ kingdom, such as 2 Samuel 7:12 or Daniel 7:14. The ancient prophets already knew that a time would come where the transitory earthly ego of peoples and of humanity would pass away and be superseded by an eternal spiritual self, culminating in Jesus’ spiritual kingdom.

The replacement of the predominance of the earthly with the predominance of the spiritual is the redemption of the human being from his entanglement in the transitory earthly world. The spiritual king of the sons of the Most High solves for himself this entanglement on the basis of forces that flow to him through his spiritual identity. Since as spiritual king he exemplarily represents the spiritual power structure of the true self and encompasses those of all others, he thereby also enables in all other human beings the reestablishment of their true spiritual identity. On their side, they only need to dissolve the earthly ego-identity in favor of their true self. Jesus is thus the redeemer, and rightly the name “Jesus”—the Greek form of the Hebrew Yehoshua—is given to him, which means “God is salvation.” The name impresses on the redeemer the seal that designates his being and function. It is essential that this seal also appears in the whole world. For this reason, the angel puts great value on Mary naming her son Jesus.

Relationship between Mary and Elizabeth

The angel makes Mary aware that she is not the only one to have “found favor with God.” Her relative Elizabeth, although old and infertile up to now, has also become pregnant. In this way he connects the two aspects of the impulse from the divine world, the one of preparation and the one of realization, and again indicates that it is a matter of spiritual processes that work into the earthly world, become anchored there, and then trigger certain events. “For nothing will be impossible with God.” A word is structure and force; a word of God is spiritual structure and force that unfolds according to its laws and is irresistible. The expression leans on the Old Testament: Just as Sarah, “old” and “barren,” still gave birth to a special son because nothing is “too wonderful for the Lord” (Genesis 18:14, NRSV), so Elizabeth and Mary also give birth to special sons who have special tasks within the framework of the spiritual impulse.

Both are “related” to each other. This refers not only to their blood relationship. Above all it refers to a relation of spiritual and soul qualities. For both women are vessels for the reception of special beings and are thereby special instruments for the new spiritual impulse. Their relationship is also one of preparation to realization. Elizabeth is the “old woman,” the soul that has lived through everything earthly and thereby prepared itself for something that initiates the new, the unearthly. The preparer John is born of her. Mary, on the other hand, is the young woman, receiver and carrier of the new, the unearthly, that replaces the old. The indication that Jesus is conceived and born six months after John, thus that the development of each is always six months apart, is also very meaningful and likewise corresponds to the relation of preparation to realization. For after creating for six days, God “rested” as it says in Genesis. Six days of work are necessary so that on the seventh the fulfillment, the fruit of the preparation, can come. For the “rest” of God on the Sabbath is not the rest of not doing anything but the penetration and sanctification with divine forces of everything created.

The relation of preparation to realization, of the old to the new, further corresponds with the circumstance that the birth of John the Baptist is announced to Zechariah, the man, and the birth of Jesus to Mary, the woman. The old is the matured earthly from which it is necessary to part. The active, masculine, initiates the farewell and prepares the path for the new. Therefore the angel

Gabriel first turns to the man who represents the will element. The new, on the other hand, is the young spiritual impulse. The angel now appears to the young woman, Mary, the receptive feminine. And while the old in its will aspect, Zechariah, even resists to a certain degree the preparatory impulse, the new is accepted willingly by Mary, the receptivity for the new. She says, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” She consents to the event arranged and carried out by the spiritual world. She makes herself available as a vessel.

That Joseph hardly appears in Luke—which is different than in Matthew where he is the conversation partner of the angel—has its good reason. Luke puts the accent on receptivity, the feminine side of events. Joseph represents the “will of man,” the generating principle that is responsible for the creation of Jesus’ material body. It can and must remove certain earthly obstacles so that the spiritual principle can unfold. In Matthew it steps into the foreground with this function. In Luke, however, it is emphasized that it can do nothing directly for the growth of the new, the spiritual principle. Therefore Joseph steps back while Mary, the receptive principle, lovingly cares for the new earthly and spiritual life growing in her.

Elizabeth’s and Mary’s Joy

1:39 *In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. (NRSV)*

When an impulse from the spiritual world breaks into the earthly world and is anchored in it, joy reigns in all who long for redemption. It is not the joy of someone whose earthly wish is fulfilled or even the joy of someone who rejoices that his opponent is “justly punished.” It is the joy of someone whose heavy burden is taken away. His true identity, up to now suppressed by the ego-identity, breathes a sigh of relief. Finally it can unfold; finally forces flow to it unhindered in which it can grow and realize itself. Finally its own powers also flow unhindered. This joy can be compared to the one of a prisoner who eventually takes off his fetters, steps out of the darkness into the light, perceives a new world in the sunshine, and blossoms forth in these new

experiences.

It is also a joy of the true self for itself. Just as the joy of life of the earthly individual does not need a particular cause and is an expression of a free flow, even an overflow, of forces, so the joy that the liberated true self experiences is also a pure “joy of life,” feeling of self, and the liveliness of spiritual power.

The whole world will one day be such a sea of joy. It will live out of its spiritual root, the divine world, which is abundance and joy. Now, depression and dullness cover a world writhing in pain. Only occasionally a ray of joy from the divine world breaks into it, while otherwise it has to be content with very fleeting joys and always knows that pleasant conditions are followed again by unpleasant ones. But one day everything earthly will have become an expression of the spiritual again.

Connected with such joy is gratitude, for the one experiencing joy senses that the joy has not been granted to him due to his own efforts. It flows to him as a stream of power from the spiritual world in which he now takes part, with which he is now involved. Therefore he is now filled with gratitude towards God who not only has removed the earthly burdens but also sends the forces in which the true self unfolds. God is after all this stream of power from the spiritual world. This gratitude is spontaneously expressed in hymns of praise to God who is active within as the source of life and power, as the true self, but who is also the source of all life and all power outside of the human being.

Luke repeatedly describes this joy, gratitude, and reverence that are connected to an impulse of redemption from the spiritual world. When the angel Gabriel announces to Zechariah the birth of John the Baptist, he says that Zechariah “will have joy and gladness” and that also many others “will rejoice at his birth” (Luke 1:14, NRSV). The angel does not refer here to the ordinary human joy over the birth of a child. Rather he speaks of the joy that this new life will be a life filled with spirit through which many will be turned to God (Luke 1:16).

Such joy also breaks out when Mary and Elizabeth meet each other. It is a meeting of the carriers of the twofold impulse of redemption—one woman is the “vessel” for the preparer, the other for the fulfiller. And in this meeting of “vessels,” the “germs” of the twofold impulse also meet.

This expresses a spiritual law. Although the two aspects of the redeeming impulse step into the spatiotemporal world one after

the other, they are from the outset connected and attuned to each other in the spiritual world. Correspondingly the aspects of preparation and realization also make contact with each other from the start in the spatiotemporal world. As soon as the realizing aspect, Jesus, connects to the germ of his material body, he seeks to meet with the preparatory aspect, John the Baptist, who has connected with his material body “six months” earlier—the symbolic expression for the precursorship. Thus Mary goes “with haste” to visit Elizabeth.

Both aspects *can* make contact with each other because not only they themselves are “related” but also the “vessels” in which they are growing.

When preparation and realization meet—be it on the level of the carriers of the spiritual beings, be it on the level of the spiritual beings themselves—an energy exchange occurs and an increase in energy as when two electric currents meet. This increase in energy is expressed as joy. The preparer is pleased about the fulfiller. He is pleased that he is the preparer for the goal of redemption and a participant in this process. For this reason the child John the Baptist leaps in Elizabeth’s body when it is confronted with the higher power of the child Jesus in Mary’s body. And the “vessel” Elizabeth is pleased when confronted with the “higher vessel” Mary.

Elizabeth’s Hymn

1:41 *And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.” (NRSV)*

Filled with the forces of the spirit, Elizabeth sings the first hymn of joy, gratitude, and praise in the Gospel of Luke. She recognizes what function Mary has: to be a vessel for something holy. The vessel itself is also holy, the more so as it makes itself available without reservation for its task. Mary is “blessed.” She is in a state of openness to the spiritual being that lives in her, that connected with the earthly body generated in her by Joseph, and that is

growing with it. Elizabeth recognizes this, is filled with joy, and expresses this in a hymn. She is glad over her own function of being a participant in the process of redemption as the carrier of the preparatory aspect. She is even gladder of the fact that the other participant in the process of redemption, the carrier of the aspect of realization, has made contact with her. Is that a joy of pride? That she may be a participant and meets with an even “more important” participant? That would be a very earthly joy. No, through the meeting of the two aspects, Elizabeth experiences an increase in power. She is connected to an even higher stream of power than the one that flows in her in the form of the spiritual being John. This increase in power in her is joy, the anticipation of a state of redemption, the unfolding of the spirit in all people and in the world. She knows there will “be a fulfillment of what was spoken to” Mary “by the Lord.”

Mary’s Hymn

1:46 *And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.” ⁵⁶And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home. (NRSV)*

Through the meeting with Elizabeth, Mary also experiences an increase in power, an intense joy that she expresses in gratitude and praise. The hymn spoken by her describes the characteristics of redemption: Redemption means a fundamental, radical change in all relationships. What dominated previously—the earthly—is now put in its right place. The spiritual is again in first place and expresses itself through the earthly.

At the beginning of the hymn, Mary speaks of herself and

joyfully recognizes that this relationship is also brought again into order in herself through the redeemer. The redeemer sets new standards. What appeared lowly in the eyes of the world, Mary's true self, is now shown to be the highest. And what appeared to the eyes of the world as a lack—her unfruitfulness in regard to earthly fruit—now turns out to be the prerequisite for fruitfulness in another and higher sense. Mary as true, spiritual self is the vessel for the true, spiritual self of the redeemer who can grow in this vessel. This is the highest dignity that can be granted to someone.

Mary rejoices over this reevaluation of all values, this setting right of relationships. As with Elizabeth, it is also with Mary not prideful joy of being dignified with great tasks as an earthly human being. Rather it is the self-evident expression of a condition: What previously was regarded as lowly and suppressed although it is high now gains power and can unfold. The true self shows its joy of life, and this joy is the greater the more the true self does not exist for itself but is there for the world and bears fruit. Mary's true self is the womb for the true self of the redeemer.

Redemption is the reestablishment of the right relationship of spiritual and earthly world not only in the individual, however, but also in whole populations and in all of humanity. Therefore Mary now addresses political and social conditions. Here one could easily misunderstand the hymn and think that Luke understands redemption to be first and foremost social and political justice. God scatters "the proud in the thoughts of their hearts," fills "the hungry with good things," and sends "the rich away empty." But does "redemption" really mean for Luke that a people are liberated from foreign and class rule? Did Luke or Mary belong to the lower class, and is Mary's hymn the visionary compensation for previous degradation, suppression, and poverty, the dream of someone who has been passed over?

Or does Mary long for moral justice rather than for social justice? The person who is morally good, "righteous," and pious loves peace and does not fight for honor, power, and possessions. Therefore he is suppressed and driven from his place in the sun by those striving for honor, power, and possessions. He is consoled by the hope that the good will eventually be rewarded, be it already in this world when social conditions are overturned or be it later in heaven. The wicked are punished, however, by God perhaps already robbing them of their goods in this life or throwing them

later into hell.

Would such resentment, however, which in imagination takes revenge on others for their life of luxury and their wickedness, be worthy of someone pious who loves God? Would such compensatory thinking be worthy of Mary who is a vessel for the Holy Spirit?

No, the hymn is not a song of praise for social revolution, neither as real compensation for socially weak, humiliated, and poor people nor as moral compensation for good people in which the good get their just reward in the end and the wicked their just punishment. The hymn describes processes and characteristics of spiritual redemption. In this redemption the presumption of the earthly world being the essential existence and the absolute value is annulled and the spiritual world is rightly reinstated as the real world on which the existence and value of the earthly world depends. According to earthly standards the spiritual world is lowly and poor. But according to spiritual standards, it is distinguished, dominant, and rich. When it is developed and fed, then the earthly is also developed and fed if it complies with the spiritual. When, on the other hand, only the earthly is developed and fed, then the spiritual is disregarded and wastes away, whereby also the earthly will lose its power in the long run.

Thus for the process of spiritual redemption, the hymn uses pictures taken from the social sphere. When the powerless, poor, and imprisoned true self is freed from its imprisonment in the earthly and becomes conscious and active in the spiritual world, then it fares like what a powerless and poor prisoner in this earthly world may experience when he suddenly becomes powerful, rich, and free.

When the wrong relation between the earthly and spiritual world is removed in the individual, however, the social conditions are ordered in the long run as well. So the processes described in the hymn are after all not only pictures for a spiritual revolution. They also describe real conditions that are the result of a spiritual revolution. God is not a heavenly authority who punishes the wicked and rewards the good and even less the active driving force in social revolutions. But when a spiritual revolution occurs in many individuals, then this also results in fundamentally new social conditions without the resorting to violence. The true self in Mary rejoices over this spiritual lawfulness, which is God.

In her song of praise she finally embeds the event in the

development of humanity. The whole development of humanity has redemption as its goal, the reestablishment of the right relationship between the earthly and the spiritual world. For this reason God remembers Abraham and “his descendants forever.”

Abraham and his descendants, all the people of Israel, “God’s servant,” here stand for those in whom the true self is being born. This true self is the “servant” of God; it is oriented to the laws of the spiritual world, which are also its own laws. The whole development of humanity has the aim that one day all will have unfolded their true self, belong to the “people of Israel,” and live in eternity. This is a further reason for Mary’s song of praise of the spiritual world.

The contact between the two aspects of the new spiritual impulse, preparation and realization, which are still in the state of germination, lasts for “about three months.” Mary stays with Elizabeth this long. Seen outwardly these are the three months still remaining until the birth of John the Baptist. Seen inwardly it is the time in which the preparatory and the realizing aspects attune to each other: in willing, feeling, and thinking. After the attunement has taken place, what has previously been growing as a germ can step into life. It can be born.

Timeless Meaning of these Processes

How would it help the contemporary person if an embodiment of beings connected to the spirit, John the Baptist and Jesus, had occurred only once, about 2000 years ago? Should he believe they had redeemed humanity once and for all? Redemption is only possible by the person going a spiritual path himself and radically changing on it. A belief that this path was lived about 2000 years ago as an example can help very little with this. It also has to be possible today that a spiritual impulse anchors in the earthly world, that beings connected to the spirit incarnate in earthly bodies and are born from a womb. Only under these conditions can the contemporary human being also go a spiritual path.

As the New Testament describes spiritual laws by way of exemplary historical events, its depictions can also really apply in the present and in the future. Beings connected with the spirit can incarnate in earthly bodies also today. One knows of such events from the most recent past: There were forerunners of new spiritual schools around whom pupils gathered, as around John the Baptist,

and there were founders of such spiritual schools around whom pupils congregated, as around Jesus.

The spiritual impulse depicted in the New Testament can be understood even more directly and contemporarily when the events are referred to the individual person. This is possible because soul-spiritual laws are valid on all planes. The destinies of the historical figures in the gospel then become pictures for the destiny of the soul forces of each individual who prepares for and goes a spiritual path.

Most people are at a level of development in which they suspect nothing of their actual purpose of life. They are absorbed in the earthly world and its desires for success, power, and wealth. Their true self is completely latent. It sleeps.

Other people are in a state of development in which the true self becomes noticeable as the presentiment that the human being has a purpose that goes beyond life in the earthly world. The goal of life of such people is not to get ahead in the world but to lead a life that approximately expresses their innermost presentiment. Traditional religion gives their presentiment a goal and content. They are not yet on the spiritual path but are preparing for it—be it consciously or unconsciously—through their religious faith and through an upright life.

“Zachariah” symbolizes such a person’s will for a consistent way of life that is oriented in a living and not a dogmatic way towards a traditional religion. Such a person furthermore sees reality differently than someone who is totally absorbed in his interests and desires. The feelings of the former show him the relativity of these interests and desires in comparison to the goal of life of which he has a presentiment. The symbol for this feeling is “Elizabeth.” The head and heart of this person—“Zachariah” and “Elizabeth,” will and feeling—are touched by a presentiment arising from the true self. The true self becomes noticeable in him as from a distance and gives new perspectives to will and feeling.

If this state becomes permanent, then it can happen as in a flash that the hope, even the certainty, can shoot up from the true self, from the deeper layers of the soul, that a life is possible that definitively turns away from all transitory goals and interests in order to let itself be permeated by the impulses from the world of the spirit. This lightning-like certainty and vision of a life open to new experiences is a message from the true self that is intensively touched by the spiritual world. This touch is communicated to the

consciousness. This is the angel Gabriel's promise of the birth of John the Baptist. "John the Baptist" himself is the picture for the state of soul arising from will and feeling, an ethical conduct that prepares for and promotes a new spiritual life.

The procreation and conception of John the Baptist through Zachariah and Elizabeth are thus pictures for a "repentant" earthly soul prepared for conversion arising from a will consistently directed to the spiritual world (Zachariah) and a new feeling connected with this (Elizabeth). A repentant earthly soul—symbolized by John the Baptist—is the prerequisite and preparation for a spiritual soul, a conscious true self that is closely connected with the spiritual world.

The will of the person on this level of development—Zachariah—is at first closed to this repentance and total life reversal. This person is too accustomed to expect his salvation and his redemption solely from the fulfillment of the "law" and the loyal faith in the dogmas of his religion. Zachariah, however, symbolizes the will of a person who finally nevertheless loosens from the traditional Old-Testamentary constraints and cooperates on the path to freedom. But he is temporarily "dumb." Doubt hinders him from "speaking," from cooperating with the coming events.

The feeling of the person on this level of development—Elizabeth—is "getting on in years." The person has had countless painful experiences with the transience of the world and has come to the insight that this world in its material and immaterial aspects does not offer any fulfillment to his innermost longing. Therefore he is "barren" in regard to earthly "fruit." He cannot possibly identify any longer with the goals of this world of time and space. He is open, however, for the higher meaning in all events. He knows that new possibilities are waiting to be realized in him and gives the "repentant" soul—"John the Baptist"—room to recognize these new possibilities and to prepare for them with a new ethical conduct.

Thus the first step of human development is an unreflective absorption in the transitory earthly world. The true spiritual self connected with the spiritual world is completely latent. The second step is the arising of a "repentant" consciousness and a corresponding ethical life evoked by a presentiment arising from the true self. This step is the preparation for the spiritual path, the preparation for a spiritual consciousness and life. It is symbolized

by Zachariah and Elizabeth, the purified human head and heart, and by the resulting John the Baptist: conscious life-reversal. The person tunes himself ethically to a coming new existence in harmony with the spiritual world.

The spiritual path, the third step of human development, leads to this new existence. When the true self gains more scope on the basis of the preparatory way of life, then openness and receptivity for the spiritual world arise in the person. This is the beginning of the spiritual path. The heart is no longer just oriented to the spiritual world in presentiment and piety like “Elizabeth” but is seized and permeated by this spiritual world. He no longer has a primary interest in the world of time and space and does not let it influence him in any way. This state of the heart is symbolized by “Mary.” She is open to the spiritually new but closed to the earthly old. This is her “virginity.” Therefore the certainty that a new consciousness and being, the true self, will be born in such a person can communicate itself to the perception of his soul like a flash of lightning from the spiritual world—Gabriel. “Mary,” however, still believes that this new consciousness and being have to be conceived out of the earthly will—which is why she doubts and emphasizes, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” For she is free of the influences of the earthly will. Out of the spiritual world, however, the insight arises in her that the new, spiritual state of soul will arise out of the “Holy Spirit.” This is the correction by the angel Gabriel.

The true self that up to now had only worked as if from a distance on “Elizabeth,” the purified heart, will now work directly in the heart open to it, “Mary,” and take residence in it. “Jesus” arises in this person.

The state of preparation for the spiritual path and its beginning also “meet” in such a person. The germ of the spiritual soul—Jesus—meets the already further developed germ of the “repentant” earthly soul—John the Baptist. The “vessels” of these states also meet: the feeling heart virginally opened to the spirit—“Mary”—meets the feeling heart oriented to and preparing for the spirit—“Elizabeth.” Both conditions of the heart, the ethical and the spiritual, pass into each other. And surely joy will arise about the events of redemption in the person’s own being, a joy that lets the heart in its two states—“Elizabeth” and “Mary”—resound with two songs of praise. When the promise of the angel Gabriel sounds in his heart, when his heart is touched by the impulses of the

divine world, then it is filled with forces that do not originate out of the spatiotemporal world. It is lifted into a state of unearthly bliss and joy. And the human individual touched by the approaching spiritual forces also suspects and finally proclaims as in a hymn what redemption actually means: the reestablishment of the original relations between spirit, soul, and body in one's own being.

Thereby, through the first milestone of the gospel, the first phase of the spiritual path and its preceding preparation are characterized. Jesus is promised: World and humanity are touched by the impulse from the spiritual world and open themselves to it. It is the phase of receptivity, of "faith" in the sense of openness to this impulse. This faith is preceded by a complete life reversal also enabled by the divine impulse. John is promised: World and humanity are called to ethical reversal by the divine impulse.

Second Milestone of the Gospel of Luke: Connection of the Spiritual World with the Earthly World

The second milestone of the gospel, Jesus' birth and circumcision and the preceding birth and circumcision of John the Baptist, describes the second phase of the influence of the spirit in the world. After the touch of the world and humanity through the impulse from the divine world, there follows the connection of this impulse with world and humanity. Transferred to the spiritual path of the individual, this means that the pupil enters the second phase of this path. The births of John the Baptist and Jesus become pictures for events in the soul realm of the individual pupil. His true self and an ethical way of life that promotes the development of this self are "born" in him. That which up to now had slept as a latent tendency in him becomes active and noticeable. The spiritual forces—Jesus—now work in him and are increasing. This work is prepared and accompanied by the cooperation of his earthly ego. It makes the paths straight for the true self as John the Baptist made the paths straight for Jesus.

Birth means that what has been growing in the womb steps out into the world, connects with it, and anchors itself in it. When a

being connected to the spirit such as John or Jesus steps out into the earthly world, then it does so in an earthly body. It has laid aside its spiritual body and voluntarily taken the “form of a servant” in order to be close to human beings in this form and to bring them the spiritual impulse. This presupposes, however, that the true self of this being can utilize the whole earthly personality—ego and body—as a useable instrument. The earthly personality has to become totally free of egocentricity. It has to completely surrender to the impulses from the true self. This means that it is no longer led in any way by earthly interests. This necessity of the earthly personality becoming free of egocentricity is described symbolically through the “circumcision.”

The connection of the spiritual impulse with the world furthermore means that it is made tangible and visible from the start. It not only works in the world but is also characterized from the beginning as a spiritual impulse. Its nature is described so that human beings will know and understand what is happening among them. This open characterization of the spiritual impulse is symbolized by the “naming” ceremony.

Thus in what follows Luke describes the births as well as both circumcisions and naming ceremonies of John the Baptist and Jesus, which correspond to the two aspects of preparation and realization.

Birth of John the Baptist

1:57 *Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. ⁶⁰But his mother said, “No; he is to be called John.” ⁶¹They said to her, “None of your relatives has this name.” ⁶²Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. ⁶³He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is John.” And all of them were amazed. ⁶⁴Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶All who heard them pondered them and said, “What then will this child become?” For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him. (NRSV)*

John the Baptist is born. The being connected to the spirit that had already connected in the womb with the germ of a mortal body and ego now steps into the world of appearances with this mortal body and the ego residing in it. With this the preparatory aspect of the spiritual impulse embodied through John is anchored firmly in the earthly world and begins to work in it. It works in humanity as a call to turn back and to ethically prepare for the conscious experience of the spiritual impulse.

Circumcision

On the eighth day the “circumcision” takes place. This is a very profound Jewish custom, for everyone steps into the world not only with an earthly body and rudimentary ego as the organizing center of the earthly life and carrier of thinking, feeling, and willing. Connected to this body and its ego is also a true self with which the human being belongs to the world of the spirit. But because the earthly body and its ego are usually totally determined by earthly forces, this true self is generally ineffective and latent and also remains so lifelong.

The task of the individual is to allow the true self to unfold in the divine forces, however. The prerequisite for this is that he is free from his egocentric interests and the domination by earthly forces. Then the whole personality can become a receptive vessel for the impulses from the true self and as a good instrument translate these into action. Circumcision is symbolic for the removal of egocentricity. It shows the essential requirement that someone will have to meet in order to fulfill his actual task in life. Since time immemorial the male member has been symbolic for the human creative force, also the holy creative force of the true self. Over the member lies the foreskin, however, symbolic of the egocentric personality, which hinders the true self in its function. This impeding skin is cut off or cut into as a sign that whoever wants to reach the goal of life has to cut away his egocentricity. The divine laws of the Ten Commandments cut away egocentricity from the outside. Thus circumcision can become symbolic of the old covenant that God made with Abraham (Genesis 17:10-14). The law cuts away egocentricity and thus enables a preliminary connection of God with the human being. It ends “paganism,” being wrapped up in the earthly world, and makes the individual a member of “Israel,” a servant of God. (“Israel” means “servant of

God.”)

John also is circumcised for if he is to fulfill his life task, he will have to meet the prerequisite for this. It is true: An active relationship between the true self and the world of the spirit exists in him from before birth. The true self in him is in principle awake and able to act, but the material body that he voluntarily accepts and the rudiments of an ego tied to it, which takes itself as absolute, lie like a “skin” over the true self so that for the time being it cannot manifest. This “skin,” this egocentricity, has to be first cut away so that the true self can use the personality like a vessel and instrument.

Circumcision traditionally occurs on the eighth day after birth. Eight is the number of the breakthrough of something new after a complete cycle of development symbolized by the number seven. When the personality with its body and ego has developed in the earthly world up to responsible maturity, the time has come where its egocentricity can be cut away by the law of the old covenant and it can become a “servant of God.” In a new development it then becomes a vessel and instrument for the true self. This new development is enabled by the “circumcision on the eighth day.” The ritual points in anticipation to these processes.

Naming

After the circumcision of John, he is given a name. The name of a thing or living being is for the ancients the formula in which in a concentrated way are expressed its being, its special task in life, and its special goal in life, which stamp all its expressions of life. Whoever names a thing or living being recognizes its characteristics and thereby becomes conscious of them. When Adam in Paradise gives every creature a name (Genesis 2:19-20), this means that he becomes conscious of the nature of each creature and makes it understandable and communicable through a term. The name of a creature was originally the exact expression and reflection of its nature in thought and in language.

Actually on the eighth day after birth, the day that symbolizes the breakthrough of the new, the human being should receive the name that corresponds to his true self and its special characteristics. Then his name would contain the promise of the realization of the special life task indicated in the characteristics of his true self and the incentive for him to fulfill this task. Contrary

to the symbolism of the circumcision, however, most newborns receive a name that corresponds to the wishes or coincidental preferences of the parents. It describes the characteristics of the child's earthly personality that are desired by the parents and is not in the least related to the child's true self.

Luke expressly emphasizes that in the case of John the Baptist, the true self has priority over the spatiotemporal personality. The earthly personality, which is biologically generated by the father, should traditionally receive a name that expresses its origin in the earthly blood of its lineage. For this reason "they," the neighbors and relatives, representatives of the spatiotemporal and blood relationships, want to name the newborn after his father, "Zechariah." But in John the spiritual true self dominates over the earthly constitution. The structure and function of his special true self have to come to expression in his name: "God has shown mercy." The special task of the spiritually connected being John is to let spiritual forces of a special kind flow into humanity. They are to move people to reversal and preparation for the reception of redeeming spiritual forces. This possibility of reversal and the preparation for the reception of redeeming spiritual forces is the "mercy" shown by God. The parents of the newborn, Zechariah and Elizabeth, are already connected with the spiritual world and feel it is important that the child receives the name that corresponds to his spiritual being and task.

When a spiritual impulse steps into the world, it is important that it has a name and that it is the right name. For through the name people are informed that such an impulse is even coming to them, of what it consists, and of what it is bringing to them. In this way they can consciously examine the impulse. The name, the earthly formula for a spiritual content, acts like a transformer station for this content in the earthly world.

It is even more crucial that there is agreement between the name and the being of the carrier of the name. If this agreement exists, the impulse, the being of the carrier of the name, works with increased power. If, on the other hand, it does not exist, for example in the case that the name pretends something that does not correspond to the being thus named, then the contrast between the effect of the name and the effect of the being will have disastrous consequences.

John's name, "God has shown mercy," describes a particular aspect of the effect of the spiritual world in the earthly world. It

anchors this aspect through thoughts and language in human consciousness as if it were the seal of the sender of a letter. Thereby people become aware of this aspect, can examine whether there is behind the name the reality it designates, and feel challenged to investigate this reality. They can open themselves to the cleansing, purifying spiritual forces of reversal and preparation for redemption. God has shown mercy.

In this sense every spiritual brotherhood, every mystery school, and every religion that brought a new spiritual impulse to humanity has expressed its essence with special names or symbols in order to anchor itself in the earthly world and give people the possibility to consciously examine it.

Zechariah did not want to believe the proclamation of the “angel,” the voice from the spiritual world that promised the preparatory spiritual impulse. Such a possibility appeared too unlikely to him, to the earthly will. Through this doubt he cut himself off from the stream of spiritual forces in his own being and could therefore also not cooperate with them and give them expression. He could not “speak.” But now “speech” comes back to him. He announces the will of the spiritual world. He submits to the will of the spiritual world and collaborates with its requirements and laws. He rejects the naming by earthly powers and with a name related to the earthly personality of the child and effects a naming that corresponds to the laws of the spiritual world. He recognizes how important it is that these laws take effect in the earthly world. With this he again stands in the stream of spiritual forces, can take them up, and express them: He can “speak” again.

“Fear” came over the people of the earthly world in the face of these events as always happens in the limited earthly consciousness when it is confronted with a spiritual dimension beyond its horizon. It suspects the power of this dimension and the fact that it has cut itself off from this dimension, that it lives in a state of lack that cannot be maintained in the long run, and that it has to someday comply with this dimension either voluntarily or involuntarily.

In spite of this the people in this story do not close themselves off from the effects of the divine dimension, however. They “pondered them.” They are open to the events and feel connected to the child and the effects that will one day go out from him. They are prepared to allow their deficient existence to be reversed with

the help of the spiritual world. They do not yet know how, which is why they ask: “What then will this child become?”

Hymn of Zechariah

1:67 *Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy: ⁶⁸“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. ⁶⁹He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, ⁷⁰as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, ⁷¹that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. ⁷²Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, ⁷³the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us ⁷⁴that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. ⁷⁶And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, ⁷⁷to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. ⁷⁸By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, ⁷⁹to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” ⁸⁰The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel. (NRSV)*

After John’s circumcision, Zechariah, who has regained his “speech,” speaks a hymn. The spiritual world inspires him and enables him to recognize the spiritual laws. He gives voice to this recognition. Like Mary he describes in his hymn the characteristics of redemption.

For him, too, redemption is a process of humanity: the breaking in of eternity into time from which follow a revaluation of all values and a revolution of all relationships. Where now the striving for honor, power, and wealth stands in the foreground and everything is judged from this perspective, one day the life from the world of the spirit, which is a mighty streaming of spiritual forces according to the laws of the spiritual world, will dominate. Conflict, suffering, death, and suppression, the results of the striving for power, success, and wealth, will have disappeared and made room for a conscious, powerful cooperation of humanity

with the laws of the spiritual world. This drastic change of conditions, this removal of the fundamental imbalance between spiritual and earthly world, is unavoidable and determined from eternity. For a distancing of humanity from the laws and forces of the spiritual world inevitably results in tension, which will powerfully pull humanity back to the spiritual world after it has lived through the disastrous consequences of this distancing.

For this reason this hymn speaks of God's prophets who have been sent out "from of old." They embody the voice of eternity in time and the call back to eternity. The covenant of the "people of Israel" with the "God of Israel" has as its goal the redemption of the people and is exemplary for the covenant of all of humanity with God in so far as it is the image of God. It is the confirmation of the fact that the spiritual world repeatedly touches and connects with the earthly world. It does not cease to call to the image of God in humanity no matter how far it has distanced itself from its origin.

On the basis of this unbreakable anchoring of the spiritual in the earthly world, spirit-connected individuals who represent the spirit in the earthly and promote the process of redemption appear again and again in human history. Abraham, the faithful, was such a person, an example for all who open themselves to the impulses from eternity. Another person of this sort was David, the confident, who is an example for all who are stirred by the forces of the spiritual world, who go through life with a strong faith in them, and who maintain their connection to them despite all errors and set-backs. In the house of David, a "mighty savior" is raised up: The countless individuals in the course of history who believed in the spiritual world like Abraham and fought for the spiritual world like David form the basis in the organism of humanity on which the strength of salvation can be established. Individuals connected to the spirit like Jesus in whom the spiritual world works with perfection can appear when these preconditions have been established and being redeemed themselves help others in their redemption. With this Jesus, the "mighty savior," becomes the example for all who are filled with redeeming forces and help others in their redemption.

Redemption is: being saved from one's enemies. The revaluation of all values means that the dominance of the striving for power and success—these are the enemies—over the life out of eternity is abolished. The true self can breathe a sigh of relief; its

“enemies,” the energies of the earthly human being, in the long run even become the servants of the spirit. They are integrated in the soul-spiritual household and find their right place there.

Redemption is: to be able to serve the spiritual world in holiness and righteousness and without fear. The true self freed from the grip of the earthly energies no longer needs to lead a shadow existence in the face of the superior power of earthly conditions but can realize itself. It realizes the laws of the spiritual world, which are also its own, and is liberated thereby. A being is free when it can live according to its inherent laws. The true self living according to its laws, which are also those of the spiritual world, is holy—whole—because it is attuned to the spiritual world and righteous—just—because it lives according to the laws of the spiritual world. This all becomes possible because God, the spiritual world, repeatedly turns to human beings according to the “oath” that God swore to Abraham: according to the indissoluble anchoring of the spiritual world in the earthly.

Redemption does not mean that the earthly ego is rescued from its enemies and becomes holy and just. When the earthly ego is worn down by the results of its striving for power, success, and happiness and longs for mercy and redemption, then it perhaps becomes very humble and obedient. But thereby the dominance of the earthly over the spiritual is not abolished. It continues; the fundamental imbalance between the spiritual and the earthly worlds continues. It is only abolished when the true self can unfold freely, which presupposes that the earthly ego steps back. Then it is possible, however, that the purified earthly ego penetrated by the forces of the true self becomes its organ of expression, and this means redemption for the earthly ego as well. It is then again in the right place in the cosmic order.

In the second part of the hymn, the role of John the Baptist is characterized within the framework of the great event of redemption, and the redemption for which he is to prepare the way is described in more detail. John the Baptist belongs to the line of prophets who were sent “from of old” from the spiritual world to prepare humanity for redemption. He stands in the tradition of Elijah who according to Malachi (3:1) is sent by the Lord, by God, to prepare his way. After the preparation of the prophets, God, embodied in Jesus, wakes the true self of the human being, enables it to mature and unfold, and leads it to conscious resurrection in the spiritual world: to redemption.

Redemption is: “knowledge of salvation.” Whoever goes the spiritual path becomes conscious of the insight arising from the deepest layers of his being of what salvation is for him: the birth of his true self. For with that he fulfills his inherent aim.

Redemption is: “the forgiveness of sins” by “the tender mercy of our God.” When a new consciousness arises from the true self, then connected to it is the power to recognize the self-maintenance of the ego that is filled with fear and earthly striving. The nature of this ego appears spontaneously before the consciousness. The individual concerned recognizes that the striving of the ego is trivial in the face of the abundance of the spiritual world. With this knowledge, egocentricity gradually dissolves. The separation from the spiritual world, “sin,” gradually fades in the forces of the spiritual world, in the “mercy of God.”

Redemption is illumination of existence by the light of the spiritual world. A light from on high shines on “those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.” When a human being on the spiritual path has become conscious of his goal, “salvation,” and in this consciousness has done away with the separation from God in principle, then he becomes conscious of the laws and forces of the spiritual world. The light of the spiritual world will dawn in him. At the same time and in contrast to this, he becomes conscious of the situation of the earthly human being. The latter’s consciousness, which is stamped by the world of appearances, is darkness in comparison to the consciousness stamped by the spiritual world. While the true self, itself eternal, rises into the life of eternity, the earthly ego is subjected to death.

Redemption is finally: to walk on “the way of peace.” When the human being follows the impulses of his earthly striving for power, success, and happiness, then struggle and conflict will reign everywhere because of the differing individual and collective interests. The peace that he creates as an earthly ego afraid of the consequences of his behavior will always be only a delicate balance between different interests. The causes of conflicts are not removed, so that with the smallest shifting of the balance, immediately new conflicts will break out. No, “the way of peace” on which the spirit guides our feet is the way of abandoning earthly interests and unfolding the true self that lives in the powers and laws of the spiritual world. There are not different interests in the “kingdom of God,” only the knowing assumption of the tasks set by the spirit as in an orchestra where all members

know the whole score and the parts of all other instruments, faithfully play their parts, and so contribute to the success of the whole. This follows from recognition, from the abolition of the separation from God, and from illumination on the spiritual path.

Birth of Jesus

Six months after the birth of John, the preparatory aspect of the spiritual impulse, Jesus, the realizing aspect of the spiritual impulse, is born. He is circumcised like John and receives a name. Additionally the evangelist tells of the “presentation” of Jesus in the temple.

Jesus’ birth corresponds to the second phase of the spiritual path, the birth of John the Baptist to the preparation of this phase. The realizing aspect of the spiritual impulse, which at first had only touched humanity, now steps into the world and connects with it. Applied to the level of the soul in the individual, this means that the spiritual forces begin to circulate and to work. They change him in as far as he consciously cooperates. His cooperation is the preparation and prerequisite for the realization of the true self. Jesus’ birth symbolizes the beginning of the work of the spiritual world in the earthly world, the birth of John the Baptist the cooperation of the purified earthly human being. Without this cooperation the work of the spirit would be futile. Vice versa, the spiritual impulse makes the earthly cooperation possible.

So John the Baptist and Jesus step into the world and connect with it separated in time by “six months.” For John the Baptist symbolizes the earthly development that after six periods enters the seventh, the sanctification through the divine world. In the story of creation, God also sanctifies his work on the seventh “day” after six “days,” six periods of development.

Circumstances of the Birth

2:1 *In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was*

engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (NRSV)

The story Luke tells of Jesus' birth is also an exemplary story that shows under what conditions a redeemer from the spiritual world is always born in the earthly world and how earthly human beings receptive to the redeeming forces always react to such a "birth" in their own being.

It may be that some circumstances of this birth were really historical—what is essential to recognize are the always valid soul-spiritual facts that Luke expresses through these circumstances and through other details. So for example the apparently exclusively historical detail that the emperor Augustus rules the world and specifically that Quirinius is governor of Syria for the Roman emperor is a statement of the condition of the world that the Redeemer enters. One might think that Luke wanted to date Jesus' birth with this statement. If this had been his main purpose, then he could have given a more exact year. But he wants to show thereby that the Redeemer comes at a time, even has to come at a time, when the earthly powers, here represented by the Roman emperor, have the absolutely sole rule. The Jewish people, among whom the Redeemer from the spiritual world is to be born, are also under the rule of the earthly powers. Might, success, wealth, and force rule even in the people who as "Israel," as "servant of God," are supposed to give expression to the spiritual world. The right order of things in which the spiritual would rule over the earthly and the earthly would be an expression of the spiritual has been reversed to its exact opposite worldwide. The earthly dominates and does not allow the spiritual to carry any weight. Such a situation demands a redeemer; there simply has to be a turnaround after this wrong situation has developed to such extremes.

On the other hand it becomes clear what a mighty task the Redeemer is faced with: to initiate a reversal of all conditions so as to reestablish the right order of things. The nature of earthly power is characterized by the census to assess people's wealth for tax purposes ordered by Quirinius after Judea has been annexed as a new province in the Roman Empire. Earthly power does not want to leave anything to chance. It wants to determine, control,

and utilize all the resources available to it for its own purposes. The total rational registration of all possibilities and the steering of these possibilities are in its nature.

The nature of the Redeemer and of redemption forms the greatest imaginable contrast to this. There is freedom in the spiritual world. The spiritual laws are not imposed from the outside. They are the inner structure of the spirit and the essence of the spiritual world itself. They unfold spontaneously without calculation and planning. Every spiritual being allows the other spiritual beings to unfold in freedom, and all are filled with the self-evident certainty that the essence of the spiritual world and its order will manifest in this unfolding. This is redemption, and the human being in whom the forces of the redeeming spiritual world become active enters this state. Instead of fear for one's own existence and the resulting calculation and manipulation of others—which result in general uniformity and paralysis under compulsion—a knowing trust in the effectiveness of spiritual laws in one's own being and the being of others develops. It can be allowed in full trust that one's own and others' being unfold in freedom according to their inherent lawfulness.

The Redeemer is also always born in "Bethlehem," not in "Jerusalem." "Bethlehem" means "house of bread" and is a symbol for the living bread, the forces of the spiritual world. It is of "one of the little clans of Judah" (Micah 5:2, NRSV), the most inconspicuous place in the land in comparison to the mighty Jerusalem. Although "Jerusalem" means "city of peace," it has in the meantime become the stronghold of an old religion hostile to all new spiritual impulses, the stronghold of the traditional religious power of the high priests and scribes. The Redeemer is always executed as a blasphemer and heretic in "Jerusalem." The Redeemer has no chance of survival in such a place of earthly-religious significance and power. Thus he is born in the "house of bread," at the source of spiritual forces inconspicuous to earthly sight. It can be the case of a place in outer reality that has the suitable conditions for the birth of the Redeemer. It can also be a place in the soul of the individual where the true self first becomes active.

Bethlehem is also the birthplace of David, the king who represents the independent earthly ego oriented to the spiritual world. Thus Jesus is born in the same town as David; he is even "from the house and family of David." He is a descendant of David

according to the blood. Thereby the Redeemer also embodies the ego-forces of the people of "Israel," the "servant of God," that are oriented to the spiritual world. According to blood and spatial origin, he is the inheritor of these forces. Every redeemer connects in a similar way to the living religious traditions of his people. As an ego he also possesses inner independence and royal power in order to fulfill his tasks as dictated by his conscience oriented to the spiritual world. And as someone born in "Bethlehem," he will be continuously strengthened by spiritual bread, by nourishment from the world of the spirit, and can communicate it to others.

There is nothing against Jesus really, historically, having been born in Bethlehem. When it says elsewhere in the gospels that he comes from Nazareth, this can be explained by his family having lived in Nazareth and Jesus having grown up there. By mentioning the birth in Bethlehem, Luke would then have additionally indicated the spiritual facts of the case that the Redeemer never comes from the sphere of the established negative religious power (Jerusalem) but is always the embodiment of the positive religious traditions of his people.

Some have doubted the historicity of the Bethlehem birth, however, and claimed that Luke added it against his better knowledge in order to mobilize the authority of the prophets for "his" Redeemer. When the prophet Micah prophecies the birth in Bethlehem of "one who is to rule in Israel whose origin is from of old, from ancient days," then one only needs to let Jesus be born in Bethlehem in order to identify him one more time as messiah. But such a procedure would testify against Luke's love of truth.

This speculation is superfluous when one recognizes that the mention of Bethlehem as the birthplace of the messiah in the prophets as well as in Luke calls a spiritual fact into consciousness whereby the historicity of this fact is secondary. Micah knew that the Redeemer could not be born in "Jerusalem" but only in the "house of bread" and that he would possess the "characteristics of David." Luke knew the same. If he was referring to Micah, then this is because Micah's statement confirmed his own spiritual statement.

It also does not need to have been, as has likewise been claimed, that the prophet and Luke fixed Bethlehem as the fictitious birthplace of the Redeemer in order to lead an attack against the ruling priesthood in Jerusalem. It is sufficient to recognize "Bethlehem" as a place of living religiosity in Israel and

“Jerusalem” as the citadel of crystallized religious power. Then one understands why the Redeemer has to be born in “Bethlehem.” Luke presents a spiritual fact and does not lead an attack in the service of theological interests.

As verse eight shows, it is moreover night when the Redeemer is born. Darkness is over the earth: darkness in comparison to the light of the spiritual world. For people’s thinking is filled with prejudices and illusions that exclude the light of knowledge of the spiritual world.

What do they know of the meaning of pain, disease, and disappointment, of the meaning of happiness and pleasure? In regard to the secret of life and death, to the meaning of the creation, also to the actual meaning of all earthly events, they are groping in the dark. Redemption, however, is recognition or becoming conscious of the spiritual world; it is illumination of consciousness; it is the dissolution of darkening prejudices and illusions. The Redeemer brings the light of insight; he is the light of insight. In this light people can gradually recognize the meaning of their own existence and of all of creation.

The earthly creation is not even conscious of its darkness. On the contrary it regards it as “enlightenment.” People concentrate on their jobs, interests, and discussions and expect their happiness from them. There is no “inn” for something new that would turn the world upside down, and the Redeemer, the new from the spiritual world, must make do with a “manger.” Earthly human beings are much too much occupied with themselves to give room to the Redeemer in their consciousness, not to speak of receiving him hospitably. Therefore he does not receive a “cradle” but a “crib.” He is pushed to the edge of consciousness.

At this point Luke was surely conscious of the words of Isaiah 1:3, which speak of the people of Israel who have fallen away and says to the contrary: “The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master’s crib.” The Redeemer is not known and not received by his own people. Only the most lowly and despised, low like the “animals,” offer him room. The ox and donkey in many artistic representations of Jesus’ birth are not drawn directly from Luke. They come from Isaiah. They also do not symbolize so much the “animalistic” characteristics of desire and stubbornness in the midst of which the Redeemer is born but emphasize the contrast between the creatures and human consciousness as shown by Isaiah. Human consciousness in its egocentricity goes its own

paths and makes no room for the Redeemer. The creatures on the contrary know at least to whom they belong.

The Redeemer is also “wrapped in bands of cloth.” As a being clothes itself with a material body in order to even be able to set foot and be active in the earthly world, so redeeming impulses when they appear in the world do not appear clearly recognizable but “wrapped” in the forms of the earthly world. Otherwise they cannot manifest for the time being. This is on the one hand a protection for the new, but on the other also an obstacle. As a spiritual being grows, it has to gradually “unwrap” and free itself from this material cover, the “bands of cloth.”

The Shepherds

2:8 *In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” ¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (NRSV)*

There are forces in the earthly world that notice that and when the birth of a redeemer takes place and immediately react to this. These forces are indicated in Luke as the “shepherds.” Jesus’ birth is not proclaimed to the priests, not to the mighty, respected, rich, and learned, but to the “shepherds.” They embody in this story less

an occupation than a nature and attitude of soul. A shepherd is a guardian of what has been entrusted to him. As guardian he does not want to rule, exploit, or manipulate it. He wants to promote it—and not for his own interests but for the well-being of what has been entrusted to him. Such a nature and attitude can also exist among priests, among the mighty, rich, and learned. Then these also belong to the “shepherds.”

On the basis of their nature and attitude, the “shepherds” are open to new spiritual impulses. A spiritual impulse does not appear for its own interests. It has the benefit of humanity as its goal, the promotion of the purpose of humanity, the “redemption” of the true self from its imprisonment in the interests of the earthly world, and the accompaniment and support of those who step on the spiritual path. The spiritual impulse is related to the nature of the “shepherd.” And for this reason the “angel of the Lord” and his message reaches the “shepherds” in their inner being or by way of their inner being. The power of the spirit, “Gabriel” who stands before God, awakens in them the consciousness that something new has stepped into the world.

As always when spiritual forces become active in someone, the inner being of the shepherds is also tremendously shaken by this breaking of eternity into time. In comparison to the earthly world, the dimension of the spiritual world is light and power, the “glory of the Lord.” When forces of this kind make themselves felt in people receptive to them, they overturn the whole previous value structure—thus the “fear” that grips the shepherds. But gradually the consciousness adjusts to this break-in of eternity: it is penetrated and uplifted by the forces of the spiritual world, the “angel.” It does not need to be “terrified” anymore. It now recognizes what is coming: a revaluation of all values that will grip the whole world and the resulting restructuring of all relationships. The spiritual is freed from its latency; the earthly will take its proper place again: to be the husk that expresses the kernel.

This is redemption, and this is joy, the joy of life of the true self that begins to breathe freely and live. Jesus, the savior, is the embodiment of this true self who “heals” the broken unity between the spiritual and the earthly. He will be able to consciously receive and distribute the forces of the spiritual world. He will be the “Christ,” the one “anointed” with the “oil” of the spiritual world. His earthly body and his ego are built from the best earthly forces

that he inherited by virtue of his birth in the “chosen people” and of his descent from David. This being, a son of the spiritual world according to the spirit, a son of David according to the flesh, is the Redeemer. The revaluation of all values and the restructuring of all relationships come from him.

How can such a redeemer be discovered in the earthly world?

The shepherds receive a “sign” from the angel. The spiritual world in their own being awakens the insight in them that the Redeemer is wrapped in the conventional forms of the earthly world, the “bands of cloth,” and that according to earthly standards comes from a “poor” family, and lies in a “manger.”

Someone with earthly standards *of this side* expects redemption from power, from success, and from wealth, from the gleam of learning or eloquence, from the tribune who promises the abolition of all inequality and poverty and the establishment of universal prosperity and happiness. The Redeemer does not come in this way, however. He revalues all earthly values and therefore finds no lodging in the structure of these earthly values. Only the shepherds, people who are beginning to see with their spiritual eyes, recognize this state of affairs and do not seek the Redeemer in the sphere of earthly greatness.

Someone with earthly standards *of the beyond* expects that the Redeemer comes as a miracle worker or as an apparition in celestial splendor visible in a miraculous way to earthly sight, perhaps also as a great magician identified as an emissary of the “spiritual world” by his spectacular deeds. But the sign of the Redeemer also contradicts this expectation. The Redeemer comes “wrapped in bands of cloth.” He appears in the ordinary earthly form not any differently than others. Only people with spiritual sight, the “shepherds,” see the spiritual being behind this shell. Someone not coming in the ordinary earthly form would not be the Redeemer.

After the spiritual world has proclaimed itself to the shepherds as the entry of the light of eternity into earthly consciousness and as insight into the being of the Redeemer, their consciousness suddenly opens to another dimension. The totality of the spiritual world, the “multitude of the heavenly host,” is revealed to them. The structure of the spiritual world, the hierarchy of spiritual beings, and the “activity” of this spiritual world and the spiritual beings is shown to them.

Hymn of the Heavenly Host

This “activity” comes to expression in the words of the spiritual hierarchies. For their being and working—their “speaking”—are and intend nothing other than the realization of the potentials and laws of the spiritual world. They recognize the values of the spiritual world and express them ever more gloriously. This means: “Glory to God in the highest heaven.” To honor God is not thunderous singing in front of a majesty surpassing all earthly measures, even less an enthusiastic lip-service after which everything remains as before. To honor God means to unfold the image of God that the human being is potentially. This is accepting the values of the spirit and carrying out the potentials of the spiritual world that are to become active in humanity.

God “favors” those who honor God in this way. The power of the spiritual world works in them, redeems them, and leads them to a new peace, while it works in a breaking-up way for those who have closed themselves to it. God does not favor them. Through their resistance to the spiritual forces, they invoke “God’s wrath,” that is the “wrathful” effects of these forces. The peace that will reign among those on earth who honor God is not an earthly peace. The latter is after all only a passing balance between differing earthly interests. The peace which comes from redemption has “God’s honor” as a prerequisite: the acceptance of the values of the spirit. Then the true self, the soul permeated by the spirit, can unfold, and then true, never ending peace is a natural condition. For what would still be able to call forth dissatisfaction in someone who lives freely in accordance with the laws of his true self? And what would be able to call forth conflict among people when they are all one in the laws of the spiritual world, which are the laws of the true self?

The words of the heavenly host accurately express the right order of things. The spiritual world in the highest heaven carries out the laws of the spiritual world. When people on earth also accept and realize these laws, peace will reign among them. They will unfold the image of God that they are potentially. The heavenly host point to this goal of human development, to this redemption.

After the “shepherds,” those who are receptive to the spiritual world, have experienced this world breaking into their consciousness, recognized the characteristics of the Redeemer, and grasped the goal of redemption, they set out for Bethlehem,

the “house of bread,” the spiritual source out of which redemption comes. They recognize the Redeemer in that on the one hand he finds no place in the ordinary world and in that on the other hand he is not a charismatic performing showy miracles. They also recognize his “parents,” that is they recognize that according to the flesh as well as according to the spirit, he is born in an appropriate “vessel” and completely obeys and submits to the laws of the earthly world,

After they have experienced all this, they make known their experiences and thereby reinforce them. They praise God for everything they have seen and heard. Thereby they meet people who can hear and who can at least suspect the importance of what they have heard. Those who have heard are amazed at the power of this event. But Mary is not only amazed. She also finds access to these events. She lets what was heard work quietly in her. She “pondered them in her heart.” This is her way of approaching soul-spiritual laws. She does not try to prove them or to seize hold of them through thinking. They would withdraw from such attempts. Instead Mary places them before the receptive heart where the true self is active and quietly allows that they reveal themselves to the consciousness. She circles around them repeatedly with quiet longing to understand them. By this the moment will also come when they voluntarily communicate themselves to her understanding.

Timeless Meaning of these Processes

All this happened about 2000 years ago. Soul-spiritual lawfulness that is always valid expressed itself and became historical about 2000 years ago. It can also express itself and become historical in the present, however. The events of about 2000 years ago are exemplary for similar events in all times. A new, young impulse from the spiritual world embodied in a redeemer “child” can always, also in the present, break into the earthly world and anchor itself in it. This event can and will always be preceded by a preparatory impulse personified in a forerunner. The circumstances under which such events can occur today are the same as then. The “emperor,” the earthly world with its strivings for power, success, and possessions, also rules today almost without limits. The earthly powers also try today to regulate every area of life in detail like the “census” of that time. The Redeemer,

however, shows spontaneity. Only thus can the true self unfold in the laws of the spiritual world.

Today redeemers are also born in “Bethlehem,” the “house of bread.” For a redeemer can only grow up in a community of living souls. He is born in the darkness of ignorance of soul-spiritual facts and the resulting chaotic conditions. He is hidden to earthly eyes, for he does not cause a stir and works silently. Only spiritual eyes recognize his greatness and his quiet growth. Earthly eyes let themselves be dazzled by success and fascination. They do not recognize that the redeemer declares himself in inconspicuous, conventional forms.

Today there are also “shepherds,” the guardians of the living, who are the considerate and the attentive waiting for the redeeming new. They are called within by the spiritual powers—the angels—and listen. They discover the redeeming new embodied in other people. For they see with spiritual eyes and see through all false earthly expectations of redemption. They are also prepared to honor God: to reevaluate their former values and to shape their life anew in the sense of soul-spiritual laws; hereby true peace on earth arises. This is something different than to celebrate the birth of a redeemer who was born about 2000 years ago and on whose redemption one faithfully relies. This only hinders the recognition and realization of the redeeming new in the present.

Soul-spiritual lawfulness that is always valid is not only expressed in outer figures and their relations but also in the soul realm of an individual person. All events surrounding the births of John the Baptist and Jesus can also refer to an individual. They can be experienced by everyone within their own being.

When John the Baptist is born in someone, then this means that unusual thoughts and feelings arise in this person that are caused by the true self awakening in him. He asks himself: What actually is all of life for? Is the earthly life with power, success, and wealth everything? Is it what I actually want? If I want to fulfill my purpose, I have to change my standards of value and may no longer live as before. This is the “repentance” to which the John the Baptist within the person summons. The former life does not correspond to the purpose of the person; therefore he “repents.” John is the preparer in a fourfold sense: The thoughts turn towards a new life and are illuminated by the prospect of this life, also the feelings, thirdly the aspirations, and fourthly the actions.

The four candles on the advent ring correspond to these. One after the other, the thinking, feeling, striving, and activity are ignited in a person in whom John the Baptist is active and who is waiting for Jesus' arrival in his own being. Such a custom invites the person to realize what is inherent in him.

Jesus in the human being, however, is the "child" that is born, a new spontaneity and innocence, the timid germ from the spiritual world that is waiting to unfold as the true self in the human being. It can only be born and unfold after a radical altercation with the earthly world outside and within, in the sense of John, and the recognition of the relativity of this earthly world in the light of the new. Then the new forces and a new consciousness can be born amidst the earthly habits of this person: amidst his striving for security and his mania for planning (Augustus); in the "house of bread," the source of spiritual forces in the heart; and in the night of the old consciousness and being, perhaps as a quiet, timid voice that hardly finds shelter among the many earthly interests and worries and that expresses itself awkwardly like one wrapped in "bands of cloth."

From which "parents" is Jesus born in the human being? His mother is Mary; his spiritual father is the Holy Spirit; his earthly father is Joseph. The mother of the spiritual life is a pure heart: Mary. Only a pure heart receptive to the spirit can bring Jesus, the true self, into the world. When the soul lets itself be influenced by passions and fears, by aspirations for wealth, power, success, and enjoyment, by illusions and dogmas, then it is not a pure "virgin." Then it is a being that engages with everyone. If it frees itself from the many things and interests that court and want to possess it, however, then it becomes a pure virgin, a Mary. It becomes quiet, resting in itself, and can open to the influences from the world of the spirit, from the kingdom of God. Then it receives the Holy Spirit, spiritual forces from the kingdom of God. In comparison to Elizabeth, Mary is a higher octave of the soul life. Elizabeth is the heart receptive to ethical principles; Mary is the heart receptive to spiritual impulses. Correspondingly, John, the forerunner, is born of Elizabeth, and Jesus, the one who realizes, is born of Mary.

The Holy Spirit is the actual father of the true self that is born of Mary. Joseph on the contrary is the foster-father of the true self. He embodies the clear insight in the individual how the earthly will can make possible the birth of the true self and promote its growth. Such a will wants nothing but what serves the growth of

the true self. It is the higher octave of Zachariah who is the purified will that is oriented to ethical principles. Joseph protects Mary, the pure soul, and the child from the enmity of the earthly world by recognizing tendencies within and outside of the person that are hostile to the development of the true self—doubt, egocentricity, and fear—and by rebuffing them. Joseph is really only the foster-father of the true self, however. Even an earthly will completely oriented to spiritual principles cannot conceive the new spiritual life. Such a will can only protect and accompany it. It is “conceived” by the Holy Spirit.

The “shepherds” embody those earthly faculties and forces in the individual that have a premonition of the new possibility of life and are touched by this. Overpowered by the forces from the spiritual world, they investigate and turn to this new possibility of life as the shepherds turned to the child in Bethlehem.

The Christmas tree is a symbol for the fact that after suitable preparation, the whole human being—the tree—can be ignited by the redeeming inner light. All functions and characteristics shine with a new light. The true self steps into existence. The presents that people customarily give to each other at Christmas can be pictures for people in this new state communicating to each other what they are and possess inwardly. But outer symbols are only aids to the realization of inner processes. The inner processes are not bound to a particular time. The redeeming new can manifest in every time of year in the human being. The birth of John the Baptist, the birth of Jesus, the contributions to these events by Zachariah, Elizabeth, Joseph, Mary, and the shepherds—all these are independent of time, independent of the time of year, and independent of the year. Christmas in this sense is not a remembrance of a redemption “served” to humanity without their contribution by a redeemer about 2000 years ago. It is an indication of the redemption that is inherent in everyone and that has to be realized by himself with the help of the forces from the spiritual world. Christmas in this sense is not a festival for children in which adults nostalgically reminisce of a wholesome childhood. Christmas means that the human being finally grows up. The growing up of the true self begins. Christmas in this sense is not a family festival. The flight from harsh reality into the intimate circle of the family and into the group as such stops when the person—on the basis of the laws of the spiritual world—becomes a responsible citizen of the world. Christmas is a festival

of humanity, the beginning of the realization of the true self from which true peace on earth arises.

Circumcision and Naming of Jesus

2:21 *After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. ²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.” (NRSV)*

Jesus, too, is circumcised and receives a name. The same is true here as in the circumcision and naming of John the Baptist. The circumcision occurs eight days after the birth. The eighth day symbolizes the breakthrough of something new after a closed development of seven periods. This expresses that after the unfolding of the earthly ego, the newborn, every newborn, stands before the task of allowing the true, spiritual self to break through the shell of the earthly being and step into the light. The prerequisite for this is that the ego, which surrounds the true self like a husk, is “circumcised” and subordinated to the true self. Only in this way can the true self unfold.

Jesus is moreover a special human being: a human being connected to the spirit, embedded in the stream of the spiritual world, and living out of it. He is different from ordinary human beings in whom the true self is still inactive. This special nature of Jesus is indicated by the remark that the angel gave Jesus’ name before he was conceived in the womb. Before the biological conception, Jesus as a spiritual being had been consciously at home in the spiritual world. He incarnated with a special task in the spatiotemporal world. The being and task of Jesus are expressed by his name: Yehoshua—“God redeems.” Jesus’ task will be to help all those whose true selves want to be liberated from its enslavement by the earthly being: to help them in their redemption.

The naming is a further aspect of the anchoring in the earthly world of the spiritual impulse embodied in Jesus. The being and

task of this impulse are stamped like a formula in the language of the spatiotemporal world. Thereby it simultaneously creates a bridgehead for itself into the consciousness and thought world of the spatiotemporal. From there it can work with greater power in the spatiotemporal. It becomes recognizable to the consciousness of the earthly human being which can look at it and react to it either positively or negatively.

When an impulse from the spiritual world connects with an earthly body and thus anchors itself in the spatiotemporal, the earthly body and the spiritual being that has entered it are necessarily subject to all earthly laws to which an earthly human being is generally subject. Jesus is born in a culture, a religious and political tradition, and a community of blood relations. These are also “bands of cloth” that are wrapped around the child. For the time being they are a protection for the new that is developing but can later become obstacles that have to be overcome just as Jesus later overcomes the stiff legalism of his surroundings.

Circumcision and presentation in the temple are such traditional ritual requirements to which Jesus’ parents willingly submit on the basis of their religious affiliation. Like all rituals, however, these rules also have a spiritual meaning.

The mother of a newborn male is regarded as “unclean” for the seven days until the circumcision of the child and has to go through a period of purification for 33 days concluded by certain sacrifices in the temple in order to be cleansed (Leviticus 12). Jesus’ parents also go to the temple in Jerusalem, the center of the Jewish religion, in order to present Jesus to God as the “firstborn” male (Exodus 13:2).

These are symbols for soul-spiritual facts. The mother has brought an earthly child to birth. It should, however, be the task of human beings to be “holy” and bring forth divine children. A “child” can here be any work that the human being accomplishes. Every “birth” of an exclusively earthly work that occurs without sanctification by the world of the spirit does not correspond to the purpose of the human being, makes him therefore impure, and requires an intensive purification in the forces of the spiritual world. The period of impurity lasts for seven days. Beginning with the eighth day, the day of circumcision of the newborn, the symbolic removal of earthly egocentricity, the mother as well enters a process of purification and sanctification. It lasts for 33 days. 33 also is a special number. It refers to a complete cycle that

runs through all stations of a development in the spatiotemporal. At the end of this period, the purification and sanctification have been accomplished and are concluded with an animal sacrifice that again demonstrates that everything animalistic in the human being is given to the forces of the spirit to be transformed.

Presentation in the Temple

The “presentation” of Jesus in the temple is a further symbol for soul-spiritual facts. The ritual goes back to the exodus of Israel out of Egypt and is explained thereby (Exodus 13). Every “firstborn male” is holy to the Lord and therefore has to be “presented,” shown, to the Lord. The “Exodus from Egypt” can only take place when the “firstborn males” are consecrated to God. The “firstborn male” is a symbol for the human ego that forms out of the unconscious tendencies in childhood as the first “work” of this human being. This ego should not be wrapped up in the earthly world and egocentrically distanced from the spiritual world but dedicated to the service of the laws of the spirit. This is the task of the human being, every human being, and the birth of a child, especially of the first male child, reminds him of this. Only when the ego, the “firstborn male,” is dedicated to God can the human being cut his ties to the earthly world—“Egypt”—and make his way to the spiritual world—the “promised land.” Through the ritual of the presentation of their firstborn, Jesus’ parents become conscious of their life task and the child, as ego, is subordinated to and connected with the forces of the spirit as in a baptism.

Thus the birth of a child became for the Jews the occasion to repeatedly become conscious of the basic human situation and to promote the actual purpose of humanity through ritual practice. Jesus’ parents also carry out this ritual practice. For Jesus as an earthly being is “flesh” and not “spirit,” so the general Jewish purity regulations also apply to him and his mother.

The event that now follows, however, refers to the spirit being, which bound to Jesus’ earthly body is also “presented” and dedicated to the Lord.

Simeon

2:25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to

the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; (NRSV)

What Is the “Holy Spirit”?

Ever and again the “Holy Spirit” is spoken of in the stories in the Gospel of Luke that report of a redeeming impulse coming from eternity anchoring in the realm of time. This is not possible any other way. For a redeeming impulse from the spiritual world is necessarily accompanied by the influence of the Holy Spirit. John and Jesus, who as beings of eternity bring the redeeming impulse into the realm of time, are already filled by the Holy Spirit before their conception in the womb (Luke 1:15). Also the “vessels” in which they grow as earthly personalities and spirit beings are filled by the Holy Spirit: Mary in a way so that the son “of the Most High” (Luke 1:35, NRSV) can come forth from her, Elizabeth in the way that she recognizes what is growing in Mary as the “fruit of her womb” (Luke 1:42, NRSV). In the power of the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth praises Mary as the mother of the Redeemer, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, Mary sings her hymn to redemption. Zachariah, the father of John, is also filled by the Holy Spirit and thereby recognizes the nature of redemption, of the forerunner, and of the one who is to realize redemption. In the same way, the Holy Spirit now rests on Simeon (Luke 2:25) and the prophet Anna foretells the redemption of Israel (Luke 2:38).

What is this “Holy Spirit”? It is a power from the spiritual world that brings about certain effects. When the spiritual world opens and sends a redeeming impulse into the realm of time, the power of the Holy Spirit also has to enter the realm of time in accompaniment. God the Father is the creative order of the spiritual world, its foundation, its driving principle of development, its innermost structure, its “intelligence,” which wants to reveal itself step by step. The Holy Spirit is the power of the spiritual world by means of which the Father, the innermost structure, reveals itself. And the result of the collaboration of structure and power is consciousness, light, realization: the Son. Out of the generating divine will and the receptive divine power, the divine light is born.

Wisdom and realization are the effects that the Holy Spirit as power out of the spiritual world evokes in the human being. This is shown in the behavior of Elizabeth, Mary, Zachariah, Simeon, and

Anna: In all of them knowledge pertaining to the spiritual world and its influence in the realm of time awakens in them when they are filled with the Holy Spirit. Their true self is touched by the Holy Spirit. The result is an activity of this true self. It makes itself known and simultaneously proves to be an organ that recognizes the spiritual world and its influence. Elizabeth recognizes the spirit being, the “Lord,” growing in Mary and Mary herself as the “vessel” for this spirit being. Mary recognizes her own task for the spiritual world and the lawfulness of redemption: the “reevaluation of all values” and the reversal of all conditions. Zachariah likewise recognizes this lawfulness of redemption.

The influence of the Holy Spirit is also always accompanied by the highest joy, for the activation of the true self means its liberation from the ties of the earthly world, the ties of non-recognition and non-activity. The true self now feels itself filled by divine life, and this state of the divine energy flowing through is its joy.

The influence of the Holy Spirit is something different than an incomprehensible repeating in speaking or writing of “inspirations” from the realms of the beyond. It rather consists of the true self becoming active as an independent organ of perception, which consciously sees the structure of spiritual reality and is enabled to do this by the power of the Holy Spirit working in it. Only such an independent activity of cognition by the true self enabled by the Holy Spirit is embedded in the redeeming impulse from the spiritual world and is itself redemption.

Simeon’s Vision

Previously “Israel”—a cipher for religious and ethical humanity—was in the stage of the Old Testament, the stage of the preparation for “salvation” through carrying out the outer law. Previously “salvation,” the entry into the stage of freedom in the inner law of the true self, was not yet possible. Now the Redeemer is born, however: The prototypical true self of the human being steps into the development of humanity. The freedom in the inner law becomes possible. This is a decisive moment in the development of humanity.

Simeon had looked forward to the “consolation of Israel,” to this decisive moment. He knew with certainty through the Holy Spirit that this moment would come. He also knew that he as an individual or as a member of his generation would experience this moment. The Holy Spirit had revealed this to him: Simeon felt

intuitively that the great turnaround in the development of humanity, the coming to light of the exemplary true self, was imminent. He would experience that what previously had been only premonition and prophecy would become reality.

He would still see the “Lord’s Messiah” before his own death. This can be interpreted that in the long chain of generations, he was conscious of being in the link that lived contemporaneously with the entry of the true self into the development of humanity. It can also be interpreted that in the chain of reincarnations of his own true self, he recognized himself as being the personality that would enter the stream of liberation. All previous incarnations connected with Simeon’s true self had had preparatory tasks. This now living personality, however, could really begin with the process of redemption. This became objectively possible because Jesus, the pattern of the true self, revealed himself at this point in time. It became subjectively possible because after the many forerunner incarnations, the present living personality, Simeon, finally possessed the maturity to begin with the process of redemption. It is always this way: When a comprehensive redeeming impulse becomes active in humanity, then beside the actual carriers of the preparatory and realizing aspects, others also incarnate who are especially receptive to the spiritual impulse. They have a special affinity to its carriers. The moment has come in their spiritual development where they *have to* meet with the Redeemer. Simeon is such a person. The scene in the temple demonstrates that the objective spiritual development of humanity—the pattern of the true self appears—coincides with the subjective spiritual development of some individuals.

Simeon’s Hymn

2:27 *and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”* (NRSV)

The moment long longed-for by Simeon has come. He meets with the carrier of the redeeming impulse. Being receptive to the dimension of the spiritual world in the power of the Holy Spirit, he recognizes that he is meeting the redeeming impulse of humanity

in the form of a child in the temple. This meeting fills him with the greatest joy for he knows that salvation has now begun for him and the world. After the Old Testament the New Testament comes into force.

If one takes for granted that Simeon regards himself as a link in a chain of generations, then he is glad that now finally the possibility of redemption has come to him, his generation, and the following generations. If one takes for granted that he regards himself as a link in a chain of reincarnations, then he is glad that he is now, in this moment, entering the stream of liberation and with him in principle all of humanity. In both cases he can die in peace because he knows: Now, in this moment, my redemption, which had only been prepared previously, has begun. In the meeting with the exemplary true self of humanity, my true self, which had been latent up to now, has awakened and will never become latent again. The death of my mortal personality is nothing compared to this.

This joy and this peace arise in Simeon in his meeting the Redeemer child. They refer not only to his own redemption. Simeon knows that the current redeeming impulse is also initiating the redemption of all of humanity. With the help of the spiritual world, the true identity of every human being and with this of all of humanity will unfold in the long run. All of humanity will again be in harmony with the structure of the spiritual world. The present wrong relationships between the earthly and spiritual worlds and between the earthly personality and the true self will be abolished. The transformed earthly will be an expression of the eternal. The whole world and all of humanity will experience the peace of this state, which corresponds to the real purpose of humanity.

This vision is shown to Simeon in his meeting with the Redeemer, and he gives voice to it by saying that God will bring “a light for revelation” to all “Gentiles” and glorify his “people Israel.” In every development, including the spiritual, there are pioneers who consciously and actively take a step forward and those following them who take this step afterwards. The “people Israel” represents those who have come in their development so far that they can take a new step, the decisive step from a life under the outer law to a life filled with spirit. They have come so far that they can give over the leadership of their life, which up to now was held by the earthly personality, to their true self. Like the historical

people of Israel, they are the object of a special effort of the spiritual world and thus also have the duty to react consciously and actively to this effort.

The “Gentiles,” on the other hand, are those people who put their attention on the development of the earthly personality in order to exhaust all possibilities in earthly life. In the end, however, they will also be included in the reestablishment of the balance between the spiritual and earthly worlds. This happens when the pioneers of the development of humanity have paved the way into this future, which makes it possible for the “Gentiles” to also unfold their true identity. They then have the special task of making the earthly personality serve the spiritual development and to bring all earthly conditions into harmony with this development.

The redemption of humanity, which Simeon filled by the Holy Spirit sees in a vision, refers to the pioneers, the “people Israel,” as well as those who follow them, the “Gentiles.” The pioneers are “glorified” insofar as their true self unfolds in the forces of the spirit to the glory of the harmony with the spiritual world. The “Gentiles” who follow them receive “a light for revelation.” The light of truth, the power of the Holy Spirit, fills their true self and also leads it to harmony with the spiritual world while they attune all possibilities of the earthly world—philosophy, art, and science—to the spiritual world.

Simeon’s Characterization of Jesus

2:33 *And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”* (NRSV)

Simeon also knows, however, that redemption and spiritual development are in no way free gifts of the spiritual world that come to humanity without risk and without their cooperation. A belief to be redeemed through certain events of about 2000 years ago is in no way adequate to reach the state of redemption, which is the consciousness of the true self and the silencing of earthly interests. Thus Luke emphasizes the radical nature of the task of

redemption and the precipitous alternative: fulfillment or transgression, a rising or a fall.

Jesus is the prototype of the true self, the mirror in which all others recognize themselves, the model by which they can measure themselves. In this prototype they are placed before their own purpose. In front of this mirror, they can ask themselves if and how far they satisfy or want to satisfy this aim.

When this “sign,” this prototype of the true human being, is placed in front of them, they become conscious of their own situation and task: Their “inner thoughts...will be revealed” to them. In front of this standard, they recognize the goal towards which their thoughts are aimed—the goal of the realization of either their true self or their earthly interests—and how these goals and with this their thoughts are to be valued. The realization of the true self corresponds to the purpose of humanity and leads to harmony with the spiritual world. The realization of earthly interests without regard to the true self contradicts the purpose of humanity and brings disharmony with the spiritual world.

Thus the appearance of a redeemer leads to a radical division of human beings according to their decision. Division and decision are especially serious for the pioneers of the spiritual development of humanity, the “people Israel.” The “people Israel” stand for those people who have brought their earthly personality, their ego, to a summit of development under the influence of outer—religious or ethical—laws but with a goal still hidden to them: that their ego become capable of recognizing the purpose of humanity and of consciously making itself available to the process of the unfolding of their true identity. In the development of such people, the moment comes where they notice that their ego is not the end goal of human development. It should give them only the possibility to consciously go the spiritual path and fulfill the real goal of human development.

This is a very painful realization for the ego. Its “accomplishments” are not the highest; in fact they must be put at the disposal of a new development. The ego must give up its conviction to be the highest including its conviction that it can redeem itself through its own efforts. The Jews in the days of Jesus stood before this very problem. They were placed by Jesus before the real task of humanity. They had to recognize that the old, the ego that had led them to the threshold of the new, had to be given up and transformed for the new, the true self, to come. Many

recognized and accepted their task. For them the appearance of Jesus led to a “rising,” the liberation of the true self and the subordination of the ego.

Many did not recognize this task or did not want to recognize it and clung to the old: the belief they could be redeemed through the fulfillment of outer laws alone. In their confrontation with the actual task of humanity, they held even tighter to their egocentric self-righteousness. This meant a still deeper entanglement in the earthly world of the outer law and of dogma, however. Thereby the appearance of Jesus, the prototype of the true self, led to a “fall” of many in Israel, to a still deeper sinking into the earthly world.

With the appearance of Jesus, this prototype of the true self was indissolubly anchored in the world and humanity. It works since then as a standard rammed like a stake into the human consciousness or unconscious, not to be overlooked or escaped. This standard is continuously enlivened and newly activated by all those who unfold their true self. In this way it continues to work outwardly—by the example of these people—and inwardly through its information continuing to work in the soul organism of humanity. It works not only as a standard but also as a demand for its realization. In fact when it is clearly recognized and accepted, it simultaneously gives the power for this realization. With this the prototype of the true self of the human being and of humanity is valid and active also today and stands in front of everyone—for a rising or for a fall. Even though it may have been falsified many times, even though Jesus may have been made into the good shepherd, into the tortured man of sorrows, into the genial youth, into the triumphant victor, into the gentle savior, even though the picture of the true self working unconsciously in human beings may have been projected on ideological supermen of every kind—the structure of the spiritual lines of force, the information that with the appearance of Jesus and many of his followers was anchored and has become active in the outer life of human beings and in the inner organism of humanity, the genuine picture of the true human being, the free human being, free and strong in the laws of the spirit, continues to work nevertheless.

A “Sword through the Soul”

Simeon communicates this message won in the power of the Holy Spirit especially to Mary for she is the one capable of

understanding according to her inner constitution. She, too, has a heart that is receptive to the Holy Spirit. Otherwise she could not have been the “vessel” for the Redeemer. Despite this she especially will be confronted with the standard and the demand of the true self. “A sword will pierce [her] own soul.” One can understand these words as such that the pain over the death of her son will one day cut like a sword through Mary’s soul. As shown by the context, however, they refer above all to the great division that will go through the soul of humanity and the soul of every individual because Jesus represents the archetype of the true self and anchors it in the world.

When Jesus later does not receive his mother and his brothers and says, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it” (Luke 8:20–21, NRSV), it becomes clear what is meant by the sword that pierces through Mary’s soul. Despite having been the vessel for the spiritual impulse that grew in her, she is nevertheless an earthly soul even though she may be the purest of souls lovingly devoted to the spiritual impulse. As in all earthly love, such a love contains a moment of wanting to possess. With her motherly care that wants to protect her son from evil, Mary wishes that her son would spare himself, that he would stay with her, that he would take consideration of her love and not go the way that the inner law stipulates for him. As justifiable as these claims and expectations are according to earthly standards, the true self demands that the human being subordinates also these claims and expectations to the spiritual purpose of humanity. Spiritual necessities may thwart even the highest earthly endeavors and feelings.

Mary’s motherly love will be thwarted by the sword of necessity that her son will follow his spiritual call. Mary stands before the task of consenting to this. If she consents, then she overcomes her claims of ownership and also unfolds her own true self. For this is in harmony with the laws of the spiritual world: agreement with the execution of these laws in humanity and in one’s own being.

Jesus, as embodiment of spiritual necessity, has to cause his mother an extreme pain. The divine that she believed she could keep and care for in her way separates from her, goes the path determined for it, and leaves a bleeding wound behind.

As long as she does not understand why this is necessary and therefore cannot consent, his behavior has to appear as extremely harsh. Soon she understands and agrees, however, that Jesus does

not act this way out of inconsideration but because he thus promotes his, her, and all of humanity's purpose. In this understanding on the basis of her true self, she frees him from the prison of her expectations for him and leaves him free. The wound thereby inflicted to her earthly being may still bleed for a long time—but thereby Mary herself is also freed from her expectations of him. She becomes free for the conscious experience of the spiritual impulse. Then she will also experience the deep peace that arises from the unity of her true self with the world of the spirit.

On this basis a new, much deeper harmony will be possible between them than on the basis of earthly motherly and filial love—the harmony of two people who recognize together what the unfolding of the true self and its activity for humanity demand of them. Rooted in the spiritual world and recognizing that her son is rooted in it, Mary will recognize ever more clearly that the loss of her son to his task was in reality only a loss for her earthly being.

The true self can never lose the true self of another after they have once met and recognized each other. The prerequisite for this meeting, however, is that each lets go of their earthly expectations of the other, thereby leaving the other free and becoming free from the other—free for a life of their real identity. So the earthly loss of another—if agreed to in recognition—means in reality that one first gains the other—as free fellow human being on the basis of spiritual laws. The pain of earthly loss is the prerequisite for the happiness and the peace of a spiritual gain. And this gain is lasting and indestructible while the earthly ties to another have to end sometime anyway. In this experience the bloody wound that was inflicted on the earthly being also closes.

Anna's Vision

2:36 *There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanael, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. (NRSV)*

Like Simeon, the prophet Anna is also filled with the Holy Spirit and recognizes in the temple the being and task of the child who is the carrier of the redeeming impulse. She recognizes that the time has come when waiting changes into real experience. For centuries people had prepared religiously and ethically for their real life task. The most developed among them have now become ripe to recognize true humanness and to consciously unfold it. As such a ripe soul, Anna recognizes Jesus as the Redeemer, as the model of the true self of the human being, the true humanness, which suddenly arises in the consciousness of many.

Like Simeon she is also characterized as someone serving God. Only with a consistent religious-ethical way of life can the ego mature so far so that, purified, it recognizes with the help of the Holy Spirit the true self as a predisposition in the human being in order to help it to unfold. That Anna is such a human being is symbolized by the statements Luke makes about her. She has lived “seven years” with her husband. Seven is the number of the completeness of a development. Anna is a soul who has gone through all the possibilities of the earthly world—the life with the “husband.” Since then she is a “widow.” “Widow” does not only mean that a woman has lost her husband but is also a traditional symbol for a soul, whether feminine or masculine, who lives in the painful consciousness of being separated from the spirit, its real “husband.” Anna suffers in this state until the age of “84.” “84” is also a symbolic number: seven times twelve. Anna turns away from the earthly world in all its aspects—twelve—and turns towards the spiritual world in all its aspects—twelve. Turning away and turning towards are carried out in all respects (twelve) and are complete and radical (seven). Therefore it now becomes possible for Anna to recognize the Redeemer, and redemption begins in her, too.

Simeon and Anna represent the masculine and the feminine, will and feeling: Human beings, masculine and feminine, open to the Holy Spirit of the redemptive impulse recognize the Redeemer, the being of redemption, and that now the moment of redemption has come. All human possibilities and forces are included in the event, recognize it, and pass their knowledge on to others.

The Twelve-Year-Old Jesus

2:40 *The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him. ⁴¹Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." ⁴⁹He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor. (NRSV)*

The true self of the Redeemer, which has connected with an earthly personality, needs a certain amount of time to break through the self-lawfulness of this personality and transform it into a suitable instrument. Only then can the mental consciousness bound to the earthly personality become aware of the structures and functions inherent in the true self and can the latter then express them through the personality. Later in a direct meeting with the spiritual world, this spirit being, this true self, can receive the power to fulfill its task as an "anointed one."

The stage of development in which the earthly personality has become a willing instrument for the true self living in it although it has not yet been consciously filled with the power of the spirit, not yet become the "Son of the Most High," is represented through the story of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple. Already in this stage the essential characteristics and abilities of the Redeemer come to expression but are only indicated and are not yet filled with the irresistible power that is only given in the direct meeting

with the spiritual world. That this stage already constitutes a completion to a certain extent is symbolized by the age of twelve. Jesus' soul has made his earthly personality and with this his mental perceptions capable of carrying his message in every respect—this is expressed by the number twelve. As in someone's youth all later characteristics and tasks are already prefigured in delicate contours, so Jesus' characteristics as Redeemer are painted in this story as if with soft pastel colors. It summarizes what has gone before and forms the transition to and beginning of what follows: the responsible public appearance of the Redeemer and his forerunner with the authority of the spiritual powers.

As future Redeemer the boy Jesus enters the temple in Jerusalem on the occasion of the festival of the Passover. The Passover, celebrated as symbolic of the Exodus from Egypt, is the festival of the redemption of the real identity of the human being from its imprisonment in the sense world—Egypt. This feature of the story at the same time shows that Jesus as the prototype of the new human being living in the freedom of the spirit nevertheless connects to religious tradition. For the Mosaic Law was the vessel in which the new, the life in the spirit, was prepared. Therefore the new already always shone through this vessel.

As Jesus will also later often do, the boy Jesus now has a discussion with the scribes. He listens to them, asks them questions, and gives illuminating answers to the questions of the teachers in turn. He lives from the spirit with which he was already connected from before birth and sees the doctrines, rituals, traditions, and regulations of religion from the perspective of the living spirit. Thus he recognizes and explains their original meaning, which consists of the preparation for the life in the spirit. He can clarify where the vessel is wrongly taken already for the content, the preparation for the realization, and thereby loses its function.

Thereby Jesus' activity also is outlined, which was emphasized so much in what preceded. As Redeemer he "is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel." He represents the spiritual world, that which is of his "father," the spirit. He stands in opposition to all who regard the earthly world as crucial and make religion and traditions serve earthly goals. He is "a sign" of the spiritual world "that will be opposed" by all those who only live out of the earthly perspective and want to hold on to that at all costs. By his existence he shows that the laws of the spiritual world

cut through earthly interests like a sword.

Therefore this story also especially illustrates Simeon's statement that "a sword will pierce [Mary's] soul." Relationships with relatives, duties of children to parents, and also parental love, which all belong to the earthly world and mean ties between earthly beings, are secondary as opposed to the purpose of the human being to live in the spiritual world, secondary as opposed to his relations as true self to the spiritual world and to other people. Jesus embodies exemplarily this purpose of humanity to be in what belongs to its father and with this drives a sword through the soul of his parents. They search for him "with great anxiety": They experience that the demands of the spiritual world can thwart even the most justified and beautiful interests of the earthly world. This becomes clear to them through the behavior of the Redeemer, their bodily son.

The Redeemer, the spiritual world, is also *in* them as true self, however, as in all people. Understood this way the demand from the spiritual world comes from within them as the necessity to fulfill their purpose. This inner call demands of them to put the laws of the spiritual world in first place and to subordinate or possibly give up other interests and ties. Thus the outer Redeemer is a picture for the inner redeemer in everyone. This inner redeemer pierces the earthly soul with a sword. It is not easy for someone to understand this, and even less to consent to a sword of the spirit piercing his soul. Only with difficulty does he agree that his real purpose is to live in the world of the spirit and that this has consequences for his earthly life. Therefore it says that Jesus' parents "did not understand what he said to them."

The fact that the spiritual world is primary and the earthly world secondary does not mean that the interests and duties of the earthly world deserve no notice. They have their justification in their place. The story expresses this by telling that Jesus is "obedient" to his parents in so far as his duties do not conflict with his highest purpose. When the time has come that the demands of this purpose become relevant, then he will surely not separate from his filial duties in a loveless and harsh way. Conversely his parents recognizing their own purpose will also recognize his son's and leave him free. Jesus' mother "treasured all these things in her heart." Their meaning will become clear to her in due time.

Timeless Meaning of these Processes

Circumcision, naming, the purification of the mother, and the presentation of the firstborn in the temple are spiritual lawfulness that not only acts in the relations between concrete persons but also in the individual person on the spiritual path. When in the second phase of this path the true self is born in him, steps out into the world, and begins to act in it, he recognizes that in the long run all egocentricity has to be removed. It is after all the great hindrance to the unfolding of the true self. The “circumcision” is a symbol for this removal of egocentricity. It has to happen for the benefit of an ethical way of life preparatory to the spiritual life (this is the circumcision of John the Baptist) as well as for the benefit of the spiritual development (Jesus’ circumcision).

The person in the second phase of the spiritual path also becomes conscious that new forces are beginning to be active in him: an ethical impulse, the summons to reversal, and a spiritual impulse, the summons to a life in accordance with the laws and forces of the spirit. He cannot explain either impulse from his usual talents. They come from an unearthly dimension of eternity. Therefore he experiences them as “God has been merciful” and as “God redeems.” He experiences their influence, not yet the impulses themselves. But he is conscious of their influence. This is symbolized by the “naming.”

In this position he also purifies his heart in which the spiritual impulse appears and which has made it possible: Mary purifies herself. He also dedicates his ego completely to the task of the spiritual path that lies before him. This is the presentation of the firstborn in the temple. Thereby peace arises in him. For he knows that after such a long time of preparation, now in the meeting with the way to be truly human, he steps into the process of fulfillment: “Simeon”—the name means “fulfillment”—becomes active in him. At the same time a new joy over this mercy flows through him: “Anna” in him praises God (“Anna means “Mercy”).

The sign that will be opposed is also erected in the individual. The true self active in him is also set in him for a rising and a falling. How he will react, for a rising or a falling, will show itself later, especially in the fifth phase of the spiritual path. Above all, a sword will pierce his soul as with Mary. For his heart, which has made possible the influence of the spiritual impulse, is nevertheless an aspect of his earthly being, even be it the purest.

In his heart he rejoices over the new experiences that awaken in him. He wants to keep them; he loves them; he rejoices over them. He does not let the spiritual forces that are born in him go, just as a mother does want to let her son go. Still he must realize that he may not keep them and may not handle them according to his own ideas and desires. If he did so, they could not develop further and fulfill their task. Therefore the sword of the spirit coming from the true self thwarts the possessive love with which he wants to embrace, cherish, and care for the new spiritual forces. Only thus are they freed and can work in him in their way, which he as an ego perhaps does not at all want. The most sublime earthly love, the love of the earthly for the spirit, is thereby wounded. Only thus, however, is the spirit freed and will it then also change and permeate the earthly love so that it can become the spirit's instrument instead of it using the spirit as an instrument. The individual can recognize this necessity and consent to it. Then he will also experience that the spiritual forces open completely different spaces to him, spaces of eternity. They accompany him to resurrection, whereas if he would want to possess them for himself, he would remain the same old human being even if filled with the most sublime love.

The young Jesus in the temple symbolizes this process. He must be in what belongs to his Father, the spirit. The spirit does not allow its freedom to be robbed despite the love of the earthly for it. This is ultimately also to the benefit of the earthly. Like a bright premonition, the young true self anticipates its later task: the altercation with the dogmatic mind, the "scribes" and "Pharisees," and his conscious connection with the world of the spirit.

With this, the presentation in the Gospel of Luke of the second phase of the influence of the spirit in the earthly world is concluded. In this phase, after the spiritual impulse in its preparatory and realizing aspects has touched humanity and the individual, both aspects connect with humanity and the individual. John and Jesus are born. In reference to the spiritual path of the individual, this means that a new ethics and a new spiritual possibility of life begin to work and circulate through the human being.

They work and grow together, always separated by "six months," the "space in between" preparation and realization. Nourished by the forces of the spiritual world, the true self, Jesus, grows up to the age of "twelve," the threshold between childhood

and adulthood. Childhood is now finished. The true self could not grow and be active, however, if the purified earthly personality, John the Baptist, would not cooperate and make the paths straight. The latter must behave in such a way that the spiritual impulse is also given room. The individual as an earthly personality must change his thinking, feeling, striving, and acting and arrange his life in such a way so that the spiritual impulse can reside and work in him. This is his own accomplishment on the spiritual path, but it is also made possible by the spiritual impulse and its direction is given in advance by the world of the spirit. Thus John the Baptist is also connected with the spirit from before birth.

Third Milestone of the Gospel of Luke: The Spiritual World Becoming Conscious in the Earthly World

The third great milestone in the Gospel of Luke is the beginning of the public appearance of Jesus prepared by the public appearance of John the Baptist. The beginning of Jesus' public appearance is marked by the water baptism in the Jordan as well as his "anointing," the baptism by fire, which follows immediately. Jesus is "anointed" with the forces of the Holy Spirit; he becomes the "Christ," the Anointed. As in the two previous phases, the dimension of the divine world appears directly. Heaven opens, and the spirit of God in the form of a dove descends upon Jesus.

This third milestone of the gospel introduces the third phase of the influence of the redeeming power of God. It has touched the earthly world—the annunciations of the births of John the Baptist and Jesus—and then connected itself firmly to it—the births themselves. Now, however, John the Baptist and Jesus have grown up. Jesus, the prototype of the true self, has become so strong that he can function as the carrier of the cosmic spiritual powers. He can consciously receive these spiritual powers and independently and consciously convey them into the earthly world. A human being, Jesus, connected from before birth with the forces of the spirit, is "anointed" with them, and thereby becomes a conscious, individual spiritual being, working independently in the earthly world but always in harmony with the forces of the cosmic spirit. This activity is also again prepared by a forerunner, John the

Baptist. John the Baptist, the prototype of the ethical ego, has meanwhile grown up and become conscious of his preparatory task.

As soon as the power of the Holy Spirit becomes active and conscious in a human being, it calls up in a far stronger and more conscious measure than before the “demonic” forces of egocentricity. He has to have dealt with them and put them in their place before he can really begin with his task. The temptations of Jesus describe this altercation.

Now in this third phase of the influence of the redeeming power of God, what was predicted by Simeon first clearly appears. The power of redemption, which is working consciously in harmony with the cosmic spiritual power and drawing from it, leads human beings to a rise or a fall. The redeeming powers embodied by Jesus, who has become the Christ, attract what is like them in other human beings: the true self, which is sleeping, latent, under the egocentric characteristics but longing for a life in the spirit. Therefore Jesus gains pupils, human beings whose true self reacts to the true self “Jesus.” Moreover he heals and drives out demons. The forces of the spirit remove disturbances and disorder in the earthly personality of human beings. This is the prerequisite to the “rising” of the true self, to the development of human beings in the direction of their purpose.

On the other hand the forces of the spirit call up embittered resistance. The egocentric forces—the drive for possessions, ambition, and the addiction to dominate—want to maintain themselves and to continue to occupy first place. This explains the opposition against Jesus in sections of the population and above all in the Pharisees and scribes who represent the actual opposition to his pupils. They embody a dogmatic attitude of consciousness, the self-righteous conviction that one is already redeemed through the traditional religion. Thereby they close themselves off against the redeeming forces. This means an even deeper entanglement in egocentricity: a “fall.”

The same lawful effects also occur in the soul space of the individual person who goes a spiritual path. Annunciation of the births of John the Baptist and Jesus, these births themselves, and the growing up of both figures up to the double baptism of Jesus become pictures for the phases of the spiritual path. The forces of the spirit had touched the pupil in the first phase of the path, and he had opened himself to them. This was the phase of faith. In the

second phase they connected to him and went into circulation: the phase of inner work. Now in the third phase, he becomes conscious of them. The true self, which is supported by John the Baptist, who baptizes with the water of repentance, is baptized with the fire of the Holy Spirit: The spirit sinks down upon this human being and from now on works in his true self. It grows up, becomes independent, and becomes conscious of the spiritual forces and of itself. It is anointed by the spiritual forces and thereby becomes “Christ,” the anointed *in* the human being. Therefore Paul, for example, can speak of “Christ in me” (Galatians 2:20, NRSV).

In this phase on the spiritual path, the demonic forces of the beyond that are in his being also lawfully step before the consciousness. He has to intensively altercate with the drive for possessions, ambition, and the addiction to dominate. At the same time the redeeming forces work in him with new strength. They create order in his earthly personality in so far as he allows it: They heal diseases and cast out demons. They now work together with his earthly forces of consciousness that are receptive to the spirit, the “pupils.” On the other hand he experiences the opposition of the persistent forces of his nature on this side as well as his quibbling, self-righteous mind—the “scribes and Pharisees” in his own being.

An essential aspect in this third phase of the influence of the redeeming forces in the earthly world—now seen again on the level of persons relating to each other—is that they call human beings to become pupils who from then on also begin the spiritual path. While Jesus, prototype of the true self, finds himself in the third phase of his path, he is surrounded by pupils who phase-shifted and in the measure of their weaker forces go the spiritual path as well. While Jesus goes through the third phase, they step into the first and second phases of their path. Through them it becomes once again clear what the touch by the forces of the spirit and connection with the forces of the spirit mean for the individual.

Likewise John the Baptist, prototype of the ethical ego, which is the preparatory aspect of the impulse of redemption, is also found in the third phase of his development. He is “grown up”; the forces that call for life reversal have reached such power and independence in humanity that they now become public and can prepare others for the spiritual path. Luke describes this influence of the matured ethical forces that call for life reversal and the first

reaction of human beings to this as the appearance of John the Baptist.

Appearance of John the Baptist

3:1 *In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; ⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”* (NRSV)

The power of life reversal working in all times of world history manifested approximately 2000 years ago in John the Baptist. It appeared at that time under certain historical conditions and became itself historical. Luke describes these historical conditions. The secular power purely “on this side” is represented by the Roman emperor. Judea is a Roman province under Pontius Pilate. Other regions of Palestine are under the dominion of rulers dependent on Rome, especially Galilee under Herod who also embodies the secular power, the one making use of traditional religion. The religious power is embodied through the high priests Annas and Caiaphas.

It is the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, the year 29 in our reckoning of time, in which the spiritual impulse becomes public. After its development and maturation in concealment, it begins to work openly—and of course first with its preparatory aspect: “The word of God” comes to John the Baptist. This means that he becomes conscious of his task. After the power of remorse and penance, “John the Baptist,” had touched and connected with humanity, it now becomes conscious and active in those predisposed to it and with that also in humanity as a whole. The time of the public working of John the Baptist has come.

Luke mentions the historical political and religious rulers not only because he wants to give the historical circumstances of the working of John the Baptist and Jesus. He mentions them also and in the first place because certain lawfulness can be illustrated by them. The conditions of the separation of powers into secular and religious rule, the separation of secular rule into a Roman rule purely “on this side” (Tiberius) and a Jewish, ideological rule stamped by the “beyond” (Herod), the reciprocal dependence of the religious and political powers, as well as the foreign rule over the Jewish people can illustrate better than monolithic power structures how the different aspects of power react to the spiritual impulse. The gospel events that are now occurring in the open move in this frame of political and religious power, which is here sketched at the beginning of the public working of the spiritual impulse.

How does Luke represent John, embodiment of the grown-up, preparatory aspect of the spiritual impulse? Other than with Mark, which was Luke’s pattern, the attributes of the prophet Elijah—the leathern girdle, the garment of camel hair, etc.—are missing. John does appear as a prophet, however, in so far as he speaks with the words of the prophet Isaiah. He is the “voice of one crying out in the wilderness” and summons people to repentance, which means the “forgiveness of sins” and is sealed by “baptism.”

The people to whom he turns stand before the possibility of the spiritual path to which some of them are later called by Jesus. John the Baptist’s words describe the preparation to the spiritual path. But what is the desert in which John raises his voice? The desert is not only a desolate geographical landscape but also a socially, psychically, and spiritually barren one. In comparison to the fruitful landscape of a meaningful, fulfilled life, the earthly life is a desert. It is a desert because of its constant conflicts, because of oppression, insecurity, injustice, and stagnation. It is a desert in spite of many successful endeavors at harmony, freedom, security, and justice and in spite of undeniable technical and social progress, for it is not oriented to the ever-valid laws of the world of the spirit. Someone in whom the idea arises that his purpose is to live out of the laws and forces of the spirit discovers that this earthly world is really a “desert,” barren, without enduring meaning, and without fulfilling power. A life filled only with a striving for happiness, security, power, honor, possessions, and avoidance of fear seems to him fruitless. This realization is always

the prerequisite before the “voice of one crying out in the wilderness” resounds.

The “Voice in the Wilderness”

The “voice of one crying out in the wilderness” is the insight arising in such a person that everything transitory, whether negative or positive according to earthly standards, is void unless given meaning by the spiritual world.

From this insight follows another: If this is how things stand, then it is necessary to lead a life through which one fulfills one’s purpose. Whoever understands this will arrange his life so that it can become the path for the redeeming powers of eternity. He will seek to dissolve all obstacles that stand in the way of these powers. He will make the crooked roads of corruption and trickery into the straight roads of impartiality and honesty. He fills the valleys of depression and fear by surrendering his egocentric expectations. Thus he removes the cause of depressing disappointments. He demolishes the hills and mountains of the optimism of progress. He smoothes the rough ways of violence into the even ways of humaneness and trust. This new arrangement of life is not an end in itself for him. It is a necessity arising from the insight into the purpose of the human being. He carries it out in order to “prepare the way of the Lord,” which means to make the way passable for the laws and forces of the true self. Then one day the earthly world also—“all flesh”—will be permeated and changed by the forces of the true self—“shall see the salvation of God.” The world will satisfy its purpose to be an expression of the spiritual world and consciously experience and realize its laws and forces.

John the Baptist embodies the voice of the one calling in the desert that was also already embodied by the prophet Isaiah. The voice of John the Baptist and all prophets before him is the same voice. When it calls to repentance, then this is nothing other than the insight and the decision of a human being to arrange his life anew so that it becomes the path for the forces of the true self. Repentance is furthermore the active attempt to arrange life in such a way that it grants space to the new possibilities. New ways of thinking and behaving have to arise that correspond to the laws and forces of the spirit and that totally transform life, be it inwardly or outwardly. A turning away from the old and a turning towards the new—a “conversion”—this is exactly what the words

from Isaiah cited by John describe.

If this “repentance” is actively carried out on the basis of the insight into the lack of value of the old and the value of the new, then this leads to the “forgiveness of sins”: “Sin” is separation from God, from the law and the forces of the spirit. If someone on the basis of his turning to the realm of the spirit acts again out of the law and the forces of the kingdom of God, then he thereby abolishes sin, separation, and his deeds are in harmony with the law of the spirit. He is inwardly one again with the kingdom of God, feels this as a great joy and happiness, and acts accordingly. The divine law is again working in him; the forces of the kingdom of God again flow through him. The emptiness and meaninglessness of the old life have disappeared. This is the “forgiveness of sins.” “Repentance,” the inner turning around and turning to the realm of the spirit, is the prerequisite for this.

It is a matter of a cause and effect relationship in the soul. Repentance as the state of the soul is the cause. From it originates as effect, as a new state of the soul, the unity with the divine world—the forgiveness of sins. No priest imparts absolution here. The person concerned also does not impart absolution to himself. He experiences the becoming one again with the realm of the spirit not as the result of his own efforts but as an unexpected gift of the spiritual world, which again approaches him although he had separated from it. Neither repentance nor forgiveness of sins is something he can “do.” They are enabled in him through the forces of the spiritual world working in him. He has to realize this possibility himself, however.

Baptism with Water: Conversion

The “water” with which John the Baptist baptizes is a spiritual force that enables a person to come to insight into his state of separation from God and into the meaninglessness of his life and drives him to newly ordering his life. The water of the Jordan is only a symbol for this spiritual power. If it were not so, what would be meant by the “fire” with which Jesus later baptizes (Luke 3:16)? It cannot be physical fire after all. A spiritual force, a purifying and cleansing “water,” flows through the person who turns to the kingdom of God and this force reestablishes the unity with this realm.

The physical water of the Jordan can become a ritual symbol for

this process, and the physical baptism of John can become a ritual through which the inner process is made clear. Thereby this process becomes conscious and is affirmed. The ritual as such would mean absolutely nothing if this inner process did not occur. Such a ritual easily leads to the illusion, however, that conversion or the forgiveness of sins are really brought about through this act, but nothing would be less true. Only the inner execution, unplanned, unintended, born of the spontaneous insight into the meaninglessness of a life separated from God, can lead to the forgiveness of sins, to being filled with the forces of the spirit, and later to the conscious experience of these forces. "All flesh shall see the salvation of God."

The "Wrath to Come"

3:7 *John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." ¹⁰And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" ¹¹In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." ¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." ¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages." (NRSV)*

What happens with someone who persists in his separation from God and brings his own life and the life of others into disorder through egocentricity? With someone who uses force, trickery, and betrayal against others to advance his own interests like a "brood of vipers"? Such a person succumbs to the "wrath to come." He calls up force, trickery, and betrayal against himself, which are the reactions of people and of nature that he violated, and is destroyed by them. This is the "wrath of God": the reaction of spiritual and natural laws that the person maliciously violated—

not a punishment inflicted by an anthropomorphic god.

Someone who suspects these connections becomes perhaps afraid and tries to quickly save his skin. He asks himself: What must I do to escape this future wrath? I must do penance; I must get on good terms with John the Baptist, be it the “outer” preacher of repentance or be it the call to repentance within me. I must restrict my malice and follow my interests less inconsiderately. Perhaps a ritual of baptism also helps me. Thus the “brood of vipers,” the trickery, fear, and violence in the human being, will react. Out of worry of losing his property and out of fear of misfortune, he applies techniques of repentance in order to escape the wrath to come.

John is incorruptible, however. He makes it clear: These are only a subterfuge. Acts of repentance are honest actions, not maneuvers out of fear of misfortune. Whoever does not go over to deeds, to “fruits of repentance,” without being really affected will not escape the future wrath. The tendencies to evasion can be present in anyone. John addresses them and un.masks them.

Another self-deception also lurks in everyone: the self-righteous trust in belonging to a religious tradition that seemingly guarantees the connection with God. The Jews felt connected with Abraham according to the blood, as they were all descended from him. Since Abraham had made a covenant with God and was righteous himself, they concluded from the fact that his blood flowed also in them that they were automatically connected with God as well. Such a condition of the blood, however, by no means guarantees the connection with God. To be children of Abraham is an earthly characteristic, nothing more. John the Baptist calls to the Jews: Do not depend on your blood relationship with Abraham. Do not depend on the rituals and dogmas of the outer religion. Only the inner religion, the unfolding of the true self, which is itself from the spirit, can connect you with God, the spirit. John chooses a parable: Even the stones, the most earthly, can with God’s help become children of Abraham for they are earthly like you, and being a child of Abraham is an earthly characteristic. You will not assume of the stones, however, that they could connect spiritually with God! Just as little as the stones can do this, so can you solely on the basis of outer religion and the condition of your blood.

What is essential, on the contrary, is that through repentance a real connection to God is made. A spiritual force from the

“kingdom of God” has to permeate the person and induce deeds that create unity with God, forgiveness of sins. No religious tradition to which someone belongs by descent already offers the security of the connection with God. It can at most offer a good place to start. Nothing will change with someone who depends on his good basis to start and nothing more. He will belong to those who do not bear any good fruit. He does not develop a new state of the soul and a new life resulting from it. The old life and its consequences will destroy him; he will waste away by being cut off from the “kingdom of God.” The ax is already lying at the root of the tree. The process of destruction has already begun.

Whoever is really prepared to turn around, however, will ask himself of what does repentance, the new arranging of life that gives room for the unfolding of the true self and prepares the way for the “Lord,” consist on a concrete level? He will hear the answer from the outer or inner John depending on his life circumstances. Everyone has inner and outer possessions at his disposal beyond what is necessary for his life. This is what is meant by the second “coat” and the “food” that he can give to others. He can free himself from his inclination for possessions and use his abilities and property also for others. Then he will notice that this new way of life creates room for the influences from the true self.

Some are in a position of superior, educator, teacher, or employer where they may demand performance from others. If such a person lives in the new way, he will notice that he must measure his demands according to the performance capacity and the condition of the other person, not according to how he will profit the most—be it materially or in prestige. The tax collectors were then counted as especially great “sinners” because they collected taxes for the hated occupying power and enriched themselves by collecting extra amounts. They stand here for all who can make legitimate demands and are tempted to increase their advantage instead of having consideration for others and the situation. Whoever withstands this temptation and orients his demands according to the welfare of others will experience how new spaces open in him because the greed and thoughts of prestige that usually determined his demands have cleared out.

Finally, the “soldiers” stand for all who have power in some way, be it that they maintain order or be it that they have to protect others or things. They are always tempted to misuse their power through extortion and violence in order to strengthen their

own influence and enlarge their property, to let go of the reins on their arrogance and their drive for power, and to torment others. If such a person succumbs to one of these temptations, he surely cuts himself off from influences from within himself that bring tranquility and joy of life. If he tries, however, to recognize the meaning of life, to build up a just earthly order that follows from it, and to use means that are appropriate to the case and the welfare of all concerned, then free spaces for new developments open up.

One could group the people asking John into the social categories of economics, government, and military and assume that here it is a matter of particular occupational ethics. Certainly a new order of life will also affect the occupational ethics of a person. , However these three groups are also examples of positions that every person takes in relation to others and that he could exploit to his own advantage.

John does not just give rules of behavior to elevate the moral standards of individuals and society. He turns to listeners who realize that they are cut off from the realm of the spirit. Out of this insight and not out of an urge to become better or to do everything correctly, they ask the outer John the Baptist or their inner voice of John. They recognize—these are the answers of John the Baptist—that their inclination to act only for their own advantage must be replaced by generosity, impartiality, and consideration. Then the forces of the true self that have called for reversal and repentance can also work to induce a new conduct of life and thus bring the whole person again into harmony with the laws and forces of the spirit.

John the Baptist and Christ

3:15 *As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”* (NRSV)

Someone in whom John the Baptist becomes positively active as an inner voice and unrest reacts with inner reversal and repentance. He also asks himself what the nature of this force working in him is. He notices that the power of “repentance,” which allows him distance to his former life, cannot itself stem from this life. Otherwise it could not show him this life in a new light. Is this power of repentance already the power of redemption, which brings a new spiritual life? He foresees the possibility of the new life out of the spirit; he foresees that a force from the world of the spirit can awaken and build up this new life in him. He gradually learns that the power of repentance is not yet this power of the complete life renewal although both powers originate from the world of the spirit. His question, his inner testing of the power of repentance, shows him that this power is not yet the Anointed, not yet the expected and foreseen Christ.

In the same way the people in the gospel ask the outer John the Baptist if he is already the Christ. The people feel that in John the Baptist a power from the spiritual world approaches them, but they foresee and expect a redeeming, completely renewing force from the spiritual world, the Anointed, and try to get a clear idea of the character of the spiritual power embodied by John the Baptist.

John the Baptist, the outer or the inner, then answers. On the spiritual path two great powers are active that are clearly to be distinguished from each other: the power of the preparation of the renewal and the power of this renewal itself. The first power is the one of the cleansing and purifying “water.” Although it originates from the spiritual world, it turns to the earthly personality receptive to it and summons it to recognize its situation that the earthly is not primary and to carry out a reversal by which it gives space for the true self to develop. The second power is the one of the “fire,” of the spirit itself, which develops the true self and burns everything earthly that hinders its growth. The “fire” symbolizes the new spiritual life itself. Both powers originate from the spiritual world, but the first influences the earthly human being and the second, the spiritual. This constitutes the immense difference in rank between them. Thus John the Baptist, the prototype of ethical renewal, says of Jesus, the prototype of spiritual renewal, that the latter is stronger than he and that he, John, is not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. John embodies the earthly human being oriented to the spiritual world,

Jesus the spiritual human being living out of the spiritual world.

John the Baptist is also the last prophet of the Old Testament for the Old Testament describes the preparation of the earthly human being for the coming of the spiritual human being. It describes how a people becomes conscious of its condition through an outer law—that is given by the spiritual world—, recognizes that the earthly life is not the purpose of the human being, and prepares the way for a development of a spiritual life. The prophets proclaim and carry out this “old covenant” with God but always already point to coming of the “new covenant” for which the old is the prerequisite. The new covenant replaces the outer law of the earthly human being by the inner law of the spiritual human being. This inner law is the structure of the true self. The fulfillment of this inner law means freedom. The New Testament, the Christ, is the freedom for the spiritual human being; the Old Testament, the prophets, is the law for the earthly human being. With the help of the outer law, the freedom of the inner law finally becomes possible.

In John the Baptist the Old Testament has reached its culmination. It is once again recapitulated in him to then make room for the New Testament, for the Christ. Thereby it does not become superfluous. Everyone who wants to step on the spiritual path has to live through a state of repentance and conversion. Once this state has been lived through, he can be taken up in the stream of the spiritual powers that awaken the spiritual human being. Thus the law is replaced by freedom.

Luke here again emphasizes the contrasts appearing in a spiritual impulse. A spiritual impulse always has two sides: building up the new, which means joy, and breaking down the old, to which pain is connected. These two sides show already in the preparation of this impulse, even more in its realization. Someone who brings the fruits of repentance and reorders his earthly life is compared to a good tree by John the Baptist. He will live, also as an earthly personality for as such he serves the new, spiritual human being and receives from him life purpose and life force. On the contrary, an earthly personality which continues leading its old, egocentric life as before makes no room for the spiritual forces, yes, even cuts itself off from them and will be destroyed by the consequences of its deeds and its emptiness of purpose. It will be cut down like a bad tree (Luke 3:9).

This same contrast is operative in the state of the realization of

the spiritual impulse. The “wheat” is the true self of the human being, the spiritual human being who receives the light of the spirit and grows thereby. The “Anointed,” the pattern of the true self permeated by the spirit, will collect the true self of all people who react positively to him and gather them in the world of the spirit. This true self and the structure of the spiritual world working in it break irresistibly through all the husks of the old ego as the germ of the new. The old, purified ego enters the fruit to a certain degree. Where the new has not developed, however, there are only the husks, the chaff, the egocentric earthly personality. It will perish in the fire of the spirit. It is mortal after all; it does not correspond in its structure to the structure of the spiritual world. It has led its own life and not placed its forces at the disposal of the growth of the true self. Therefore its forces also cannot rise in the new spiritual human being. This chaff is swept off the threshing floor by the winnowing fork of the spirit.

Thereby in another way again, the declaration of Simeon in the temple is repeated, which speaks of Christ being destined “for the falling and the rising of many.” To this corresponds that John the Baptist as forerunner admonishes the people to conversion and repentance on the one hand and on the other hand proclaims “the good news” to them. He points to the possibility that is opened by the coming of Christ to all receptive thereto. Every human being can receive life meaning and life force from the spiritual world and thereby awaken as a spiritual human being.

Destiny of John the Baptist

3:18 *So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. ¹⁹But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, ²⁰added to them all by shutting up John in prison. (NRSV)*

The destiny of John the Baptist is the destiny of everyone who embodies the truth of the spiritual world in the midst of the earthly world. The order of the spiritual world represented by him stands opposed to the order of the earthly world in which the right of the stronger counts and everyone only follows his personal interests. Therefore conflicts will necessarily arise. The earthly world will feel disturbed in its habits by the spiritual order, will

suspect that it does not have an absolute right to exist, and will become indignant. It will persecute the representative of the spiritual order and seek to put him out of action.

This is valid no matter on which level the representative of the spiritual world works: on the level of the baptism with water or of the baptism with fire.

John as prophet who represents the order of the spirit reproves Herod, the embodiment of earthly power with a religious edge. Herod overcome by passion had taken Herodias, the wife of his brother, as wife and has indebted himself by his encroachments as ruler. He protests against the reproaches of John the Baptist, has him thrown into prison, and later killed (Luke 9:9).

Something like that can always also happen in the individual who is touched inwardly by the power of John the Baptist. The Herod within him had up to now served his passions and his addiction to dominate without consideration of the rights of others and the order of the spiritual world. Then conscience and reason—the inner John the Baptist—announce themselves and show him that his behavior is not in accordance with his innermost standards—the order of the spiritual world that is also in him. He is not prepared to renounce passion and power, however, although they will destroy him and others sooner or later, and to have his earthly habits questioned at all. Therefore he represses the voice of conscience, the inner John the Baptist, just like the historical Herod had locked the historical John into prison. Later he totally silences this voice with inner force just as Herod had John killed.

On his level John the Baptist prefigures Jesus' destiny. Jesus is later also captured and killed by the powers of the earthly world who feel challenged and put into question by him as the representative of the spiritual world.

Appearance of Jesus

3:21 *Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²²and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."* (NRSV)

John the Baptist was the last and greatest prophet of the Old Testament, the forerunner of the New Testament. But who is

Jesus? Who is the Christ, which the people await with such great longing? The questions are answered by the above scene from the Gospels.

Jesus the “Anointed”

“Christ” means the “Anointed.” It the Greek expression for Moshiach—in Greek “Messias”—, which in Hebrew also means the “Anointed.” Anointing has its models in the Old Testament where men, for example David or Saul, are “anointed” by a prophet as kings, others as priests. God also can anoint a human being. In Psalm 89:20 is written: “I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him” (NRSV). The anointing is done with oil. It is a ritual or a picture through which an inner, soul-spiritual process is symbolized outwardly. The prophet as carrier of divine powers transmits these powers—symbolized by the oil—to a human being and makes him thereby a priest or king. Or God gives his powers—the “holy oil”—directly. They are spiritual powers which transmit knowledge of the spiritual world to the recipient so that, as priest or king, he can lead his people consciously according to the laws of the spiritual world. In principle, every human being can experience such an “anointing.” Divine powers, different from earthly powers of understanding and consciousness, then illuminate his consciousness, and knowledge of the divine world becomes his share.

But in fact, only the human being who already possesses the receptivity for it will experience such an “anointing.” A possibility of a connection to the spiritual world has to be present or developed in him, a faculty for receiving these powers. Jesus was already connected with and open to the spiritual world before he came into the body of his mother so that after this receptive faculty had come to maturity in him, he could receive the spiritual powers. Consequences and duties are connected with their reception. They are given to the person concerned so that he really functions as “king” or “priest” in the sense of the spiritual laws of which he became conscious through the “anointing.” If he does not do so, then he creates conflicts in his own being. For then the structure of his actions and motives do not correspond to the structure of the spiritual world that wants to work through him. So he has to be prepared also as an earthly personality to work together with these powers, which means that he gives up all his

egocentricity in thinking, feeling, willing, and doing and builds up a thinking, feeling, willing, and doing that correspond to the structure of the divine laws. In other words: In the spiritual powers, he has to persistently continue on the spiritual path that began with an inner reversal. And he must do this for others, in the manner that through his own path, he enables others to also find and go this path. This is the “guidance” that he owes the people as anointed “king” or “priest.”

Baptism with Fire: Enlightenment

Anointing is nothing other than the baptism with the “Holy Spirit,” with the fire of the spirit. After Jesus has been baptized by John with the water of repentance, he also experiences the baptism with the fire of the Holy Spirit. The baptism with water symbolizes that he cleansed his personality of all egocentricity. It also symbolizes that Jesus connects with the tradition of the Old Testament, which means nothing other than the purification of the earthly through the outer “law,” which makes him conscious of his egocentricity and shows him the possibility of purification. The Old Testament is in its totality the description of the baptism with water and its consequences. It describes the preparation for the baptism with fire, which is the content of the New Testament. Analogous thereto, John, who baptizes with water, is the last and greatest prophet of the old covenant but also already the announcer of the new covenant, and Jesus, who baptizes with fire, the founder of the new covenant.

Through the baptism with the fire of the Holy Spirit, the “anointing” with the “holy oil” of God, the man Jesus becomes the “Anointed,” the “Christ.” As Christ he is the carrier of divine powers. They illuminate his immortal soul, his true self. The true self becomes the spirit-filled self, the spirit-self. As Anointed, Jesus now stands before the consequences and duties that follow the gift of these powers: on the one hand, to let himself as an earthly I-personality be totally transformed so that he corresponds to the structure of the spiritual world in thinking, feeling, willing, and doing; on the other, to give these powers to others as “king” and “priest” so that they can also go the path of transformation.

When Jesus is baptized by John with water and immediately thereafter by the spiritual world with the fire of the spirit, this expresses that also in the third phase of the activity of the spiritual

impulse, the preparatory aspect and the realizing aspect of this impulse connect and work closely together. John the Baptist—in the third phase of the spiritual impulse—becomes conscious of his task of being the preparer for salvation. Jesus, also in the third phase of the spiritual impulse, becomes conscious of his task of being the embodiment of salvation. After the imprisonment of John the Baptist, Jesus takes on both tasks: preparation and realization, the call to repentance and the call to spiritual renewal.

The same is true for every individual human being that enters the third phase of the spiritual path. His earthly personality with its ego is purified and consciously carries out the reversal and purification of its entire being and life enabled by the inner John the Baptist. The spiritual man, the true self, can become conscious and active on this basis. And when the spirit-filled true self becomes active after the baptism with fire, it attracts, like Jesus, people who react to spiritual powers emanating from him and thereby enter the first phase of the spiritual path.

Jesus is not the only human being who was “anointed” with fire of the Holy Spirit. Various individuals in the Old Testament received the “holy oil” of God and became anointed ones. Other religions also report of “enlightened ones” whose consciousness shone in the realization of the spiritual world. They were gifted with the Holy Spirit. There is only a graduated difference between such human beings. Some are already connected with the spiritual world from birth on, some not. And their receptivity to the spiritual powers varies depending on their stage of development. Jesus was a human being in whom the powers of the Holy Spirit lived in their complete abundance.

Luke describes in pictures how this process of “anointing,” the baptism with the Holy Spirit, actually occurs. It is a soul-spiritual event: Spiritual powers, powers of realization, illuminate the immortal soul, the true self, of a human being. In this light, he realizes the spiritual world. This event is invisible to the eyes of the senses. It occurs in another dimension than the spatiotemporal. Therefore pictures are necessary to describe it. And what picture could be more appropriate to describe the spiritual world, which in its vibrations is high above the earthly, than “heaven?” “Heaven” is an infinite expanse just like the spiritual world is infinite and eternal.

Jesus “prays,” which means he opens his being and consciousness, his true self, to the spirit of truth. Conversely

“heaven” opens. A meeting between the consciousness of Jesus and the world of the spirit occurs. The latter pours its powers into the consciousness of the recipient and illuminates it. The consciousness becomes one with the structures and forces of the infinite, eternal spirit, is permeated by them, and permeates them in turn. It becomes the spirit-self.

In the Bible various pictures are used for the Holy Spirit. In verse 3:16, Luke describes it as “fire”; in the Revelation of John, it is compared with an eagle; and here, in the illumination of Jesus, it appears in “bodily form like a dove.” This also is a picture not perceptible to the eyes of the senses. Nevertheless, it is not an arbitrary picture of the evangelist but a picture that makes clear certain characteristics of this Spirit. The illuminated consciousness experiences these characteristics as concretely as the earthly consciousness experiences analogous characteristics in the earthly world. Therefore the expression “bodily form” is used.

The pictures chosen for the Holy Spirit relate to different aspects of this power. As “fire,” the Holy Spirit is energy that fills with dynamic force what is in harmony with it and that “devours” what is not in harmony with it like the “chaff” that is burned with “unquenchable fire” (Luke 3:17). As a bird, it represents the volatile element air, the pneuma, the breath of God, which gives life to all things. As an eagle in particular, it pictures the all-penetrating power of realization, the solar eye of truth, which dissolves every falsehood; as a dove, on the other hand, the guarding power of truth, which means accordance with the order of the spiritual world. Whoever is in harmony with the spiritual world is released from all unrest and struggle. He lives in an unshakeable, strong peace, in harmony with the universe. He also brings this peace to others who are receptive to such a disposition.

In his meeting with the Holy Spirit, Jesus experiences this aspect of the great, all-encompassing peace that is grounded in the spiritual order. One way his mission is marked thereby is that he anchors this peace in humanity and functions as the Prince of Peace predicted in the Old Testament (Isaiah 9:6). This is not contradicted by the fact that he will be for a “fall” of many. For without the burning of the chaff, the dissolution of all foul, earthly peace compromises, no peace grounded in the spiritual order can arise.

Jesus, Son of God

When the powers of the spirit connect with the true self of a human being, when he is “anointed” by these powers, when he becomes conscious of them and thereby of the spiritual world, he becomes a spirit-self, a “son of God.” In this sense, Isaiah says: “Here is my servant...my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations” (Isaiah 42:1, NRSV). Luke in verse 3:22 is referring to this place in the Old Testament, as well as to verse 7 of Psalm 2: “You are my son; today I have begotten you” (NRSV). Other ancient manuscripts of the Gospel of Luke actually quote: “...today I have begotten you.” For when the spirit of God takes residence in the true self of a human being and he becomes conscious of it, then it receives a new quality. The spirit-self is begotten.

This human being is from then on threefold: He consists, firstly, of the earthly human being, the I-personality, the mortal soul with its body; secondly, of the immortal soul, his true identity; and thirdly, of the spirit that permeates the immortal soul and makes it into a spirit-soul, a spirit-self. The I-personality was conceived by two parents in a biological manner. The true self was lowered into, that is begotten in, a pure, earthly soul—Mary—by the Holy Spirit. The spirit-self is begotten of “father” and “mother” as well: The “father” is the spiritual law, the spiritual structure, at the basis of the universe; the “mother” is the spiritual power that maintains the universe. The “father” appears in the scene described by Luke as “voice,” the “mother” as the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. God “speaks”; he lays his thoughts, his creative law, into a person’s consciousness, the true self, that is filled by the divine power—the “mother.” Thereby the true self becomes conscious of the spiritual world; it is now active within him. It becomes the spirit-self, the “son” of the “father” and “mother.” Expressed differently: From the cosmic spirit and the cosmic energy, the individual spirit arises, which from now on lives consciously out of the “truth” and carries it “to the people.” Thereby, Jesus has become “Son of God” as was announced in Luke 1:35.

One has always posed the question: What is the relationship between the human being and God in Jesus Christ? Is Jesus Christ both at the same time? The foregoing casts light on this question.

As an earthly being, as an earthly I-personality with a body, begotten of biological parents as a biological being, every human being, including Jesus, is only an earthly being, basically only a

higher animal, a “false” human being, a “servant.” As true self, every human being is in principle a Son of Man, only as a rule not in actuality, as the true self in most human beings is “sleeping.” Jesus is a Son of Man in actuality, for the “true” human being, the Son of Man, is awake and active in him. Finally as a true self enlightened by the spirit, as spirit-soul, as individual spirit-self, Jesus is the Christ, is Son of God.

In Jesus—as in John the Baptist—the true self was already active from birth on and before. After all he had lived consciously in the spiritual world but then voluntarily accepted the “form of a slave”—an earthly I-personality with its body. He was from the beginning a Son of Man, a true human being. The “form of a slave” hindered the true self only temporarily in its activity as a thick veil hinders someone in the use of his limbs. This true self of Jesus, however, was present and in principle capable of action, as well as connected with and nourished by the spiritual world. In the course of time, he shook off the dominion of the form of the slave. The baptism with “water” symbolizes this process.

When the true self has shaken off the dominion of the “form of a slave,” the “father”—the cosmic spirit—and the “mother”—the cosmic energy—can sink into the true self, irradiate it with divine powers, and allow it to become conscious of the spiritual world. This event is the baptism with “fire.” In this moment the spirit-self is begotten as a “son of God.” It becomes conscious of itself, of its divine origin, and of the divine world. It can therefore also put into action the laws and powers of the divine world, but for the time being still by means of the earthly I-personality and its body.

Now Jesus as spirit-self is on the one side consciously connected with and embedded in the divine world while on the other side connected with the earthly ego, which gradually becomes a better instrument of expression and action of the spirit-self. As Jesus, this human being is therefore an earthly, false human being (ego and body) and a divine, true human being (true self); as Christ, he is God’s Son (spirit-filled true self).

Sons of God and Son of God

Confusion has also often been the result of referring to different actualities as “son of God.” Just as one can speak of many anointed human beings—for example, kings and priests of the Old Testament—but only of a singular anointing power—the divine

fire—so one can speak of many “sons of God” when one means the human being enlightened by the divine truth but has to speak of a singular Son of God in so far as one is referring to the light of the spirit, to truth itself.

“Sons of God” are all human beings in whom the individual spirit-soul, the enlightened true self, has awakened and become active through the begetting activity of the “father” and the receptive activity of the “mother.” They are the “righteous” who are spoken of in the Wisdom of Solomon, who have “knowledge of God” (Wisdom 2:13, RSV) and who act and live out of this knowledge. They are “images of God,” sons of God (Wisdom 2:18, RSV). “For God created us for incorruption, and made us in the image of his own eternity” (Wisdom 2:23, RSV). “Son of God” in a more general sense, however, is the knowledge of God as such, the imperishable truth, the light, begotten of the divine order, the “father” and conceived in the power of the Holy Spirit, the “mother.” In this sense, there can be only one “Son of God,” the conscious knowledge of God as such, the light of truth.

This one light of truth, this “only-begotten Son of God,” fills all sons of God, all enlightened ones. They are like the rays of one sun. In Jesus, this sun shone perfectly. He therefore embodied the light of truth, the “only-begotten Son of God” in a special way. In this sense one can say, he is the “only-begotten Son of God.”

Age and Genealogy of Jesus

3:23 *Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his work. He was the son (as was thought) of Joseph son of Heli, ²⁴son of Matthat, son of Levi, son of Melchi, son of Jannai, son of Joseph, ²⁵son of Mattathias, son of Amos, son of Nahum, son of Esli, son of Naggai, ²⁶son of Maath, son of Mattathias, son of Semein, son of Josech, son of Joda, ²⁷son of Joanan, son of Rhesa, son of Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, son of Neri, ²⁸son of Melchi, son of Addi, son of Cosam, son of Elmadam, son of Er, ²⁹son of Joshua, son of Eliezer, son of Jorim, son of Matthat, son of Levi, ³⁰son of Simeon, son of Judah, son of Joseph, son of Jonam, son of Eliakim, ³¹son of Melea, son of Menna, son of Mattatha, son of Nathan, son of David, ³²son of Jesse, son of Obed, son of Boaz, son of Sala, son of Nahshon, ³³son of Amminadab, son of Admin, son of Arni, son of Hezron, son of Perez, son of Judah, ³⁴son of Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, son of Terah, son of Nahor, ³⁵son of*

Serug, son of Reu, son of Peleg, son of Eber, son of Shelah, ³⁶son of Cainan, son of Arphaxad, son of Shem, son of Noah, son of Lamech, ³⁷son of Methuselah, son of Enoch, son of Jared, son of Mahalaleel, son of Cainan, ³⁸son of Enos, son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God. (NRSV)

In the “anointing,” the giving of the Holy Spirit, Jesus has been baptized with “fire,” has become the “Anointed” and “Son of God.” Father and mother, the law and power of the spiritual world, have most deeply connected with a human being. With that, the divine Word, the light of truth, can begin its public work for which it has incarnated in Jesus, for which it has “become flesh.” Jesus is at this time 30 years old. When he was twelve years old, all wisdom of the spiritual world as far as it had been handed down in tradition had opened to his earthly understanding. All aspects of this wisdom—twelve is the number of completion—were at his command, and he was in the position to discuss it with the sages and scribes of his days.

“30” Years Old

Thirty is also a symbolic number. It may be that Jesus was really 30 years old at the beginning of his public appearance—then this spatiotemporal fact also becomes the symbol for a soul-spiritual fact. If he was not 30 years old in a biological sense, however, then he was so in a soul-spiritual sense. For example, Joseph in Egypt was also 30 years old “when he stepped before the pharaoh, the king of Egypt” (Genesis 41:46, NRSV), that is, also when his influence in the earthly world—this is what Egypt stands for—began. “David was 30 years old when he became king.” This is explicitly stated in 2 Samuel 5:4 (NRSV). Three is the number of the unity between spirit, soul, and body or, expressed differently, between spirit-self, true self, and ego-personality. It is the number of the realization of the soul-spiritual impulse in the material world. Three with a zero, 30, characterizes this principle in dynamic activity. When Jesus begins his open activity at age 30, then this means that he has realized the unity between spirit-self, true self, and ego-personality, that in his body he is mature and equipped for his task, and that he has dynamic power to carry it out. This is also the meaning of the band of heroes that serves David being numbered as “30”: 30 expresses strong, dynamic activity in harmony with spirit and soul.

The Genealogy of Jesus

At this point in the gospel, Luke brings Jesus' genealogy. He had written of Jesus' divine ancestry: He became the Son of God through the Holy Spirit. Then Luke also writes and characterizes his earthly ancestry. This "genealogy" has been a great riddle mainly because Matthew (Matthew 1:1-17) gives a completely different genealogy up to David. One has tried to resolve this contradiction in various ways, for here it clearly seemed that spatiotemporal facts—a biological, hereditary descent—were described. Jesus could have on his father's side—and Jewish genealogies were always through the father's line—only one father, grandfather, etc. When Matthew and Luke gave different genealogies, then the historical validity of the gospels had to be doubted at least on this point. Although this aspect may be secondary—if Matthew and Luke did poor "research" on this point, one would also have to be careful at other, more important points.

One attempt at a solution consisted in the assumption that despite the Jewish genealogical line through the father, one of the evangelists had made an exception here in giving the genealogy of Jesus' mother, and this had been obscured by reason of copyists' errors or foolish editorial intervention in the text. Another attempted solution spoke of two Jesus children, one descended from the line of Nathan, the other from the line of Solomon (Solomon and Nathan were sons of David). After one of the Jesus children had died at age 12, according to this explanation, his soul went over into the other Jesus child and mixed with his soul so that both portions of inheritance, the priestly via Nathan and the kingly via Solomon, united in Jesus.

Perhaps still another solution is possible, however, which also explains how the priestly and kingly characteristics of his people were hereditarily united in Jesus without needing to resort to the problematical hypothesis of the two Jesus children.

In the gospel ever and again historical or seemingly historical statements are made that point to soul-spiritual facts. What if in this sense the genealogies are not historical at all or not purely historical but represent steps of a people's soul-spiritual development that Jesus shares as an inheritance and that culminates in Jesus?

Both genealogies would then be constructions by the evangelists with certain demonstrative intentions. Matthew constructs his

genealogy to show that the *whole* development of the people beginning with Abraham, especially the development of the people's kingly characteristics, is summed up in the earthly human being Jesus. Luke constructs his genealogy to show that the *whole* development of the priestly characteristics of the people, even of humanity, is summed up in the earthly human being Jesus.

An argument for this hypothesis of a construction lies in the fact that Matthew expressly divided his "family tree" in $3 \times 14 = 42$ members. There are 42 generations from Abraham to Jesus: 14 from Abraham to David, 14 from David to the Babylonian captivity, and 14 from the Babylonian captivity to Jesus (Matthew 1:17). Luke does not make such statements explicitly, but one can count: With him there are 42 generations from Jesus to David, 14 from David to Abraham, and 21 (half of 42) from Abraham to God.

The number 42 already plays a role in the Old Testament. It can appear when a long journey is made that touches all the essential points of a prescribed route. At the end of such a journey, 42 stations have been passed through. The prototypical example for this is the journey through the wilderness in 42 stations of the people of Israel after their exodus from Egypt up to their entry into the Promised Land. In Numbers 33:1–49 all these stations are listed.

With a number of places it tells what happened there. At the place "Mara" ("bitter well"), for example, the people find only bitter, undrinkable water, but Moses make it sweet and drinkable. At the next place, "Elim," the people camp by good water; twelve springs flow and 70 palm trees grow there. And so it continues. These few statements already indicate that the stations with their symbolic names, characteristics, and numbers stand for developments of a soul-spiritual kind. The "journey through the wilderness" is the spiritual path that leads out of the entanglement in the earthly world—Egypt—and into the conscious experience of the spiritual world—the Promised Land. On this "journey through the wilderness," the people have left the earthly springs and foods but are not yet in the land where milk and honey flow, that is, the realm where spiritual food and drink are taken up consciously. They are dependent on their faith in the goal, and ever and again this faith is severely tested. The necessity of parting with earthly illusions on the path is experienced as "bitter water," "Mara," but Moses shows that the disappointment is in reality sweet for it releases the truth. In "Elim" the people already quench their thirst

for spiritual goods at twelve springs, the twelve aspects of the spiritual world, and consume the fruit of 70 “palms”: They experience an overabundance (70 is a symbol for this) of hope and peace (symbolized by the palms).

Thus every one of the 42 stations renders a particular experience on the spiritual path. In the phase of preparation—until the entry into the Promised Land—42 such experiences have to be made. One can reflect that these experiences relate to seven decisive aspects each in human thinking, feeling, and willing, which would be 21 stations, whereby each experience would have a positive and negative side: 42. If one would know the meaning of each given name and place, it would surely be apparent that every name—as in the case of “bitter water”—also characterizes the specific experience made at each “place.”

This same number 42 now also appears in the “family trees” of Matthew and Luke. Should it also be a case of stations of development of a people, only not in the symbolism of a journey but of a chain of generations? The persons in the lists would then not at all have to be always descended from the others. They would embody phases and states of development. One can think of the chain of medieval German emperors. One emperor is not always descended from the others, but each individual represents a historical phase in which people had certain political experiences. One can imagine that a writer comparable to Matthew would now choose 42 of these emperors to represent the totality of the political development of the Germans. He would then list these 42 in the form of a genealogy to show that the phases of political development follow one out of the other and that the last in the list unites all the characteristics of his predecessors.

One can further think of the chain of popes. They also each represent a historical phase in which now, however, not the political, but the religious experiences of human beings stand in the foreground. A writer comparable to Luke would then choose—for the same period of time as the one chosen by the writer interested in the political relations—a number of popes that would be representative for particular religious developments.

Depending on the point of view of the classification, different divisions and numbers of developmental phases can result. Thus it can be understood why the “family tree” in Matthew has only 28 members from David to Jesus as opposed to 42 members in Luke. Different points of view of classification were important to them.

(Emperors and popes are only mentioned here for the clarification of the principle. Of course the kings and priests of Israel can only very distantly be compared to them.)

With Matthew the kings stand in the foreground, which points to the development of the “masculine” side of the people. The totality of this development in 42 phases symbolized by persons is described from Abraham to Jesus. This is the side of the human will, the active side, which realizes God’s will. The Jewish people have their beginning with Abraham; he represents its active principle.

Matthew begins his genealogy with Abraham not without reason. In his gospel he describes the special task of the Jewish people whose progenitor is Abraham. The task is the building up of a responsible ego anchored in the body. For Matthew it is important to show that the ego of this people takes form in Jesus after 42 passages through different conditions. The “kings” standing in the foreground in Matthew are the representatives of the will side of this ego. Each embodies a particular experience of this ego. One king is faithful to God and fulfills his task; another falls away from God; a third is smitten with leprosy because of his lack of faith; etc. Matthew wants to say with his “family tree”: Jesus as earthly human being is the heir of the political experiences of his people since Abraham, since its beginning, altogether “42,” that is, all possible experiences under the political point of view in the mental, emotional, and vital realm. These experiences of the “masculine” will side of the people are summed up in Jesus. How do these experiences flow from epoch to epoch? In the biological way: in that the members of one epoch inherit the experiences of the members of the previous epoch. Thereby it is all the same *how many* members are contained in one epoch or if those who pass on the inheritance are men or women—only that the chronicler always picks *one* man as the representative of an epoch.

Luke on the other hand describes with his “family tree” the development of the “feminine” side of the people, its capacity to surrender and its receptivity to God’s call. David is not only a king but also a priest. He embodies to a high degree human receptivity as shown, for example, in the psalms attributed to him. The psalms represent the human struggle to be open for the impulses from the spiritual world. Ever and again this openness is locked, ever and again unlocked. David’s son Nathan embodies David’s

priestly side, Solomon his kingly side. For this reason the “family tree” in Luke goes back to Nathan, not Solomon. In Luke there are 42 developmental phases going back from Jesus to David: the totality of the development of the side of human feeling that listens to God’s will. The masculine and feminine sides also correspond to the circumstance that the “family tree” in Matthew goes from above downwards and in Luke from below upwards. The masculine, the active, goes from the cause to the effect. It gives its impulses and produces consequences. The feminine, the passive, on the contrary goes from the effect to the cause. It opens to the impulses and gives itself to them.

If one would know for what the individual names of the “family tree” in Luke stand, then one would have a representation of the development of the feminine, the priestly, side of the people in all details: their independence or their obedience towards God, their pride, their surrender under various conditions. The seven main principles of each of human thinking, feeling, and willing would be included in this religious development sequentially, each in their active and passive aspect just as is prefigured in Israel’s journey through the wilderness: “42.”

Luke continues Jesus’ “descent” from David back to Abraham and then differently as in Matthew, back to God. There are 14 “generations” from David back to Abraham and 21 from Abraham back to God. Carrying the “family tree” back to God also fits to the special orientation of the Gospel of Luke. Matthew describes the construction of the earthly body with its ego in a particular people. Such a description is only meaningful when it begins with the ancestor of the people, the seed that unfolds through the generations. Luke on the other hand brings the development of the feeling side of the people, those characteristics that—in a religious orientation—are always directly nourished by God and related to him. (The biologically impossibly long lives of the patriarchs from Abraham back to God as they are given in the Old Testament (Genesis Chapters 5 and 11) also indicate that it is not the case of individuals but of representatives for whole epochs.)

All these “77” religious experiences on the journey of a people and of humanity through time, these experiences of surrender and of listening to what comes from above or of closing-off against what comes from above, are collected as an inheritance in Jesus. In Jesus they are present. By going back to God, Luke makes it clear that also the earthly human being Jesus originates from the

spiritual world in the final analysis. Jesus is not only “Son of God” due to his being anointed with the fire of the Holy Spirit but is also indirectly related to God, like all human beings, through the stream of the “blood.”

If one interprets the “family trees” in Matthew and Luke as a historically provable succession of generations, the result is contradictions that are difficult to solve. If one takes them as two constructions, however, that illustrate historical epochs with the help of historical personalities, on the one hand under a political rubric, on the other under a religious rubric, then it shows that they point to an essential fact:

In the construction of an earthly human being, all forces of the earthly world, especially of his people, always cooperate. They work from the misty past into the present. In the earthly human being Jesus, however, the best forces of his people and of humanity are summed up. They are on the one hand the best forces of will and body, that is, “kingly powers,” that have gone through all conceivable developments. Matthew shows this through his 42 generations from Abraham on. On the other hand they are the best forces of feeling of Jesus’ people and of humanity, that is, “priestly powers,” that have gone through all conceivable experiences. Luke shows this with his 42 generations back to David and through the further going back to God.

In this respect Matthew and Luke do not contradict each other. They even complement each other.

Jesus, Son of Joseph

Before the description of his “family tree,” Luke writes that Jesus was a son of Joseph “as was thought.” Jesus’ earthly sonship is from Joseph and Mary. One usually assumed that this is the actual sonship of Jesus. This is really just an assumption, however, that Luke expresses with his formulation. The real sonship of Jesus is out of God, the Father, and out of the Holy Spirit, the Mother, for Jesus, the true self, already lived before his birth in the world of the Father and there possessed a divine figure. He voluntarily laid aside this divine figure, as Paul says, and took on the “figure of a servant,” an earthly personality, because only in this way could his work of redemption be accomplished. This earthly human being Jesus, the “figure of a servant,” was gradually built up through countless generations like all earthly human beings, but in such a

manner that he assimilated each and every earthly force of his people: a fully developed ego that contained all conceivable—42—experiences of the will (according to Matthew) and had gone through all conceivable—42 plus 14 plus 21—experiences of feeling (according to Luke).

The Temptations of Jesus

4:1 *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ²where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.* (NRSV)

The temptation by the “devil” necessarily follows the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The baptism with fire means that the human being becomes aware of the spirit in the true self, in his spiritual soul. He recognizes that his life is part of a greater continuity than the one of daily life. In this he experiences his “divine sonship.” He experiences that his true identity is rooted in the world of the spirit and that as an individual spiritual being, he originates from the cosmic spirit in its father and mother aspects.

In front of this background of the spiritual world of which he is becoming newly conscious and in contrast thereto, the earthly, self-maintaining ego shows itself more clearly. The principle of egocentricity, which permeates the whole earthly nature and also the earthly human being, is the “devil.” He “tempts” the person becoming aware of the greater continuity who now also wants to live according to it. As soon as the person wants to live out of the spiritual lawfulness, the forces of the earthly world approach him even more and try to hold him in the old ruts. The “devil” connects to the new spiritual powers of the person concerned and tries to make them subservient to egocentricity—himself.

After the baptism with “fire,” a “son of God” finds himself at first in an in-between state. He is not yet firmly anchored in the spiritual world and is in no way immune to the influences of the earthly world. After all he possesses an earthly body and an earthly ego that make their demands of him. He has to be consciously exposed to them, recognize them, and set their boundaries. Only thereby can he become clearly conscious of his true identity, will it gain contour, and will he gain the ability to act in the sense of this true identity in a newly won confidence. Thus the altercation between the spirit-self and egocentricity always stands at the

beginning of the public activity of a “son of God.” What Jesus experiences, everyone experiences who becomes conscious of his true identity and whose false identity thereby feels threatened. The false identity—the “devil”—wants to bind the person again to the earthly world precisely also with the latter’s new spiritual possibilities. They are to be subjected to the earthly world. In the gospel, Jesus lives through and exemplarily withstands the temptations by the false identity.

Luke first describes the inner state of the true self, the Son of God, that is becoming conscious. The Son of God is “full of the Holy Spirit,” full of new possibilities of life given to him by the spiritual world. He receives this tremendous spiritual potential. But how should he use it? How should he stand towards the earthly world? “Led by the Spirit” he has an altercation with the earthly world. He longs for a home for his true self and for possibilities for his spiritual forces to unfold. Does the earthly world offer him this home and these possibilities to unfold? In his longing for them, he is chased through the whole earthly world by the spirit, and it becomes apparent that for his being, which is spirit, the earthly world is a “wilderness.” It offers him no home and possibilities to unfold. The earthly even be it full of beauty is stamped by transience and egocentricity, whereas the spirit is eternal and is love. He finds no correspondence in the earthly world. Like the people of Israel had to wander for 40 years through the wilderness, Jesus strays for 40 days through the earthly world, and for 40 days he experiences nothing but wilderness. 40 is the number of matter in its totality and its many facets. A soul touched and filled by the spirit searches through all variants of the earthly in order to find a home for itself. Ever and again it recognizes that every variant is “wilderness,” however, and offers no home for it. One does not necessarily have to assume here that Jesus really wandered for 40 days through a real wilderness. The story is above all a picture for a soul-spiritual, inner process. The original Greek text also corresponds to this. Translated literally, it reads: “And Jesus was led *in Spirit* in the wilderness.”

The wilderness increases to the highest degree the longing of the true self for realization and fulfillment. When this longing does not find satisfaction anywhere in the earthly world, it runs the risk of looking for substitute satisfactions. The temptations are nothing other than offers for substitute satisfactions. They become ever

more enticing the greater the longing of the true self becomes through the ongoing experience of wilderness. The “devil,” the principle of egocentricity, is the carrier of these offers. The longing of the true self for fulfillment in the spiritual world is the point of attachment for the devil. This longing is Jesus’ “hunger” in the wilderness. The devil tries to offer fulfillment in the earthly world to the longing of the true self. He does this by mobilizing the drives for possessions, power, and prestige.

The temptations themselves and the way Jesus fends them off are prefigured in the Old Testament, in the journey of the people of Israel through the wilderness.

First Temptation: Spiritual Forces in the Service of the Drive for Possessions

4:2 He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. ³The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” ⁴Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’” (NRSV)

One usually interprets this scene such that Jesus really suffered hunger in a real wilderness and was invited to use his abilities as Son of God to change real stones into real bread—that is, to use his miraculous powers to his own advantage, which is not allowed according to the spiritual laws. Here it is not a matter of real stones and real bread, however, but of pictures.

The precursor for this scene in the Old Testament reads: “He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 8:3, NRSV). “Manna”—this is the spiritual bread, all “that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” What is spiritual bread? What is the nourishment that could appease the hunger of the true self? It is the meaning of life. When someone feels that the whole world is a wilderness and his life is meaningless, he hungers for the meaning of life. When he finds a convincing meaning of life, then this is soul-spiritual nourishment for him. His hunger is appeased; he now knows for what he lives and can employ his forces for the discovered meaning.

The true self has awakened in Jesus. He looks around in the earthly world—and experiences it as a wilderness. There is nothing in the earthly world that could appease his hunger for meaning—for fulfillment and foundation through spiritual power and order. Then the devil—the personification of egocentricity—approaches the self hungering for the meaning of life and says: “You as true self are able to give a meaning to the earthly world out of the perfection of your power! Are you not God’s Son? Then creatively give meaning to your life, to yourself, and to the world! Change the meaninglessness, the poverty, the oppression, the conflicts—in one word, the ‘stones’—into prosperity, freedom, and peace, that is, into ‘bread!’” The “stones” are here a picture for the meaninglessness of everything earthly as such—when seen without the spiritual perspective; the “bread” is a picture of an earthly meaning of life consisting of peace, freedom, and prosperity (thus also real bread!).

The person thus hungering and tempted could answer: “Yes. I give the earthly world its meaning. I give the earthly human being his meaning. Thus I myself create my own nourishment. I have creative possibilities after all. I make ‘bread’ out of ‘stones’! Thereby my spiritual hunger is appeased.”

The first temptation is actually twofold. First the person hungering for spiritual values is to be induced to transform the meaninglessness of the earthly world into meaning. He is to see the meaning of life in prosperity and happiness, in the unfolding of all earthly possibilities. He is seduced to expect everything from the removal of poverty, of material and psychic distress, of social inequality and injustice. Who could object to such goals? Second the person is to see this relative earthly meaning of life as the absolute goal through which he fulfills his purpose. If he succumbs to this temptation, he betrays his inherent spiritual aim.

Jesus fends off this temptation by reflecting on the law of the spiritual world described in the tradition and holding it up to the tempter as a realization. Luke has Jesus quote a part of the passage in the Old Testament in which this spiritual law, which alone can appease the hunger for meaning, is anchored. “One does not live by bread alone.” “Manna,” which is the spiritual bread, is everything that is “created by the word of the Lord.” Jesus recognizes that the hunger, the longing of the true self for spiritual nourishment and power, for the real meaning of life, can only be appeased by spiritual nourishment and power, the manna. The

spiritual hunger is not appeased by counterfeiting the meaninglessness of everything earthly (the “stones”) into spiritual meaning (“bread”). Jesus further recognizes that the meaning of life cannot be given by the human being, even need not be given by the human being at all, for the meaning of life is already there. It is the law and the power of the divine world, everything “that the word of the Lord creates.” The human being only needs to accept this manna. When he gives up his egocentricity, when he withstands the temptation to create substitute nourishment in spite of the desperate hunger in the “wilderness” of the earthly world, and when he continues to trust that the true meaning of life will show itself to him, this meaning will be unlocked to him.

With this recognition and attitude, Jesus dissolves the illusion that the earthly world is what is decisive and makes a clear differentiation between earthly and spiritual nourishment. Earthly nourishment is also necessary for the earthly human being, but the spiritual nourishment for the spiritual human being is decisive. The appeasement of spiritual hunger cannot be expected from the earthly world. When the true self recognizes the actual meaning of life, however, and accepts this “manna,” then the earthly world also receives its meaning. The human being lives *also* from earthly bread, just not from earthly bread alone, not even mainly from earthly bread.

That in this first temptation it is a matter of the relation between the absolute meaning of the divine world and the relative meaning or meaninglessness of the earthly world is indicated by the complete quote from the Old Testament. It speaks there about “manna,” the spiritual bread and absolute meaning of life, in opposition to earthly bread, the relative meaning of life. Also, how would Jesus’ answer with which he fends off the temptation, “One does not live by bread alone,” fit to the conventional interpretation of this scene? It does not at all refer to the supposed temptation to use miraculous powers to one’s own advantage. No, the temptation relates to earthly and spiritual nourishment with the question of what food can serve as nourishment for the spiritual human being, the true self, and with the possibility that the creative human being whose true self has awakened appears himself as the giver of meaning instead of recognizing the eternal meaning and living out of it. The complete passage from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 8:3) confirms this connection. There could only be an irritation because in the quote from the Old

Testament, the relative earthly meaning of life (“bread”) is compared with the spiritual meaning of life (“manna”) while the New Testament at first speaks of the meaninglessness of the earthly world (the “stone”) and the relative earthly meaning of life (the “bread”), and only then—through Jesus’ answer—it is pointed out that the earthly meaning of life is in fact relative and that the spiritual hunger cannot be appeased through this substitute nourishment.

The “devil,” the personified egocentricity in this temptation, takes the form of the drive for possessions: the egocentric hunger for the meaning of life through prosperity and happiness, the “bread,” and the human arrogance of providing the meaning of its own life. This drive for possessions in the soul of the human being slyly substitutes for the spiritual hunger of the true self and deludes the human being into thinking that the spiritual hunger could be appeased through the “bread” of the earthly world, through the standard of life and through consumption. It steers the spiritual hunger onto earthly goals and uses it for its own purposes. It is very difficult to see through this deception. To alleviate the earthly misery of other human beings, to bring prosperity, peace, and happiness to the earth and to humanity out of love for the earth and humanity, and the human being as autonomous provider of meaning: what noble goals! Through all of human history up to the present, precisely the human beings filled with love for humanity have succumbed to this temptation. Earthly prosperity, peace, and happiness, as relatively meaningful these goals may also be, are not the purpose of the human being, however. “One does not live by bread alone.”

Second Temptation: Spiritual Forces in the Service of the Drive for Power

4:5 Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶And the devil said to him, “To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” ⁸Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’” (NRSV)

The second temptation is also prefigured in the Old Testament.

In Deuteronomy 8:7–19, God warns the people of Israel against arrogance. “For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land ... a land where you may eat bread without scarcity ... You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you. Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God ... then do not exalt yourself ... Do not say to yourself, ‘My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.’ ... If you do forget the Lord your God and follow other gods to serve and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish” (NRSV).

The true self has the ability to become conscious of the order of the “kingdom of God” and to serve it. This is its longing in the wilderness of the earthly world: to realize its vision of the kingdom of God. Awakened and stimulated by the “anointing” with fire, it feels slumbering within itself the potential to shape things. It is called to use tremendous power in the service of the divine order, but at first it sees no possibilities for its spiritual will to shape things in the wilderness of the earthly world.

Then the devil, the personified egocentricity, approaches the self hungering to spiritually shape things and says: “Look at *my* kingdom, ‘all the kingdoms of the world.’ If you will worship me, all this will be yours. Gain this wealth by your own power, with the strength of your own hand. You have these abilities as son of God. If you, son of God, make your spiritual powers subservient to me, egocentricity, then you as ego will gain all the splendor of the world and can stamp them with your own order.”

And the human being could answer: “I really see what tremendous possibilities are given to my will to shape things on earth. I perceive these possibilities and will realize my ideas of order in my own power.”

The temptation consists of, firstly, that the person with his earthly drive for power forgets that the kingdom of God for which he longs is a land to which God brings him, as it is said in the Old Testament. It is a spiritual land, not a geographic or political realm. The person hungering to spiritually shape things is induced to project his spiritual vision of the kingdom of God onto an earthly empire and to make his spiritual powers subservient to this idea. He could aspire to an earthly theocracy or an ideologically based earthly order: a realm of peace in which the exploitation of one class by another is removed, a realm in which the “best” race rules, a state in which security and prosperity are guaranteed for

all. If the true self would regard such a substitute order as the purpose of the human being, then it would have betrayed the divine order (and thereby also the political and social conditions worthy of humanity that can be reflections of the divine order).

The temptation consists of, secondly, that the person believes that he can gain this power and glory by his own power. In this case the ego would subdue the true self and tremendously increase its own powers. Such a person would feel like a god-man who is not accountable to anyone or at least like a representative of God, like a mighty executive organ of “providence.”

The temptation consists of, thirdly, that the longing of the true self for the realization of the divine order is taken up by the ego and forced impatiently. The divine order is freedom and can only unfold in freedom. Precisely the person who suspects something of this order is always tempted on the basis of his egocentricity to impatiently force this order on others.

Jesus fends off this temptation by again quoting for the devil a passage from the tradition of the scriptures. He turns Deuteronomy 8:19 into a positive statement: “Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him” (NRSV). He recognizes that the longing of the true self can only be appeased by cooperating with the kingdom of God, which is not of this world. This cooperation cannot consist of making the self’s own ideas absolute or of impatiently forcing developments. The true self will use the spiritual power given to it by God according to the meaning of the spiritual law and only in serving others. The laws of the kingdom of God are after all also the laws of the true self, its inner structure, for it has arisen from God and is itself spirit.

The devil works in this temptation as the drive for power. He substitutes the vision of an earthly empire for the true self’s vision of the kingdom of God, sets the egocentric will for power in the place of the spiritual will to shape things, and impatiently forces it. Thus the earthly will to power makes use of the spiritual powers.

It is also very difficult to see through this deception, for the need of the true self for the realization of the kingdom of God is seemingly appeased through the unfolding of the power of the ego. And should not the majesty of the kingdom of God also come to expression in the earthly? Should not all earthly powers work together towards this goal? What is essential, however, is that the human being serves the order of the spirit inherent within him. Then a new order of the earthly conditions follows from this.

When he recognizes the order of the spirit and cooperates with it, then he will not forcibly manipulate things and human beings according to his own ideas.

He will then serve the structures of the spirit inherent in himself and others. These will unfold in their time and lead individuals and things from within, in freedom, to their inherent order.

The true self is part of the total order of the world of the spirit and the earthly world. Therein lies its self-realization and power. If it realizes itself in this way, then its longing is appeased: It becomes itself the order of things and thereby carries them.

Third Temptation: Spiritual Forces in the Service of the Drive for Prestige

4:9 Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' ¹¹and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" ¹²Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ¹³When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time. (NRSV)

The third temptation originates from the human drive for prestige. The true self wanders through the wilderness of the earthly world and longs for the certainty of being led by God through all dangers. It knows that its purpose is to be one with the divine powers. Led itself, it will then also be able to lead others. The "devil," now in the form of the drive for prestige, takes advantage of this longing of the true self. He suggests to the person that there is a possibility to attain certainty of being led by God, certainty to be in harmony with the world of the spirit. He says to the person: "You are God's chosen one. You are worth everything to God and humanity. You can confirm it for yourself. Test God by throwing yourself into a risky situation, and you will see that he will help you. You will also see that people will then recognize you as God's chosen one."

Therefore the devil leads Jesus onto the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem, the point which symbolizes the highest spiritual

rank, and makes Jesus conscious of his surpassing position as “Son of God.” Then he says to him: “Throw yourself down from here, and you will see: You are the Son of God, and God will not allow that a single hair of yours will be bent. Test God.”

Jesus could actually say to himself: Because I am the chosen one and Son of God endowed with special abilities and entrusted with a special task for the world, God will always stand by my side, no matter in what dangers and abysses I throw myself in this work.

There is a difference, however, if someone does everything that lies in his own power and trusts that God will stand by him or if he carries out risky maneuvers whose outcome he cannot foresee and counts on God’s help because he, the chosen one, has special credit with God.

Here the devil carries his trickery to an extreme. The drive for prestige even uses an argument from the scriptures. The words of verse 10 and 11 are found in Psalm 91:11–12. The psalm deals with the “trust” of the righteous person. The devil says to Jesus: “You even have the sacred tradition on your side.” The Son of God could thus also use tradition to legitimize an attempt to obtain the certainty of God’s help. In this way the devil in the form of the drive for prestige sneaks in and used the longing of the true self for unity with God in order to obtain recognition for the ego.

Jesus fends off this temptation by reflecting on a connection that is also described in the scriptures and through this realization sees through the enticement of the drive for prestige. He says: “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” One could misunderstand this sentence as if Jesus wanted to say to the devil that he should not tempt him, Jesus. But Jesus is not God the Lord, also not for the devil. With this sentence Jesus rather holds a commandment up to the devil that is valid for all, including Jesus himself: “Do not put the Lord your God to the test!” This sentence from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:16, NRSV) is followed there by: “You must diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God ... Do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 6:17–18, NRSV). This shows how a person behaves correctly in this temptation: The true self is to recognize the laws of the spiritual world and act accordingly. If it does this, the spiritual world will likewise help it. This must suffice. The person should neither carry out risky maneuvers in a false reliance on his “connections” with God nor want to obtain proofs for his special

“connections” with God.

Many people believe that in dangerous situations nothing could happen especially to them. “Providence” watches over them. Everything that they meet becomes a sign to them that they are the chosen one of God. They are dependent on their “spiritual guidance,” by their wish to be piloted through all waters and to be led by God in their inner development. They have the feeling of the unity with God and their destiny, but they are only one with the devil who grabs them by their greatest weakness, their vanity. However: You should not provoke your Lord. Do not rely on God’s help and power in your self-overestimation and delusions of grandeur. Do not blindly trust that you will always find a way out and that destiny plays into your hand. The third temptation is the most difficult to see through. For here there is neither control through reason nor through reality. The feelings swell in self-love.

Someone will only be led by spiritual powers when he abandons all feelings of self-importance. Only then do the forces of the spirit flow to him; only then does he recognize, if the true self has begun to become conscious, the lawfulness of the spiritual world and can act accordingly.

Before this consciousness gradually awakens in him, there is only *one* attitude for him: to recognize his limitations and to act according to his conscience and his best knowledge. He does not depend on either signs or on angels or spirits. That would only be imagination and the vain belief in being chosen.

These three temptations also appear in the ordinary life of everyone. They appear with special force and malice, however, as soon as the true self touched by the spirit makes itself noticeable. For the still weak true self hungering in the “wilderness” of the world for real meaning, a real order of life, and a real certainty of the union with God then is in danger of projecting its new possibilities onto the earthly world. It expects its spiritual growth from earthly “nourishment,” its spiritual creative freedom from earthly powers, and its unity with the spiritual world from the recognition by the earthly and the divine world. It can only withstand these dangers, if it remembers its own spiritual being and relies on the traditions that describe its true characteristics. Then it will recognize when and how the earthly drives for possessions, power, and prestige secretly seek to make use of its longings and to take control of its powers and to steer them to the earthly world.

Jesus shows exemplarily how these dangers are to be withstood. Every human being, yes, all of humanity, in which the true self, the inner Jesus, wrestles to take form and to become conscious can draw from this example the standards of how the inner struggle with the tempter must proceed. It is a struggle that must be engaged in again and again and that is only at an end when the egocentricity in the drives for possessions, power, and prestige is completely dissolved and the whole human personality is permeated by the power of the spirit. Thus it says in Luke that the devil again came to Jesus at “an opportune time,” that is, in moments when the earthly world made itself especially noticeable as a “wilderness.”

By way of this story it can be well observed how some stories of the New Testament originated. (Luke in this case only found them and did not fashion them himself.) Subtle processes in the human soul—the true self personified by Jesus, egocentricity by the devil—are translated into a dramatic, clear happening. This is helped by reaching back to the Old Testament in which all three temptations are already prefigured: the one through the “drive for possessions” (Deuteronomy 8:3), the one through the “drive for power” (Deuteronomy 8:7–19), and the one through the “drive for prestige” (Deuteronomy 6:16–18). But then these patterns are further developed. It is a great artistic achievement to translate these processes in the soul realm into vivid pictures that make the soul-spiritual events that are invisible to the ordinary senses clear to them.

Influence of Jesus: Teaching and Preaching

4:14 *Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. ¹⁶When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: ¹⁸“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good*

news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." ²⁰And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (NRSV)

The third phase of the influence of the spirit in the world or in the individual is always also characterized by temptations. The spirit descends on those who have come in contact with it and allowed it to work in them and awakens the true self, the soul connected to the spirit, to consciousness. This means that Jesus—or a pupil on the spiritual path in the third phase—becomes conscious of his true identity as “Son of God” and of his connection with the world of the spirit. He becomes conscious of his task as “Son of God,” namely to convert the received power of the spirit according to the order of the spirit. Simultaneously he strengthens this new consciousness and being through his altercation on a spiritual basis with the earthly tendencies, the “devil,” in his own being and by knowingly distancing himself from them. Thereby he is in the position to step into the world in self-composure and “filled with the power of the Spirit.”

Luke consciously sets up a parallel to the first appearance of John the Baptist. He also characterized his task at the beginning of his public activity and also with a quotation from the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 40:3–5). That quotation had clearly described the preparation for redemption. The quotation from Isaiah in Jesus' first appearance on the other hand describes the realization of redemption. In the third phase of the influence of the spirit in the world, the preparatory aspect and the realizing aspect also work together, whether worldwide or in the individual. The inner “John the Baptist” in the individual instigates concrete steps to the reversal and reorganization of life, while the inner “Jesus” has become conscious and begins his redeeming activity. This consists at first of the healing of the earthly personality and its liberation from earthly compulsions.

Luke places the beginning of Jesus' activity in Nazareth “where he had been brought up.” From what follows it turns out that he must already have been in Capernaum earlier (Luke 4:23). In fact according to verses 14 and 15, he had already been very intensely active in the whole land of Galilee. In spite of this, Luke places an

event in Nazareth at the beginning of the public influence of Jesus on the basis of the inner logic of the spiritual path. This event namely gives him the opportunity to show that such spiritual influence begins in the “hometown,” meaning in the framework of the bodily, family, and close social conditions of the truth bringer in order to spread from there in “Galilee,” the emotional realm, to reach up to “Jerusalem” in Judea, the mental realm of the people, the capital. Indications of place in the gospels always also describe inner states. Jesus’ activity in the outer world or the activity of the inner Jesus within the person begins in the body, in the “blood,” in order to then penetrate the realm of feeling and finally the realm of thinking.

What is Jesus’ task as it is described in the words of Isaiah?

It is fivefold: “to bring good news to the poor,” “to proclaim release to the captives,” to give “sight to the blind,” “to let the oppressed go free,” and “to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

The words taken literally suggest an understanding of Jesus as a social revolutionary or at least as an advocate of the socially weak and healer of the sick. Could one understand Isaiah’s indications in this way? Jesus brings good news to the “poor.” What news? That they will become rich? Would this be the message of a spiritual teacher? Or is he proclaiming to them that he will liberate them from oppression and exploitation by the rich so that they really get what they have worked for? Secondly Jesus brings liberation to the captives. Socially this could only mean that the unjustly imprisoned or those who have long shown remorse are set free. One could regard the oppressed as those who have become poor due to fate or social conditions. The blind recover their sight: This would mean that Jesus appears as a healer of physical illnesses whereby blindness would also stand for all other kinds of illnesses. “The year of the Lord’s favor” refers to a Jewish tradition anchored in the Old Testament. Every 50th year corrections of social conditions and property ownership were to be undertaken. Once someone runs into debt, he easily runs into even greater debt in spite of all efforts to the contrary. Once someone has been in jail, he only reenters society with difficulty. Social and economic conditions have their own fatal dynamics, which still further distort the already distorted conditions. For this reason a conscious intervention to reverse such distortions is needed from time to time. It is no coincidence that the 50th year is such a “favored year.” For seven times seven makes 49. This number is

symbolic for the completion of all “temporal” conditions, and with 50 a new era begins. Details of this tradition are found in Leviticus 25:9–10.

One could also understand Luke as wanting to depict Jesus as an advocate of the socially weak. Certainly illness and social injustice are expressions of how bad the world and humanity are. In the long run, however, physical health and social justice are only possible if people are directed again to the order of the spiritual world in thinking, feeling, willing, and then also in action. Health measures and social revolution or evolution may bring short-term relief but cannot rectify evil in principle.

Because the evils of social conditions and physical illnesses are the results of spiritual disorder, however, they can become pictures for the evils of spiritual slavery and spiritual illness. The suffering that someone experiences due to social evils and illnesses can be a picture of the suffering he experiences due to his separation from the spiritual world. Surely Luke and his readers also instinctively associated spiritual evils and spiritual illnesses with the seemingly concrete descriptions of social evils and physical illnesses. This attitude was prefigured in the Old Testament. There it says for example right in Isaiah from which Jesus quotes: “Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes” (Isaiah 43:8, NRSV) or “Israel’s sentinels are blind, they are all without knowledge” (Isaiah 56:10, NRSV) or “I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind” (Isaiah 42:6–7, NRSV). Here blindness is always to be understood as figurative blindness, spiritual ignorance in regard to the “commandments of the Lord,” the laws of the spiritual world. Jesus’ task is to be this “light to the nations” in order to “open the eyes that are blind”: to bring to the ignorant the truth of their existence and let them experience this truth.

With the “poor” are analogously meant those people who lack the spiritual meaning of life. They feel earthly goals—power, success, possessions—are inadequate but have not yet found a spiritual meaning to their life and miss it as those in poverty miss wealth.

The “captives” are to be understood as those whose true self is caught in earthly endeavors and entanglements. Like the Israelites in the land of Egypt, they live in an environment unsuitable to them and long for the freedom of the life in the spirit. In this sense Isaiah calls out: “rise up, O captive Jerusalem” (Isaiah 52:2,

NRSV).

Spiritually understood the “oppressed” are those who have been inwardly crushed and can no longer rise to a state in which they could go the spiritual path.

Jesus brings the light and the power of truth to these “poor,” “captive,” and “oppressed.” The one lacking the spiritual meaning of life can open to the treasures of the knowledge of the spirit and become rich with the meaning of life. The one caught in the entanglements of the earthly world can be liberated in the power of truth, and the one oppressed can pluck up his courage. And all feelings and allocations of guilt built up over the course of time can be settled or annulled in this way. In the 50th year after the distortions of interpersonal relationships have reached their peak, the “trumpet” resounds on the “day of atonement.” The mighty voice of truth resounds in people’s hearts, gives them the consciousness of their situation and the power to dissolve all interpersonal conflicts and disharmonies in order to build up new interpersonal relationships according to the laws of the spiritual world. Jesus, the bringer of truth, proclaims this “jubilee year,” and those who follow this truth will be able to live in peace and harmony with their fellow human beings.

When new interpersonal relationships oriented to the spiritual world reign, however, then the result in the long run is also the healing of social evils and of illnesses. For then the drives for power, prestige, and possessions will fall away as causes of oppression and illness. That in the Old Testament and in Luke, social and bodily evils are taken as pictures for spiritual and psychic evils, even as their expressions, thus does not at all mean that the spiritual path is carried out only in the soul-spiritual realm without having consequences for the physical world. It must and will have repercussions in the physical world. The spiritual path is not exclusively a matter of unfolding the spiritual and psychic potentials of the individual. No, this unfolding must and will reveal itself also physically. Otherwise the spiritual path would remain a theoretical, pale affair.

In the gospels and in the Old Testament, it is always also made clear, however: A change in the state of physical health and social conditions has to always start from the soul-spiritual. Here lies the root of evil. Every hope to bring about immediate lasting change in health and society without a change in the soul-spiritual state of humanity must be abandoned. A changed state of health and

changed social conditions also do not change the human being in principle. A new social system and a new medicine will at most change the behavior but not the nature of the human being. Thus the beginning must be made with a radical change of the soul-spiritual in the human being: thereby that he recognizes himself and his situation in the power of truth. This knowledge will in the long run also change social conditions and the state of health.

The prophets of the Old Testament already knew that one day someone would appear in whom the true self would be perfectly conscious and active. The true self, which makes one into a true human being and enables one to form real human conditions in society and in health, was present in them like in all human beings. It was only present in germinal form, however. But they knew that in the development of humanity, the time of the complete unfolding would come and that a human being would appear in whom the possibility of a perfect human existence would be realized. They knew this lawfulness as it was active in them like in all. And thus they could foretell with certainty that one day the true self of the human being would be fully realized in someone. This would open the possibility of realization also to all others.

Jesus knew that the preparation had been realized in himself, that the germ had reached full maturity. Thus Luke can let him say, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." The moment in time in the development of humanity that the prophets had foretold was here. The law written in the human being and in humanity, their purpose to be the image of God, was fulfilled in a human being. The order and power of the spiritual world was realized concretely, visibly, and audibly in the world of appearances. From now on the standard for being human, which had only had a hidden validity until then, was revealed and established as an obvious sign for all human beings. They now no longer needed to orient themselves only by a vague premonition that arose out of the true self within them, but now had it as a visible and audible structure before their eyes and ears. Simultaneously the power of realization was available to them for *one* human being had removed all obstacles standing in the way of realization: Jesus had withstood the temptations of the "devil" in the power of the spirit. What this *one* person had done created the possibility for all others to do likewise.

With this the evangelist has outlined the identity and task of

Jesus as the model of the true self. At the same time he has characterized the means by which Jesus fulfills this task at the beginning of his activity: teaching and preaching.

Teaching and Preaching of Jesus

Jesus teaches a new human soul state from which then follow also new social and health conditions. He speaks of the “the Spirit of the Lord,” a dimension of reality that differs fundamentally from earthly human experiences. This dimension contains the fullness of life in comparison to the lack of the spiritual meaning of life in the earthly world. There is freedom because there the individual can realize his innermost being, which is in the grip of illusions and passions in the earthly world. There is the knowledge of God, a new consciousness, while in the earthly world people walk around blind to the spiritual world. There is wholeness and salvation. The healed human being acts according to the laws of the spiritual world, which are written in his innermost being. Thereby he unfolds this being and the laws of the divine world in harmony with all others who carry out the same laws according to their position in the all. Therefore there are no longer any interpersonal conflicts that “shatter” the individual wholeness of the human being, and there are no longer any “debts” to others. A debt-free condition, a “year of the Lord’s favor,” is proclaimed.

This “Spirit of the Lord” is upon Jesus, and he knows the interpersonal and bodily conditions that are the consequences of the “Spirit of the Lord.” He tells his audience about them. This is his “teaching,” and the “power” of his address is based on this. The fullness of life, freedom, knowledge, health, and wholeness stream from him in contrast to lack, imprisonment, blindness, and oppression. The order and characteristics of the spiritual world come to expression in his “teaching” and the forces of the spiritual world in his “preaching.”

Opposition to Jesus

4:22 *All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”* ²³*He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at*

Capernaum.” ²⁴And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown. ²⁵But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” ²⁸When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way. (NRSV)

With the revelation of the real human identity in front of all eyes and ears, which stimulates and demands the revelation of this identity in all others, the forces of persistence that oppose the realization of this identity are also provoked. In all phases of Jesus’ influence, forces of opposition appear on always different levels. Now at the beginning of his influence, they are active on the lowest plane, the material plane of the body and of biology. They are the forces of “blood and soil,” which put up a fight against the suggestion that they should not be the central, leading principles of human life. (Later it will be forces of feeling and intellect.)

Verses 22 through 30 describe this resistance of the elemental forces of persistence of the earthly world against the demands of the spiritual world. They describe the methods of this resistance, which culminate in the attempt to actually eliminate the forces of the spiritual world. The passage pictures this in a dramatic altercation between Jesus and his audience in Nazareth, Jesus’ hometown.

As depicted by Luke it looks like Jesus consciously provoked his listeners and made them so angry that they finally want to kill him. Could he not restrain himself? Did he have to fling hurtful truths into the faces of his admirers when he could have known what aggression he would awaken thereby? Nobody hears gladly how limited he is. Nobody likes to be compared with others who are more capable and valuable. If one were to take this scene realistically, it would not bode well for Jesus’ tact and wisdom. What reason did he have for savagely exposing his listeners’ weaknesses? Did he want to show how false and shallow their admiration was?

This is not the case of a realistic description of an escalating argument, however, but the depiction of the lawful opposition between renewing spiritual forces and persisting earthly forces clothed in a dramatic scene.

When spiritual forces penetrate into the world, they have to come in a material garment. If a spiritual being wants to be active in the world, it must incarnate in a material body. This sets up the opposition between the spiritual and the material. When the spiritual appears, the material that is provoked by the spiritual emphasizes its own nature even more. It is as when a foreign body penetrates into an organism. Thereby the organism first becomes “conscious” of its individual nature and mobilizes defensive forces against this foreign body.

The order of the spirit manifests in Jesus. At the beginning of his public appearance, he clarifies that this order of the spirit will revalue all earthly relationships. These are “the gracious words” that Jesus speaks: the promise of the new reality of the spirit. This spiritual impulse is a foreign body in the material organism of an individual, a group, or a people. Everything material, blood and biology, group and tradition, local and native, is outraged against the spiritual as something foreign to it. This inertia of the body, of biology, and of earthly relationships and habits is tremendously strong. The material persistently opposes every change.

The means of resistance is that the material concentrates on the material garment of the spiritual and thereby tries to suffocate the spiritual. Is Jesus, the embodiment of the spiritual impulse, in regard to his material garment not of the same blood, the same origin, the same tradition, and from the same native country as all his listeners? Is he not “Joseph’s son”: like us, one of us, just as earthly material as we are? By reducing Jesus to the material, the spiritual can be devalued and inactivated. It is experienced as presumption and rejected.

This is the method by which matter in its dullness tries to make the spiritual harmless. It deliberately sees only the material garment of the spiritual, knows only too well what can be expected from this garment—namely nothing new because it is of exactly the same nature—and so withdraws from the demand of the spiritual impulse, which it experiences as a presumptuous foreign body.

Although the people of Nazareth scornfully say to Jesus (Jesus puts these words in their mouths and characterizes them thereby):

“Doctor, cure yourself!” In the context of what follows, this means: You, spiritual force of healing, have healed other towns. Now also heal your own town. But Jesus has to answer them: You yourselves make this impossible, for you exclusively place your outer relationship with me in the foreground, and because you know yourselves, you know only too well what can be expected of someone related to you. Thus you do not open yourselves to the spiritual force of healing, the doctor, and cannot be healed. Expressed again in another picture: “No prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown.”

Others on the contrary, Jesus continues, not related to me outwardly cannot take this relationship as the pretext for refusing my spiritual healing power. To their advantage they do not have this means to make the spiritual force of healing ineffective. Therefore their receptivity to the healing power can unfold, and this power can work. Jesus gives two examples of this lawfulness. Elijah in his time could not achieve anything among his own people and could only help an inhabitant of Sidon. Likewise Elisha could not cleanse any Israelite leper, only a Syrian.

When now all means of the material organism to defend itself against the spiritual foreign body fail and the spiritual foreign body, Jesus, exposes this behavior, then hate—the repulsing force of the organism—rises so much that the foreign body is inevitably driven out. Jesus’ listeners want to hurl him off the cliff at the brow of the hill on which their town was built. “But he passed through the midst of them.” The spiritual cannot be held by the material, only the material garment of the spiritual. The spiritual has its own vibration and freedom, completely different from the material and incomprehensible. This may have an outwardly visible effect: As soon as someone like Jesus reveals the spirituality working in him, he radiates such sovereignty and power that all pursuers become as if blind and powerless.

In all times of history, it was tremendously difficult for spiritual impulses right at their start to break through the thick blanket of habits, traditions, biological predispositions, and group ties. The dullness of the blood and of habits seeks to extinguish every spark of new spirituality. And always arguments can be found to silence the bringer of such spirituality by references to his origin and his belonging to a particular class, race, occupation, and sex. He is after all one of us, inadequate like us: Should we let him tell us anything?

Driving out Demons: the Demon in the Synagogue

4:31 *He went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and was teaching them on the sabbath. ³²They were astounded at his teaching, because he spoke with authority. ³³In the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴“Let us alone! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” ³⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” When the demon had thrown him down before them, he came out of him without having done him any harm. ³⁶They were all amazed and kept saying to one another, “What kind of utterance is this? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and out they come!” ³⁷And a report about him began to reach every place in the region. (NRSV)*

Jesus’ teaching and preaching have an effect on the people. The lack of the meaning of life is removed; what was imprisoned is freed; blindness is healed; disaster is turned into salvation. The teaching, the portrayal of the order of the kingdom of God, and the preaching, the transmission of the power of the kingdom of God, lead to “healings” and the “driving out of demons.”

What are demons? They are passions or fixed ideas in a person that have become independent, that have gained their own life, and that “possess” the person. He creates them himself, as an individual or in a group. As parts that have split off from the ego or the ego of a group, they have their own individuality, but because the person or group is not conscious of them, they have withdrawn from the control of the conscious ego of the individual or group. Like the normal ego they use the body and especially the voice of the one “possessed” to express themselves. But it is always the one “possessed,” whether an individual or a group, who nourishes the demons with soul forces. Ideologies and delusions are demons for example. A fanatical ideologist is no longer lord over himself: He is the victim of a fixed idea that uninterruptedly tortures and drives him—the victim of an individual or collective demon.

Demons live in the unconscious layers of the soul, in the “beyond” of the individual. They take an intermediate position between the world of the divine spirit and the conscious ego. For their roots are twofold. On the one hand an ideology for example is nourished by the deepest longing for justice, freedom, unity, and

happiness, which comes from the true self. On the other hand forces from the “beyond” are mixed with this longing: the drives for prestige, power, and possessions that have become independent. From this comes the forced, fanatical element of such ideologies.

If someone finds out about the world of the spirit in which freedom, unity, and love dominate without the drives for prestige, possessions, and power and this world is awakened in him, however, then he can recognize and overcome the demons. He is strengthened by forces from the spiritual world. He becomes conscious of the unconscious parts that have split off from his ego and tortured him from the depths of his soul. His own psychic energies or those of a group at whose mercy he was and against which he was helpless are again subjected to the rule of his ego. Thus stimulated by the world of the spirit, the forces of the spirit in him drive out the demons. He becomes free.

Because the demons live in the intermediate realm between the true self—whose longings they use—and the conscious ego, it becomes understandable why in this story they recognize who Jesus is: the “Holy One of God,” the “Son of God,” the “Anointed.” Just when in someone the true self, which corresponds to the “Holy One” and the “Son of God,” awakens, then the demonic forces become irritated. In the unconscious they stand in direct contact with the true self and thus “recognize” it—just like it “recognizes” them. When the deepest spiritual layer of the soul, the true self, becomes active in someone, then on this basis he also becomes conscious of the demonic layers in his “beyond” such as megalomania, a fanatical drive for power, and lust for possessions, and their power is broken. The demonic forces on the other hand recognize the true self as the stronger, as the “Anointed,” the “Son of God.”

The demon that Jesus “drives out” at the beginning of his activity is a demon in the religious realm. Demons are characterized by the environment that those they possess occupy. In this story the one possessed is found in a synagogue, a religious environment. One can easily imagine what psychic complex is symbolized by this demon. The original goal of religion is to awaken the true self, the image of God, and to reconnect it with its origin, with God. This requires that all egocentricity, which is after all the obstacle to this connection, fades away: all drives for prestige, power, and possessions. Just these demonic forces from

the beyond in the person, however, like to use original religion and to make the person into a fanatic who wants to establish the kingdom of God in himself or in the world by force. He feels he is chosen—the drive for prestige—, seizes the symbols of original religion and materializes them into dogmas through which he believes he can give meaning to his life—the drive for possessions—, and forces himself and others to strictly follow these dogmas—the drive for power. This fundamentalist corruption of religion is the demon that possesses the man in the synagogue. The power that nourishes the demon is the human longing for reconnection with the divine world. But this longing is corrupted by egocentricity and projected outwardly into this world or into the beyond—in an imagination of life after death—while the divine world can only be experienced within by the true self.

The true self can be strengthened by the forces from the divine world—the outer Jesus—so that it “drives out” the demon even if the demon uses its power one more time to “throw down” the possessed one.

The true self frees the human being. It is his real identity. When it becomes active he comes to. This also strengthens his earthly independence, his responsible ego. He comes to rest, can recognize on a spiritual basis what tortures and imprisons him, and with the help of the spiritual forces working in him is liberated in this way from the exploitation and subjection through ideologies and delusions. These are the exorcisms of demons described in the gospel. They are healings of psychotic states.

Applied to the individual this story says that the “inner Jesus” within him, the true self, stimulated and strengthened by the spiritual forces from outside removes an unconscious psychotic complex. The “people” in this story symbolize his normal characteristics. The true self frees him from psychotic influences that appear here as religious fundamentalism.

Healing the Sick: Fever

4:38 *After leaving the synagogue he entered Simon’s house. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked him about her. ³⁹Then he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. Immediately she got up and began to serve them. (NRSV)*

The demons in someone can be “driven out” by the forces of the divine world. On the other hand mental, emotional, will-related, and then also physical disorder can be removed from someone by the order of the divine world. These are the healings of illnesses in the gospel. As long as someone knows nothing other than the earthly world and its interests, then he looks for satisfaction on this level. Lasting satisfaction on the earthly level will always fail to materialize, however, because he can only find ultimate satisfaction if his true self becomes active and conscious—whereby he realizes himself. On the earthly level he inevitably runs from disappointment to disappointment, which causes mental, emotional, and will-related disturbances and as a result also physical illnesses.

If he is shown a new perspective on life, however, then he can recognize that his actual purpose lies in the divine world, which corresponds to the deepest layers of his soul. Through this the order of the true self deep within him becomes active and has an ordering influence on his personality, on the ego with its body. He is healed mentally, emotionally, and possibly also physically.

The disorder that can arise in the life of someone due to his exclusive concentration on the earthly level is symbolized in the gospel by three typical pictures. In the beginning of his activity, Jesus heals three illnesses: fever, leprosy, and paralysis.

The evangelist describes the first healing, the one of “fever,” in the scene with Peter’s mother-in-law. Someone without a dependable perspective on life can get into hectic unrest. He constantly makes changes and searches for the new because the old cannot satisfy his deepest longing. A whole era and society can be gripped by this hectic unrest because the meaninglessness of its life has become unbearable. This is “fever.” If someone—or a society—learns of a perspective of life corresponding to the human being as the image of God, however, he will come to rest and breathe a sigh of relief. The search has reached a goal, and all earthly interests that previously seemed to be the main thing can now be qualified. Prosperity, entertainment, and knowledge are no longer the main thing. Resting in a meaningful inner order, the person can quietly also care for the earthly needs of his soul and body.

It is no coincidence that Jesus heals the mother-in-law of Simon Peter from fever. In the circle of Jesus’ pupils, Simon Peter represents the will element. The feverish illness is thus connected

with this will element. The person tortured by the lack of a purposeful life does not know what to do with the will forces and acts blindly. The human true self represented by Jesus, however, can awaken, give the person a true purpose in life, and “rebuke” blind activity and agitation. Then the “fever” leaves the ill woman.

Jesus stood at the “head” of the ill woman (according to the Persic version of the Bible) for the insight into the teaching of the kingdom of God, of the real meaning of life, is a function of the head. Will impulses go out from the head that put the nerves into feverish agitation but are now calmed by the new insight. The new will from now on serves the new life perspective. Peter’s mother-in-law “serves” Jesus and his pupils.

Every healing of an illness must originate from the true self of the ill person. Although he can be strengthened from the outside, he himself has to do the real work—recognizing the meaning of life and reordering his life. Otherwise the healing does not last or the individual concerned becomes dependent on the healer. Applied to the individual, Peter’s mother-in-law as one of the people symbolizes a particular aspect of the earthly personality. The functions of the will that have become ill from nervousness and irritability are calmed by the forces of the true self, which transmit the meaning of life to the personality.

Universality of the Divine Forces

4:40 *As the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various kinds of diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on each of them and cured them. ⁴¹Demons also came out of many, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Messiah. ⁴²At daybreak he departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowds were looking for him; and when they reached him, they wanted to prevent him from leaving them. ⁴³But he said to them, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose.” ⁴⁴So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea. (NRSV)*

The forces and content of the divine world transmitted by Jesus’ preaching and teaching accomplish exorcisms of demons and healings. They are not limited thereby to a few—individuals, cities,

or regions—but are there for all. In their egocentricity, people would like to monopolize them for themselves or their group. This is impossible, however. The divine forces are universal. The message of the kingdom of God has to be proclaimed to all “cities.” All people, no matter their religious denomination, race, class, or sex, can be reached by the abundance, freedom, and unity of the spiritual world, the “kingdom of God.”

Jesus did not allow the demons to speak “because they knew that he was the Messiah.” The person approached by the spiritual forces should recognize them consciously. This is the goal of the spiritual path. He should not recognize them on the path through the unconscious, bypassing the conscious ego. Therefore Jesus forbids the demons, aspects of the unconscious, to proclaim who he is. The spiritual path is a path of becoming conscious at the end of which stands the becoming conscious of the true self. If the true self would become conscious on other paths such as through dreams or through techniques to activate the unconscious, then these would be secret paths and the more dangerous as thereby the unconscious complexes, the demons, which should be dissolved after all, would the more be able to reestablish themselves.

When Jesus withdraws to a deserted place, then this means that the spiritual forces in him can only live and increase if he maintains his strong connection with the spiritual world and periodically withdraws from all activity. This is a law of the working of these forces in the human being. He has to take the rhythm of rest and activity into consideration. Quiet reception of the spiritual forces has to alternate with their translation into deeds. He remains their good “instrument” only in this way. At “sunset” Jesus gives out the spiritual forces for others. At “sunrise” he absorbs them in solitariness and turned towards the spiritual sun. Such “indications of time” are not only indications of time but symbolize soul-spiritual connections. “Sunrise” is the arising and building-up of the spiritual forces in the human being. “Sunset” is their streaming out and their flowing away to others.

Being Called: First Phase of the Spiritual Path of the Pupils

5:1 Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, ²he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. ⁴When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” ⁵Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” ⁶When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. ⁷So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” ⁹For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; ¹⁰and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” ¹¹When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him. (NRSV)

When someone gifted with special spiritual forces, an “Anointed One,” a Christ, begins his public activity, he will always heal people and cast out demons. At the same time he will always gather pupils around himself, individuals who consciously open themselves to the forces from the spiritual world. Like the Anointed One and led by him, they then go a spiritual path in these forces. Applied to the individual this means: When the forces from the spiritual world begin to work in someone, they not only liberate the earthly personality, symbolized by the “people,” from fixed ideas and passions—the demons—and from mental and emotional disorder—the illnesses—but also turn to the personality’s conscious insight and capacity to decide. These characteristics correspond to Jesus’ pupils who decide on a spiritual path with conscious insight.

Now the first phase of the spiritual path begins for Jesus’

pupils: the receptivity and openness to the forces from the world of the spirit, the phase of “faith.” The fact that Jesus himself walks a spiritual path influences them to begin on the path. From now on an indissoluble connection and a “shifted” parallel influence exist between master and pupils. In the measure that the master progresses, the pupils also progress on their step. In the measure that the pupils progress, the master also can continue. For his work with the pupils awakens in him new forces and possibilities. This is the lawfulness that is valid in all times when someone goes the spiritual path. He will always find pupils at a given time, and his own progress will depend on how his pupils progress.

Luke connects the calling of the pupils by the master with a miraculous catch of fish. If one interprets this story as a real “miracle,” that is as an event in the sense world that breaks its laws, then the pupils were so impressed by the magical abilities of the miracle worker Jesus that they cannot help but join him. The motive of their pupilship would have been that Jesus is a miracle worker, therefore he is the Son of God, and one should follow this Son of God as the highest authority. A modern realist could then object, The authors of the gospels have very skillfully betrayed themselves and others by endowing Jesus with miraculous powers and thereby foisting on him the authority of the Son of God who should be followed absolutely. If the modern believer’s faith is dependent on such “miracles,” then he would have to be constantly on guard that his belief in miracles is not challenged by the realist.

But here it is not the case of a “miracle” in the sense of the breaking of natural laws. It is a depiction of soul-spiritual experiences that always occur when people are receptive to the forces of the spiritual world. At the time of the composition of the gospels, it was a common method to clothe soul-spiritual experiences in pictures. If one takes these pictures as real experiences in the sense world, then one denies oneself access to the inner experiences to which they point.

All people are “fishers.” They search in the sea of life for meaningful experiences that inwardly bring them further and give them power. Such experiences are the “fish” that are caught in the net of their consciousness. But Simon has fished “all night long” and not caught anything. He has looked into the world with a dark night consciousness not illumined by the spirit and only found meaninglessness. For is there anything in life that has lasting

value from the standpoint of sense consciousness? Everything which arises goes to ground again including the human being. Every wish fulfillment is followed by a disappointment, every joy by a pain, every birth by a death. There may be momentary attractions in them but no meaning. Everything is coincidence—this is the final conclusion of this materialistic night consciousness.

If the spiritual world breaks into an earthly consciousness, however, then it becomes light therein. And now it looks at the world with different eyes: Simon once more lets down the nets according to Jesus' say-so, according to the impulse of the spirit. Now he sees all events in the world and in life in a new perspective. Every disappointment and every pain is meaningful, for they are chances for the true self to awaken. Every wish fulfillment and joy is also meaningful as they are an indication—even if a transitory one—of the possibility of lasting fulfillment and joy in the spiritual world.

Even death is meaningful. It puts an end to all life not arisen from the spirit and thereby paves the way for the true self, which lives out of the immortal spirit. The meaning of human life is the unfolding of the purpose of the human being, the unfolding of the true self. In the end all events in life and in the world serve this goal, the becoming conscious of the true self, and regarded in this way are meaningful as well.

As soon as a consciousness illumined by the spirit explores the sea of life, it attracts countless sense experiences—"fish"—to itself. The spirit, which is itself abundance and everlasting meaning, gives meaning to all transitory things and events, which would be trivial without it. To such a person the whole transitory life becomes an allegory for eternity. An abundance of experiences of meaning takes the place of the experience that all is in vain. This sudden abundance of meaning of also the transitory life when the spirit illumines a consciousness is most certainly also a miracle but one that can occur at anytime and anywhere and be experienced by everyone. It is not invented by the evangelist in order to present Jesus as a miracle worker. It is the necessary consequence of Jesus, the embodiment of the spirit-filled true self, becoming active in someone and illumining the consciousness.

“Sin”

The reaction of Simon Peter and his partners is then also logically consistent. For when the abundance of the spirit breaks into someone's consciousness and shows him life and the world in a new perspective, his own being is also newly illuminated to him. Then it comes to light that the earthly human being is “sinful,” that is through and through chained to the earthly and built up of transitory elements. He is not only sinful as a “bad” person who offends against moral and civic laws but is also sinful as a “good” person who abides by moral and civic laws. As a bad as well as a good person, he is transitory and separated from the eternal spirit, “sinful.” The abundance and brightness of the spirit that break into him and awaken his true identity make clear to him that his ego-identity is flawed and dark. At the same time he notices that as this dark, sinful man, he is not a suitable vessel for the spirit, which has entered into him. Therefore Simon calls out, “Go away from me!” He recognizes only all too clearly that he does not offer a worthy home for the spirit and that he is existentially “sinful.” He cannot stand this tension. He and his partners are amazed that the abundance of the spirit upset their normal life, revalued their previous ideas and experiences, and showed them life and the world in a new, meaningful light.

So it is not the superior, divine might of the miracle worker who makes the fishermen conscious of their powerlessness and causes them to be amazed. It is the inner experience of the abundance of the spirit that fills with tremendous force everything with new meaning so that the earthly person becomes aware of the darkness of his own soul and feels incapable of assimilating the abundance of experiences of meaning assailing him.

“Faith”

It is always so that with the first, shattering meeting with the spirit, the person is overpowered by the feeling of his total inadequacy and the powerlessness to assimilate the new impressions. The spirit immediately also works to relieve and strengthen, however, so that the person can overcome the first terror. Thus Jesus says to Simon, “Do not be afraid!” Such a meeting leaves such an indissoluble impression, it lastingly opens the person for further impressions so that strengthened and

reassured, he cannot do otherwise than to dedicate his whole life to this new goal and purpose. The ones concerned leave all old habits and ideas behind and give themselves to the new life perspective. This means following Jesus: following the perspective that the meeting with the spirit unlocked. This is faith: openness for a new life perspective. Faith is not the belief that Jesus did miracles in the sense of breaking natural laws and thereby proved himself as the highest divine authority. Faith in the sense of the gospel is the orientation of the whole life to a new goal because this new goal was experienced as a premonition in a meeting with the spirit.

Moreover the new life perspective does not only mean that in the long run the true self unfolds until it is united with the spirit. Always when the true self unfolds in a person, he will also attract others who are receptive to the spirit and enable the same unfolding in them. Just like Jesus himself goes the spiritual path in the forces of the spirit up to the complete unfolding of the true self and “fishes” and attracts people receptive to the spirit out of the sea of life in order to enable them to go the spiritual path, so in the measure that the true self unfolds in his pupils, they will also attract others—become “fishers of men”—and enable them to go the spiritual path. Before their meeting with the spirit, they were only “fishermen”—the outer occupation is a symbol for an inner characteristic—who tried to gain meaningful experiences from the sea of life. After their meeting with the spirit, they can be “fishers of men” who pull others out of the sea of life in order to go the spiritual path with them.

When Jesus teaches from the boat on the sea a little way from the shore, this is an indication that his teaching comes from another dimension of reality than the one that the crowds on land belong to. Jesus speaks from the “sea,” which is symbolic for soul life directed to the spiritual world. No earthly emotions, ideas, and interests hold sway in his soul. The forces of the spirit live in his soul. He gives them to the listeners on the land, those still characterized by earthly emotions, ideas, and interests.

When Jesus with Simon and his partners on board of the ship sail further out to “catch fish,” then the ship is symbolic for a special community formed by Jesus and the others. Two ships are mentioned because every spiritual community has the tendency to bring forth new communities. Jesus and his pupils together sail over the events of life and “swim” over them without being

devoured by them. For they have a different basis of life: the orientation to the spiritual world. On this basis Simon's consciousness is illumined so that he can see the whole earthly life in a new perspective and gain experiences of meaning from it.

Healing the Sick: Leprosy

5:12 *Once, when he was in one of the cities, there was a man covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean." ¹³Then Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, "I do choose. Be made clean." Immediately the leprosy left him. ¹⁴And he ordered him to tell no one. "Go," he said, "and show yourself to the priest, and, as Moses commanded, make an offering for your cleansing, for a testimony to them." ¹⁵But now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. ¹⁶But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.* (NRSV)

Jesus had healed Peter's mother-in-law from "fever": The contents and forces of the spiritual world transmitted through teaching and preaching had freed a soul from hectic unrest created by the lack of a sure life orientation. "Fever" is the reaction of the will to this lack. When emotions and mentality react to it, other "illnesses" arise: leprosy and paralysis. Luke describes the healing of these "illnesses" in what follows.

Leprosy is a disease of the skin caused by disturbed metabolic processes. The skin is the person's boundary with the environment, and a disease of the "skin" is a picture for a disturbed relationship with one's fellow human beings. It is the relationship of isolation that is expressed more meaningfully through the quarantine that is imposed on lepers because of the danger of infecting others. When someone is only still interested in his own progress because of a lack of a dependable life perspective, then he regards others as instruments for his own purposes or as objects. His relationship to others will be determined by dishonesty, undependability, cheating, and corruption. He does not trust others, and he himself will be met with distrust. So the border between people, the sphere of the exchange of feelings, the "skin," becomes unclean and foul, "leprous." Then gradually joy of life, merriment, cheerfulness, and

spontaneous sociability die off. Sympathy, helpfulness, shared joy, and compassion no longer flow between him and others. The boundary between him and others is impermeable; the skin has become “hard.” This is “leprosy.”

When many behave in such a way, a society of isolated individuals arises in whom love for others has cooled and who only seek their own advantage, a society in which a common joy of life is no longer possible. This is societal “leprosy.” Social events organized to replace what has been lost cannot hide the real disease.

If someone afflicted with this “leprosy” discovers the new perspective of life embodied in Jesus, however, then he can become receptive to it. Unifying forces flow to him; he can overcome decay, coldness, and isolation, “leprosy.” In this sense the leper in the story by Luke “sees” Jesus, the new life perspective, and becomes receptive to it. He asks it for a healing. The forces embodied in Jesus work in him; he allows them to work in him. The new life perspective emerging in him is stronger than the tendency to isolation and makes him into someone who on a new spiritual basis can meet his fellow human beings full of trust, respect, and openness. The flow and exchange of feelings is again possible. What is essential in this state is that the healed individual also takes up his new duties that are connected with his new abilities and that without a lot of fuss he reenters the social milieu, which has now received a new meaning through his new life perspective. This reentry is symbolized by the rule in force at that time for someone who was healed from physical leprosy. He had to show himself to the priests and get from them the confirmation that he was able to live in society again.

What does the command “to tell no one” mean? Would it not have been appropriate that the healed person would tell others with this disease of this possibility to be cured? Would this not be in accordance with what Jesus would wish: that the new life perspective is spread about as much as possible? What is meant with this command is that the healed person in fact also realizes the new possibility of life and not that he, perhaps overjoyed and overenthusiastically, imposes it on others who are perhaps not suited to it. Thereby he would work off and dissipate the received forces without effect, perhaps even provoke negative reactions. Instead he should single-mindedly and quietly change his life. Only then is it assured that “leprosy” does not appear anew.

Healing the Sick: Paralysis

5:17 One day, while he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting near by (they had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem); and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. ¹⁸Just then some men came, carrying a paralyzed man on a bed. They were trying to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; ¹⁹but finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the middle of the crowd in front of Jesus. ²⁰When he saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you." ²¹Then the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, "Who is this who is speaking blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ²²When Jesus perceived their questionings, he answered them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? ²³Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'? ²⁴But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" —he said to the one who was paralyzed—"I say to you, stand up and take your bed and go to your home." ²⁵Immediately he stood up before them, took what he had been lying on, and went to his home, glorifying God. ²⁶Amazement seized all of them, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen strange things today." (NRSV)

With the third healing that Jesus does in this beginning stage of his activity, it becomes especially clear that the healings refer primarily to soul-spiritual states of which the bodily disturbances are as a rule only the effects and symptoms.

The forces from the world of the spirit are always directed "to heal" as it says in verse 17. The spirit-filled true self is a type of structured power field that influences the earthly personality, the ego with its body. It wants to bring this personality into a state that corresponds to the purpose of the human being and that thus is "health." This spiritual power field unceasingly strives to adequately express itself. In the long run it corrects everything that deviates from it and simultaneously returns it to "health"—provided the person allows its influence.

Exactly this process is described by the words, "When he saw their faith, he said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven you.'" The prerequisite for the effectiveness of the spiritual forces is that the person allows them to enter and work in him: that he also accepts

the new life perspective that comes to him from the spiritual world. "Faith" is nothing other than this. It is the openness for the forces of the spiritual world and allowing them to enter and work so that the order of the spiritual world can dissolve the disorder of the personality—and then also of its body. The paralyzed man and his companions demonstrate this openness to the forces of the spirit. This is their faith. Since the power field of the spirit is enlivened in the sick person due to this openness, the disorder of his earthly personality is dissolved. "Forgiving sins" is nothing else. The disorder in the personality means separation from the spiritual world, "sin." If the power field of the spirit works again in the personality, however, then its order is congruent with the order of the spirit. The separation is reversed; the unity with the spiritual world is reestablished; the "sins are forgiven."

This is at the same time "recovery." For unity with the spiritual world means that the disorder of the personality, the illness, is replaced by order. In this story the psychic disorder consists of a paralysis. Paralysis can be the consequence of over-intellectualism, being solely in the head, which appears when someone is lacking the spiritual perspective on life. He regulates everything purposefully; every activity is "burocratized." In his neurotic egocentricity he builds a security system in which his rights and property are defended against the rights and property of others. This also applies to his world view. He ceaselessly seals it off from others' world views: This is mental "paralysis," for he does not move a step forward or back now.

If many people and groups behave in this way, then societal paralysis arises. The society disintegrates into closed camps, institutionally and according to world view. Nobody yields even a millimeter; nobody has understanding for the position of another: political correctness, immobility. Every movement and development has become impossible.

Such a neurotic paralysis can only be healed when the sick person opens himself to the healing forces of the true self, to a new life perspective. In this illness a special complication appears, however: The access to the true self is blocked. One understands this fact the best if one takes the story as a picture for processes in an individual. He himself is the "house" in the middle of which Jesus is present. The middle of the human being is the heart. In the heart the true self and through its mediation, the power field of the spirit work in a special way. The healing forces of the spirit go

out from the heart.

In this case, however, the middle is blocked so densely by the “people” that the illness cannot reach the forum of the heart. The “people” symbolize the characteristics of the earthly personality: habits, interests, desires, and thoughts. They block the way to the healing by the forces from the spiritual center of the human being. Every attempt by the true self to bring its influence to bear on the way of thinking of the sick person fails because the habits, interests, desires, and thoughts of the personality are so numerous and strong.

Then there is only the possibility that all these blocking characteristics of the personality are bypassed and first a direct connection between the illness and the consciousness in the head is established. Thus in the story the “roof,” symbolic of the head, is opened, and the paralytic is let down through the “roof” into the middle of the house. Faith opens the consciousness in the head and enables conscious insight into the nature of the illness. Thus all the earthly interests and desires that besiege the heart and do not allow the disturbance to reach the healing forces of the true self acting in the heart are bypassed. When the illness is then recognized as such and brought to consciousness, then it can be given over to the true self and its healing forces. As a result also a bodily, visible paralysis can possibly disappear.

The scene describes the healing of a neurosis, an unconscious, compulsive idea created by fear that paralyzes free activity. The illness cannot reach the healing forum of the true self in the heart because habits, interests, desires, and thoughts block the access to this center. Thus this blockade has to be bypassed. The compulsive ideas have to be first made conscious in the head, in thought. This becoming conscious is only possible if faith in a possibility of healing and openness to this possibility exist first. Whoever does not have this faith will not even allow this becoming conscious.

This becoming conscious is only the prerequisite for the healing of the neurosis, however, not the healing itself, which can be accomplished exclusively by the spiritual forces. The disorder of the illness has to be placed before the true self in the center of the human being and has to be removed by its order. If this process does not occur or if the healing spiritual forces are not present, then becoming conscious helps little. Only the healing forces from the spiritual core of the human being are capable of dissolving the

compulsive ideas and the fears lying at their basis, of allowing the earthly life forces to flow freely again, and of removing the neurotic paralysis in this way.

The first healing by Jesus pertained to psychic disorder connected with the will—"fever"—the second to psychic disorder caused by feeling—"leprosy"—and the third to a mental psychic disorder—"paralysis": The mind has hardened due to unconscious compulsive ideas. Thereby the three healings by Jesus in this beginning stage of his activity show how, if faith is present, the spiritual content and forces can bring the whole realm of disorder of also the earthly personality back to an order that is inspired by the order of the spirit. This applies to the individual as well as to a whole society. The true self, the soul filled with the spirit, the true human identity, becomes active—"Jesus the Anointed." Certain aspects of the earthly consciousness, the "pupils," are oriented to this activity and go a spiritual path. But also the mental, emotional, and will aspects of the earthly personality, the "people," are reached by the influence of the true self in the form of "healings" and the "driving out of demons." Applied to a whole society, this means that also the great number of people who cannot or do not want to go a spiritual path can gain a new purpose of life and new life force. Thereby egocentricity diminishes in their daily life, and all interests of their personal and social life comply with a new order.

The Scribes

The Pharisees and teachers of the law who from now on accompany Jesus' activity without interruption first appear in the gospel in the story of the "paralytic." Jesus symbolizes the living activity of the spirit. The "kingdom of God" lives in him.

The Pharisees and teachers of the law on the other hand represent the outer law, convention, and dogma. They lead a life not determined by living spiritual forces but by moral precepts, powerful traditions, and religious convictions. Someone in whom the spiritual forces are alive must necessarily be a thorn in the flesh of the scribes for he does not stereotype people and situations. He sees the world and people afresh in every moment and acts in an unbiased way in accordance with the spiritual world. The scribes' awareness of the abundance of reality is

distorted by dogmas, however. They approach people and the world in a schematic way according to their legal regulations. They cannot react spontaneously to the ever new, surprising challenges of reality.

The Pharisee or teacher of the law is not only a sociological but also a psychological category. Everyone has a teacher of the law inside: as the mental tendency to categorize and to judge according to stereotypes. In everyone who goes the spiritual path, a constant clash between the living, unbiased, spontaneous spiritual forces and the dogmatic, pharisaical objections of conventional understanding occurs.

The teachers of the law in this story take exception to Jesus' statement, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you," for according to their dogma only God can forgive sins. And this dogma is certainly true. Only God can forgive sins. The person who has lost the unity with the divine world, who lives in "separation" and "sin," cannot reestablish this unity by his own power. Other people can do this for him just as little out of their earthly forces. The unity can only be reestablished by the divine world, only thereby that divine forces are received by and work in the person.

A dogma is a conceptualization and materialization of a living religious experience. The teachers of the law no longer understand what religious experience stands behind their dogma that only God can forgive sins. They imagine God to be a personal or abstract power active outside of the human being. Jesus shows them, however, that God is a living power active in and through human beings. When this power works out of the true self, embodied by the "inner Jesus," and the person opens to it, then it removes the separation between him and the kingdom of God: sin. It is also possible that an outer Jesus appears who has himself become one with God. Then the power of God works through him to influence others who are receptive to it and stimulates the true self, the "inner Jesus," in them. This also results in the "forgiveness of sins."

It would indeed be a "blasphemy" if an institution or a person in whom the divine forces are not active and who is not one with the kingdom of God would claim to be able to forgive sins. They would put their inadequate ego in the place of God who works in the true self. In this case no sins would really be forgiven for forgiveness of sins is a provable reality. Someone whose "sins are forgiven" lives out of other forces and in another state as before. He lives in the

state of unity with God. If an institution or a person in whom the divine forces are not working says to others that their sins are forgiven, then only illusions are created, not reliable realities.

Jesus, however, is a person who not only says, “Your sins are forgiven you.” He also really transmits the power that reestablishes the unity with God. This is illustrated in the story whereby that the forgiveness of sins is tied to the healing of the paralytic. Although real forgiveness of sins is invisible, it has visible effects, and the reality of the invisible cause can be deduced from the visible effect. The divine power, the true self, “Jesus,” reestablishes the unity of the human being with God. This is the invisible forgiveness of sins. From this real cause follows the removal of the paralysis, the visible, that is the experiential, effect. In someone whose separation from the divine world has been removed and who lives again in unity with it, the streams of life flow anew. Every paralysis is removed.

Thus Jesus not only “says”, “Your sins are forgiven you.” When he says it, it is the expression of a real event. And when he says, “Stand up,” then this is also the expression of a real transfer of power that is carried out as a provable experience. The skeptical mind, the teacher of the law in everyone, can read from the effects what the true self caused in someone. The removal of the paralysis that occurs “before its eyes” must convince it that the spirit-filled true self and Jesus as the embodiment of the true self can really forgive sins.

The paralytic reacts as is appropriate to the facts of the case. He goes “to his home, glorifying God.” He knows what forces have become active in him; he knows that they have come from the true self, from the kingdom of God and gives God the glory. He also stays home: He changes his own life in accordance with the new life perspective and does not work off the received forces by blindly telling his inner experiences to people who have no understanding for them. All witnesses to the scene behave just as appropriately. They glorify God.

Influence of Jesus: “Son of Man” and “Word”

Jesus as someone on whom the “spirit of the Lord” rests, as spirit-filled true self, now unfolds a heightened influence. His

characteristics as true self, as “Son of Man,” step clearly into the foreground. As the divine “Word,” teaching and preaching work on a higher octave and with greater power. The Sermon on the Mount and special effects of the “Word” are expressions of this heightened effectiveness of Jesus. In the story of the paralytic, Jesus speaks of himself for the first time as the “Son of Man” (Luke 5:24).

The expression is known from the Old Testament. Above all the prophet Ezekiel was addressed by God as “Son of Man,” and also in Daniel, a Son of Man appears “on the clouds of heaven.” This is a true human being, a “son” of the original human being as “fathered” by God. It is the true human identity, the true self. Contemporary people are no longer true human beings. They are so only potentially since they carry at least the seed of the Son of Man within themselves. Presently they are separated from God, “sinful,” indissolubly entangled in the transitory world as mortal souls. They have developed a limited ego derived from transitory phenomena, a false, mortal identity. Their true, immortal identity, however, is their presently latent true self. They can become “sons” of the original human being if they remember their true identity and go a path on which it becomes active again.

Jesus is the prototype of this Son of Man. All who find their true identity, however, also become Sons of Man. One can see how someone becomes again a Son of Man by the example of the prophet Ezekiel, a Son of Man of the Old Testament. God, the order and power of the spiritual world, appears to the prophet Ezekiel and demands, “Son of Man, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you.” The text continues, “And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me” (Ezekiel 2:1–2, NRSV). People again become Sons of Man when God touches them, connects with them, becomes active in them, and they become conscious of it. Then the spirit enters into them, stands them on their feet, and lets them hear God. God speaks to people from the true self. When people admit these impulses from the spiritual world, then the spirit enters into them. If the spirit enters into them, then their true identity, which was latent up to now, stands up and becomes independent. It stands on its feet. And then they can hear what the spiritual world tells them and can fulfill their spiritual task as did Ezekiel and Jesus. They belong to those in “Israel” to whom Jesus is destined for a “rising” (Luke 2:34).

The three stories that now follow, of Jesus and his disciples' meal as guests of the tax collector Levi, of Jesus' disciples eating and drinking instead of fasting, and of Jesus' disciples plucking grain on the Sabbath, all refer to characteristics of the Son of Man. In each case, they are contrasted with the characteristics of the scribes and Pharisees so that they clarify each other.

One could briefly say in summary: Jesus embodies a new religion, namely the realization of the connection of the true self with God (*religio* = reconnection) in inner freedom, while the scribes embody the old religion of preparation, which is concerned with keeping outer laws. Although this preparation is important, whoever sees it as the final goal as the scribes and Pharisees do, however, misses the main point: the realization.

One could also say: Jesus represents a particular state of human development, the scribes another. As long as people are not yet capable of being inwardly free, of living independently according to the laws of his true self, they have to allow themselves to be led by outer laws, which lead them in a preparatory way to the border of the state of inner freedom. If they persist in the state of preparation, then they remain in this state even if they formally follow a spiritual path. They will then interpret this path as an outer law. If they are in the state of inner freedom, then they will interpret outer laws that served as a preparation for the spiritual path simultaneously as the laws of their true self and live in inner freedom.

Characteristic of the Son of Man: Restoration of Unity – “Physician”

Every Son of Man, not only Jesus, has “authority on earth to forgive sins.” The powers of the spirit work in them, overcome their own separation from God, and restore unity. And through the powers transmitted by them, the true self in others can be stimulated to also awaken from latency, take up the spirit, stand up, hear, and fulfill the task given by God until they live again in complete unity with God, without sin.

This is the first ability of the Son of Man: to forgive sins on earth and to restore the unity with God. He reveals this characteristic in contrast to the ideas of the scholars of the law. As the story of the “paralytic” (Luke 5:17–26) teaches, they are not in the position to understand that forgiving sins is a play of forces

within the human being, a real change of the former state. For them, it is a matter of faith in the power of God for they do not *experience* the restoration of the unity of the true self with God. It even turns out that they do not even *want* the restoration, either in others or in themselves. They are convinced that they already possess it and that they are the only ones who deserve it. This self-righteousness is shown once more in the now following story of the calling of Levi – in contrast to the characteristic of the Son of Man.

Illustration of this Characteristic

5:27 *After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, “Follow me.”* ²⁸*And he got up, left everything, and followed him.* ²⁹*Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting at the table with them.* ³⁰*The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”* ³¹*Jesus answered, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; ³²I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.”* (NRSV)

Levi is a tax collector, one who collaborates with the occupying power and is therefore a hardened sinner in the eyes of law-abiding Jews. He not only violates the commandment not to recognize any other lord above him than God – the pious Jews also necessarily violate this in political practice – but he also actively serves this foreign lord as a tax collector. And tax collectors also have a reputation for enriching themselves excessively by collecting more tax than required.

Levi, however, is one of the sinners whom Jesus calls to repentance (Luke 5:32) and who follow this call, for “he got up, left everything, and followed him.”

Repentance is leaving all previous habits and attitudes, “getting up,” reflecting on your task as a Son of Man, and also following the new way of life. In this way, people become pupils of the new religion of inner freedom embodied by Jesus. So they are “healed” by Jesus as the “physician,” by the true self, which itself is in contact with God. The break between humanity and God is healed.

But the scribes and Pharisees who hardened themselves in self-

righteousness cannot be healed. They are righteous in that they comply with the outer laws necessary to prepare for inner freedom. But because they believe that they have already been saved by this compliance, they cannot develop further. They cannot see that human beings as earthly people, despite all pious compliance with the law, are existentially sinners as long as they do not fulfill their purpose. They are separated from God and thus existentially “sick.” Therefore they need the physician and must repent, even as pious law abiders not just as lawbreakers. They have to learn to see their life in a new light, leave all old law-based righteousness, get up, and follow the new way of life.

The whole point is that although preparation is important, it can become an obstacle when viewed as the ultimate goal. Conversely, despite lack of preparation, people can experience the call of the spirit. They can hear it even though they are moral sinners. Despite their immorality, they can be open to the new way of life, while the scribes are not open to it despite their morality. This story is about existential sin. Morally good earthly people, the just, are still existential sinners, since they are separated from God and do not realize their purpose. They are as much existential sinners as the morally bad earthly people, the unjust (the sinners in the moral sense), who are also separated from God.

Both the morally good and the morally bad people, the scribes as well as the tax collectors, can only be saved and healed if they recognize that they are sinners in the sense of an existential separation from God. If the moral sinners, the lawbreakers, recognize this, they can go on the spiritual path, even without having prepared themselves for it by observing the laws. They can and will make up for the preparation. Those who “get up” and follow the new way of life will henceforth lead a morally perfect life guided by the inner laws of the true self.

So the story does not demonstrate that preparation is superfluous and that the spiritual impulse turns just to lawbreakers. It only demonstrates that even the lawbreakers, the moral sinners, can be struck by the spiritual call and become aware of their existential sins despite a lack of preparation. People will not draw from this possibility the conclusion that it would be better to forego preparation and live as lawbreakers in the future, for with such an attitude, they would surely fail to hear the call of the spiritual impulse. On the other hand, the story demonstrates that preparation does not guarantee that people will hear a

spiritual call. With the attitude of the scribes, who consider themselves to be already redeemed due to their compliance with the law, the call from the spiritual world is certainly not heard either.

Jesus ironically expresses that the scribes cannot be healed: The righteous do not need a physician. The truly righteous, namely those who are already in harmony with the divine world, really do not need a physician. But earthly people still in the preparation stage are simply not righteous even if they fulfill the external commandments right down to the smallest details. If they nevertheless consider themselves righteous and do not think they need a physician, the physician cannot heal.

How do the founder and the pupils of the new religion behave towards people of the old law-based religion who are open to the new? They will ignore the requirement of the old religion to strictly distinguish between law-abiders and law-breakers because they have left the level of preparation and entered a new level: the level of openness to life as true self, whether moral preparatory work has been done or not. Hence the common feast, the wonderful meal of joy and gratitude that Jesus and his disciples hold with everyone who has found the way to the new way of life. They enjoy the community at the level of the new life from which all differences at the level of old life disappear.

This does not mean that Jesus and his disciples had a soft spot for sinners in the sense of law-breakers. Nothing would be less true. It is not that a benevolent Jesus had special pity for immoral people. It is also not the case that immoral people as such could particularly rely on the love and compassion of Jesus or even had to emphasize their wickedness in order to draw the attention of the redeeming Son of God with greater certainty.

Instead, it is said in this story that *only* when people, whether they are immoral or moral, repent do Jesus and his disciples sit down with them. Only when and because people leave everything old, “get up,” and rise from earthly weakness and self-pity, because the new way of life becomes effective in them, *can* Jesus, the true self, sit down with them at a table. Only then will both be on a new level, and *then* it does not matter what kind of life was led up to then.

But how do the scribes and Pharisees relate to the disciples of Jesus, the followers of the new religion of inner freedom? In their self-righteousness at the level of the law, they cannot understand

the inner constitution of Jesus, his disciples, and those newly added from the circles of moral sinners. Therefore, they cannot understand their community. They have to misunderstand it at their level of law-based religion, where there is an insurmountable contradiction between law-abiders and lawbreakers. From this perspective, a community of law-abiders, as the Pharisees still view Jesus and his disciples, and lawbreakers, such as Levi, is impossible. The Pharisees and scribes accuse Jesus and his disciples of this violation of the requirement of their law-based religion without realizing that what is happening here is on a completely different, new level.

Jesus founded his community with moral sinners by pointing out that they are sinners who are open to the new way of life. He has come to make all people, whether law-abiders or lawbreakers, aware that they are sinners in existential terms. In this way, he calls them to repentance, can heal them, and be the right physician for them. But he can neither call to repentance nor heal people who self-righteously insist that they have already been redeemed. He cannot and does not want to be a physician to such “righteous” people.

In due course, all human being can experience the characteristics of the Son of Man within themselves. They can experience their true self, the state of the “kingdom of God.” In particular, they can experience how this true self as “physician” dissolves their false identity, their existential sin, and asserts itself as their true identity.

In this state, they experience unity with the world of the spirit. The separation that was caused by the limited ego has been abolished, and the associated state of suffering and mortality has been overcome in principle. Now they can have “a great banquet in his house” with all others who also experience unity with the world of the spirit, a meal of joy and thanksgiving in which the spiritual powers are absorbed.

The moral striving for unity and the failure in this striving are now superfluous, as necessary these experiences were, for now they *are* in unity, and their life flows without moral effort from the order of the spiritual world that works in them. From the state of fulfillment, the value and the worthlessness of the state of preparation are recognized.

Characteristic of the Son of Man: Bringer of Love – “Bridegroom”

5:33 *Then they said to him, “John’s disciples, like the disciples of the Pharisees, frequently fast and pray, but your disciples eat and drink.”* ³⁴*Jesus said to them, “You cannot make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you?”* ³⁵*The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.”* (NRSV)

A second characteristic of the Son of Man is that he distributes the fullness of divine love. This characteristic makes him the “bridegroom” in whose presence the wedding guests draw from the fullness of divine love. This characteristic and its effects also stand in contrast to the characteristics of the teachers of the law and the Pharisees; yes, they only become clearly recognizable through this contrast.

The Pharisees and the disciples of John the Baptist represent the preparation for the spiritual path. People preparing for the spiritual path will follow certain rituals, observe rules, and cultivate a community life that serve to purify their earthly personality, enable them to master their passions, and thus make them good “vessels” that one day can receive the fullness of the spirit within them. Like the scribes, they live in a religion of preparation through outer laws in order to attain someday the religion of fulfillment through inner freedom.

Fasting is part of the preparatory system of rules. It is a question of consciously foregoing eating and drinking at certain times. Certain nutritional rules are observed because they are intended to bring the earthly personality into a state in which the true self can develop better.

In the new life of inner freedom, however, behavior is no longer based on external rules. This is where the true self is realized, and also the behavior of the earthly personality arises spontaneously from the life of the true self. Their inner being then tells people how their outer life must be designed. The outside serves the inside without constraint; it flows freely from the inner state. Too much food and drink is then simply impossible because the people concerned feel that too much is detrimental for their inner state. They do not need an external commandment to restrain themselves. And they will also experience for themselves *which* foods are beneficial to them from the effects of the foods on their

inner sensitivities. They will regulate their diet based on their own experience.

“Eating and drinking” is just one aspect of energy intake in life. The difference between free and non-free ingestion also applies in the area of cultural “pleasures.” Those who are preparing for the spiritual path will consciously make a choice among different cultural “pleasures” and adhere to certain external rules. Pupils on the path who learn to live from inner freedom, however, will spontaneously know which cultural products are beneficial for their new state of soul and which are harmful to it.

The picture with the wedding guests and the bridegroom points to this new life where everything outside follows from the inside. But it shows even more. When pupils and masters meet on the new spiritual level, a completely different eating and drinking becomes possible, namely spiritual eating and drinking, absorption of divine powers, exchange of divine love. With such eating and drinking, “fasting,” a regulation of food intake according to outer laws, is completely absurd. Eating and drinking on this level no longer have anything to do with preparation, only with the joy of realization. When the bridegroom is there, the “love-bringer,” the wedding couple, his pupils, cannot possibly “fast.” They celebrate the wedding between the fire of the spirit and their true self. The fire of the spirit penetrates and illuminates their true self just as after the baptism in the Jordan, the fire of the spirit entered Jesus’ true self and made him Christ. As a bridegroom, as Christ, as the light of the spirit, he can now bring this light to others. He brings himself, the light of the spirit, to the bride, to the true self of his disciples. All intentionality and fearful orientation towards rules are washed away by this love.

However, when the bridegroom is no longer there and the pupils are on their own again without being able to release the divine powers of love themselves, they will unavoidably have to “fast.” They will then be back on the level of preparation and will have to work internally until a new spiritual impulse comes that sweeps away all external regulation.

The scribes and Pharisees cannot understand the new state of spiritual realization, the resultant free way of eating, and above all the absorption of spiritual “food” in this state, the reception and transmission of divine love in the community of Jesus and his disciples. Like John the Baptist and his disciples, they are in the stage of preparation where it makes sense to “fast” with their

pupils but where there is still no possibility to freely absorb and implement divine energies.

All people can experience also this characteristic of the Son of Man, the bearer of divine love, at the appropriate time. When the true self in them is filled and enlightened by the powers of divine love, it celebrates the wedding with the “bridegroom,” the spirit. That is the “getting up” of their true identity. They experience love as a state of the “kingdom of God.” With this, they have left the state of preparation and entered the state of fulfillment. The regulation of food intake according to outer laws is now superfluous. But it is by no means indifferent what, how much, and how they now eat and drink. Only their previous outer compass is replaced with an inner one. Their food intake – whether material or immaterial – is based on their inner state.

Illustration of this Characteristic

5:36 *He also told them a parable: “No one tears a piece from a new garment and sews it on an old garment; otherwise the new will be torn, and the piece from the new will not match the old. ³⁷And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. ³⁸But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. ³⁹And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine, but says, “The old is good.”” (NRSV)*

When it is the time of fulfillment and the inner religion comes to life, it will develop forms that are an expression of its content. When its followers on the spiritual path reach the immediate experience of the fullness of the spirit, their life will spontaneously be completely different than before. They will be free from outer laws because the inner laws of the true self work in them. The forms of life of the whole community will be shaped accordingly: The pupils will become a free association of autonomous people whereas up to now they had been held together by the authority of hierarchies or laws – necessary at the stage of preparation. Old rituals of external worship, sacrificial rites, prayer rituals, fasting, and the like are replaced by new rituals that express the new experiences and ways of life. A “new garment” for the true self comes into being, corresponding to the experience of the fullness of the spirit.

There would be no point in integrating parts of the new religious forms into the old ones. What sense would it make to graft structures of a free community life onto the old structures of authority and thus create a mixture of old and new forms? This would only dismember the wholeness of the new “garment,” the form organism that was tailored to the experience of abundance and freedom, by removing an element and would still be no gain. For what could followers of the old religion, who, according to their stage of development, need authority and outer laws, do with forms of free community life? The piece of the new garment, of the form organism of the religion of freedom, would not match the old garment, the form organism of the law-based religion. So when a new religion of the spirit emerges within a law-based religion, separation of the two forms is the only sensible solution. Everyone who belongs to the religion of preparation according to their inner development can develop further in their forms. But whoever approaches or breaks through to the fullness of the spirit needs other forms of community life. A combination of both forms would be harmful for both parts. Nothing would come of it. Another aspect of this necessity is expressed in the image of the wine and the wineskins. Here it is less about the relationship between the old and the new form than the relationship of the new content to the old or new form.

The new “wine” is the directly experienced powers of the spirit. They need appropriate forms in which they can express themselves and will also develop such forms. If people tried to express the experience of the fullness of the spirit within the old organizational structures, they would blow up these structures – and would have failed to develop new forms corresponding to the new experiences. As a result, the new experiences, because they lacked the appropriate forms, could only express themselves in a distorted manner or would have to atrophy. The “wine” would spoil. A feature of the new community could be, for example, that their people no longer live in monastic seclusion where they follow the rules that serve to prepare them, but everyone would live in their place in society where they responsibly would carry out their societal tasks based on their independent spiritual experience. Then the new “wine” would keep well in the new “wineskins” that correspond to it.

But too many people feel comfortable in their old, traditional religion, which serves as preparation for the independent

experience of the spirit. They do not long for new content and new forms. Jesus complains about them in verse 39: “And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine, but says, ‘The old is good.’” How much Jesus, the Son of Man, wanted people after the preparation of a traditional religion to enter into the fulfillment of a spiritual religion and drink the new wine of the spirit to become Sons of Man themselves! But “no one after drinking old wine desires new wine”!

This is one of the few places in the gospel where the readers can take a look inside the messenger from the world of the spirit. They are shown how much the Son of Man, living in the dimension of the spirit, longs for all other people to live in the same dimension and to have communion with him and with each other. The spiritual power of the Son of Man attracts other people and encourages them to live in the spiritual dimension as well. And yet he must constantly experience that the opposing forces, the Pharisees and scribes in them, are stronger than the new possibility, the realization of which would be their purpose. This discrepancy “hurts,” for the spiritual life in Jesus feels pushed back by it; it cannot flow out as it would be possible with greater receptivity of the others. The pain about the others also contributes: What happiness they could experience if they followed their purpose and were not so attached to tradition!

Characteristic of the Son of Man: Creative Freedom – “Lord of the Sabbath”

6:1 One sabbath while Jesus was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked some heads of grain, rubbed them in their hands, and ate them. ²But some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?” ³Jesus answered, “Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴He entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and gave some to his companions?” ⁵Then he said to them, “The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath.” (NRSV)

The third characteristic of the Son of Man is creative freedom. He is “lord of the Sabbath.” For the Jews, the earthly Sabbath day was a symbol of the spiritual Sabbath day, for the seventh day of creation, the period in the development of world and humanity in

which everything that was created would be sanctified. Everything created, permeated by the spirit of God, would express this spirit. The earthly Sabbath was also to serve as preparation for the spiritual Sabbath. The earthly Sabbath was thus already a symbolic anticipation of the state of fullness. No earthly work in the service of earthly interests was permitted. People were to focus entirely on the future reality of unity with God. By coming to rest according to their earthly interests, they were to allow the activity of the powers of the spirit within them. Innumerable commandments and prohibitions in Judaism served this preparatory and signal character of the earthly Sabbath. Not the slightest work was allowed, not even the rubbing out of kernels from the head of grain from the field.

But the Son of Man, in whom the true self became perfect reality, has entered the state of fulfillment. The spiritual Sabbath took shape in him: conscious life from the laws and powers of the spirit. Therefore, he no longer needs the preparatory regulations of the earthly Sabbath. He still has an earthly personality and lives in earthly conditions, but now he no longer lets his earthly needs be regulated by outer laws and traditions – which were meaningful in the state of preparation. He starts from his inner experiences and makes the outer world serve them. Thus, he “sanctifies” the earthly world; he gives it meaning.

Likewise, the disciples of Jesus are no longer guided by outer laws when it comes to shaping their earthly life. That is what the earthly Sabbath is for: to be a preparation and service for the spiritual Sabbath. The forms in which this preparation and this service takes place are decided in the state of fullness by the Son of Man, the true self, freely and individually, on the basis of the spiritual order inscribed in the true self. Thus, the Son of Man, living freely in the spiritual Sabbath, is lord of the regulations of the earthly Sabbath.

Jesus, prototype of the true self, explains to the Pharisees, who live in the stage of preparation by outer laws, what freedom means in the inner, individual spiritual law. And he appeals to David, who defied the general outer laws when they were not conducive to his life. David had been on the way to the state of the Son of Man and had realized the resulting freedom. The regulations of the earthly Sabbath and all rituals in general took their form and meaning from the life of the true self.

All people can experience the Son of Man, their true identity, in

due time within themselves. Then they also experience the freedom of the spiritual Sabbath, the creative cooperation with the powers and developments of the spiritual world. They celebrate the spiritual Sabbath by letting the spiritual powers permeate and thereby sanctify all their expressions of life. The outer Sabbath commandments are “canceled,” so to speak, by the inner ones, by the structure of the true self.

Illustration of this Characteristic

6:6 On another sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. 7The scribes and the Pharisees watched him to see whether he would cure on the sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against him. 8Even though he knew what they were thinking, he said to the man who had the withered hand, “Come and stand here.” He got up and stood there. 9Then Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?” 10After looking around at all of them, he said to him, “Stretch out your hand.” He did so, and his hand was restored. 11But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus. (NRSV)

The contrast between the creative freedom of the Son of Man and the dogmatic rigidity of the scribes is illustrated in the following story. The Son of Man, who lives in and out of the laws of the spiritual world, is free with regard to the earthly Sabbath regulations, free from the laws that apply at the stage of preparing people for the spiritual path. For example, he questions the regulation that no healing should be done on the Sabbath. And the scribes are waiting for Jesus to break this rule for which they could accuse him of violating the Sabbath laws.

The rule makes good sense, for also medical work is work and can hinder people’s orientation towards God, which is the purpose of the Sabbath. But if a rule is followed too rigidly and also in individual cases for which other points of view should apply, its purpose will be reversed into its opposite. The prohibition of healing on the Sabbath has the purpose of enabling people to especially focus on God, on the good, on the spiritual life, so that earthly life can be sanctified. When the prohibition is made absolute, it can happen that earthly life is destroyed, which would contradict the meaning of the rule. Jesus sharply emphasizes this

contrast with his question of what is allowed on the Sabbath: to save a human life or to allow it to perish. A rigid application of the rule would allow a human life to perish. In this case, it must be overridden to fulfill its purpose of saving human lives. This is the actual content of the story. The Sabbath is used for worship. But is it worship when good is prevented and evil promoted? The Son of Man is free from the outer law. On the basis of the inner law that is active in him, he can judge when an exception to the outer law can and must be made. In this way, he saves lives on the Sabbath and therefore serves the actual function of this day, whereas if the Sabbath rules were rigidly applied, he would pervert the function.

In doing so, Jesus exposes the dogmatic rigidity of the Pharisees. You could think of it as deliberate provocation. But Luke is concerned with showing a regularity. The living power of the spirit, when it is present in a person, must necessarily save lives, must necessarily in individual cases override rules that oppose this, and thereby must necessarily come into conflict with dogma. This applies to the confrontation of the outer Jesus with the scribes of his time; it also applies to all similar confrontations at any time, and this also applies to the confrontation of the true self, the “inner Jesus,” in individuals with their rigid dogmatic habits. The Pharisees in people cling to traditions that may no longer be life-promoting and assert themselves against the spontaneous life of the true self, which cannot help but promote life. It is understandable that the hostile, rigid habits become “filled with fury” when before their eyes, the spontaneous life out of the spirit breaks rules that have become meaningless.

The scribes are all the more furious because the illness that Jesus heals before their eyes is also theirs. He shows them their own illness and its healing – and they balk at this insight and the possibility of healing even more. What is their illness? Their “right hand” has died and that in the synagogue, in the realm of religion.

This illness too is an image of an illness of the soul. The right hand is the instrument of activity while the left is traditionally considered the receiving hand. If the right hand is withered, it means that the person’s active life is dead and frozen in habits. It no longer reacts flexibly to situations. And if this happens in the synagogue, it means that this rigidification in habits relates to religious activity. The activity no longer draws its strength from the living connection with the spirit. When you make your religious life and actions dependent on rigid laws, you will

experience that you can no longer act in a way that is appropriate to the situation and people and do more harm than good.

The cause of this frozen life of action is that the people, self-righteously insisting on their traditions, have lost contact with God. If God were in them, there would also be recognition of what is necessary and flexibility in them. They would act according to the situation and people. This connection is already expressed in the Old Testament: "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!" says Psalm 137:5 (NRSV), where Jerusalem stands for the divine world. The people who forget "Jerusalem," the spiritual world, will experience that no more spiritual powers flow to them. Their life of action will not receive any new impulses and will freeze into habits.

Jesus heals the withered hand. The powers of the spirit, when people allow them to enter, dissolve all rigidity of the life of action. With this, Jesus shows the scribes what their own condition is and how they could be healed. But this is exactly what increases their rage. And all people frozen in habits will be able to understand this. They experience in themselves how much they fearfully reject and become angry about every impulse from within that shows them their condition and opens the way to healing.

In three short stories, Luke has characterized spiritual fulfillment in comparison to the preparation. At the stage of realization, preparation becomes secondary. It is necessary and by no means superfluous, but if you think it is the main thing, it becomes an obstacle. The story of the tax collector Levi shows that when the true self lives in them, people can finally breathe in unity with God. The true self, as "physician," has abolished the existential separation between humanity and God, the existential sin. In contrast, the time of preparation is characterized by constant – necessary – effort. Some believe that they have already achieved unity through faithfulness to the law. The others, moral sinners, consider themselves to have failed, but they can breathe a sigh of relief when the true self comes alive in them and also includes their earthly personality in the new unity with God.

The story of fasting is about the unimpeded flow of divine energies, love. It becomes possible as soon as the spirit, the "bridegroom," feeds the true self with the fullness of these energies. Anyone who experiences this abundance, also as a personality, at the same time leaves behind the meticulous rationing of earthly energies, "fasting," which makes sense at the

stage of preparation.

Third, when the true self comes to fruition in people, then the outer law is replaced by responsible freedom and the outer order by an inner order. The true self is “lord of the Sabbath.” It works freely and creatively in accordance with the order of the divine world, while in the stage of preparation, people had to regulate their actions meticulously through external laws.

These are the characteristics of the Son of Man: unity with the spiritual world, radiating its powers of love, and freedom in the inner law. The disciples of the Son of Man already share in these characteristics in the first phase of their spiritual development. Compared to the Pharisees, who, in the state of preparation, live according to outer laws and cling to them even when they could penetrate to freedom, the disciples of Jesus move in the spiritual atmosphere of unity with the divine powers, of mutual love and love of people, and of the freedom of the true self aware of its responsibilities.

Organization: Second Phase of the Spiritual Path of the Pupils

6:12 *Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. ¹³And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: ¹⁴Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, ¹⁵and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. (NRSV)*

While Jesus is still in the third phase of his spiritual path and performing powerfully as the Son of Man, as true self living out of the fullness of the spirit, his disciples begin the second phase of their spiritual development. After being touched by the spiritual impulse, it is a matter of their attachment to this impulse. The spiritual powers circulate and work in the disciples of Jesus, indeed the disciples work with them for others, whereby these powers continue to grow in them. All of this always happens in complete harmony and parallel to the activity of the perfect true self, Jesus, who provides the powers for the disciples and always forms the background for their development.

This second phase of the spiritual path of the disciples consequently begins with them being “organized.” Their respective spiritual characteristics, which gradually developed in the first phase, are ordered and related to each other so that they can have an even stronger effect to the outside. Of course it is Jesus himself, the embodiment of the order of the spirit, who organizes his disciples. From where else could the order of the community of disciples come if not from the order of the kingdom of God? No earthly purposes, such as success, domination, or the acquisition of wealth, can be considered here.

In order to ascertain the order of the kingdom of God and to anchor it in the community of his disciples, Jesus withdraws from the many people and goes “to the mountain” to pray. “Mountain” is a symbol for a sublime inner state in which people can meet God, can “pray.” Prayer is nothing other than that the true self is consciously seeking connection with God. The image of God, created by God, opens up to the divine spirit, the Father, becomes one with it and receives its powers. This happens in the “night,” namely in the state of rest and receptivity of the soul, while “day” symbolizes the activity of the soul.

In his connection with the spirit on the “mountain,” Jesus realizes the order of the spirit, selects twelve of his disciples, and gives them their special tasks in accordance with this order. The number twelve is not a coincidence. It represents completeness, the entirety of the main aspects of a whole. According to the ideas of astrology, the twelve “houses” denote the main areas of the world of appearances, and the twelve signs of the zodiac denote all the main types of humans, animals, plants, or minerals in the earthly world. When Jesus as the Christ, embodiment of the spirit-filled true self, chooses twelve disciples on the mountain, the place of the spirit, it means that he divides his disciples according to the twelve main aspects of the spiritual world. He himself, Jesus as the Christ, embodies the whole of the spiritual world, which is now broken down into twelve facets surrounding him, twelve characteristics of the spiritual world, whereby the intensity of the activity emanating from him is increased enormously. The spirit is poured out into humanity as it were on twelve special paths and reaches on each path the people who are especially receptive to this aspect.

From now on, the disciples of Jesus no longer act only as earthly personalities but also as spiritual beings. This is expressed, for

example, by Simon being given a new name. He is now called “Peter,” the rock, which characterizes his spiritual identity. He embodies the fundamental aspect, the will aspect, of the spiritual world, the beginning, the strength of the activity of the spirit – we could say the spiritual zodiac sign “Aries.” The next eleven principles follow this basic principle. All other disciples of Jesus outside the Twelve can also be assigned to these twelve main aspects. They do not form an amorphous mass but are a structured community, depending on their characteristics and abilities.

Jesus’ approach on the outer level has its counterpart within the individual. The disciples of Jesus represent those powers in earthly people that are consciously involved in the spiritual path. At a certain moment on the spiritual path, these powers are grouped around the spiritual impulse emanating from the true self, the inner Jesus. This impulse permeates all twelve aspects of consciousness and transforms the whole personality.

The spiritual path not only leads to the unfolding of the true self of those who walk it. When they go the path, other people will be affected by this possibility and can also decide to do so. Yes, those who walk the spiritual path only for themselves will soon petrify in egocentricity again. Their own development can only continue when the powers of the spirit that are becoming active in them are also implemented and made available to others. Because only through spiritual work for others do the spiritual powers flow into the pupils. That is why Jesus calls his disciples “apostles,” messengers of the spirit. Their task is to implement the powers of the spirit released in them for others.

Influence of Jesus on the People

6:17 He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁸They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. ¹⁹And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them. (NRSV)

Jesus arranged the position and function of his disciples who consciously follow the spiritual path. Now, at the beginning of the second phase of the spiritual path of his disciples, the effects Jesus

has on people who come into contact with the spiritual powers without consciously following a spiritual path are shown in a great picture. These people of the “multitude” correspond to the mental, emotional, and vital layers of the individual personality. These are influences not from spirit to spirit, as on the “mountain,” but from spirit to earthly personality. That is why Jesus “comes down” from the mountain with his disciples to the level of earthly conditions. Here he is now, the embodiment of the spirit-filled true self, surrounded by a large group of his disciples, who represent the twelve main aspects of the spiritual world and pass on the powers of the spirit. They in turn are surrounded by a multitude of people from all over the country. And what Jesus had previously done alone is now reinforced by the community of his disciples that surrounds him. Jesus teaches and preaches, and the powers that come from him are passed on through his disciples in twelve currents, thereby multiplying.

This gives people of all kinds new perspectives and new hope. This results in the healing of the disorders of their souls and liberation from captivity in ideologies and systems of dogma. The spiritual power is inexhaustible. Whoever comes into contact with it will be healed. It represents the actual order of being and dissolves all disharmonies.

Such events are not limited to the days of Jesus. Whenever a person connected to the spirit in a special way appears in the world, such structures emerge, spiritual communities and schools, which in turn can have tremendous effects on their environment.

The Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Luke

6:20 *Then he looked up at his disciples and said: (NRSV)*

Sequaciously, the Sermon on the Mount stands at this point in the gospel because it describes the characteristics and behaviors of the pupils in the second phase of the spiritual path in which the spiritual powers begin to circulate in them and they use them for others.

In some Bible editions, this sermon handed down in Luke is called the “Sermon on the Plain” in contrast to the “Sermon on the Mount” in Matthew because it follows the scene in which Jesus and his disciples are on a level plain with many people. But this

scene and the sermon are very clearly separated by the words, "And he looked up at his disciples and said." From this formulation, it follows that Jesus' sermon relates to spiritual matters, to a higher level on which people consciously open themselves to the spiritual impulse, and no longer, as in the scene before, to the level of the "people," to the development of the earthly personality. Whenever phrases such as "he looked up" or "they looked up" are used in the gospels, it means that the consciousness rises to the spirit, to a dimension higher than the earthly. Jesus looked up to the spirit, to the true self, in his disciples. In this respect, we must speak of a "Sermon on the Mount" also in the case of Luke.

The whole Sermon on the Mount is expressly addressed to the disciples, to those people who follow a spiritual path. It must therefore be understood from the spiritual dimension. If you ignore this and apply it to the egocentric earthly personality, the greatest misunderstandings arise. By the way, the fact that it can and must only be understood from the spiritual dimension is not only confirmed several times by the introductory sentence but also by references in the text itself.

The Sermon on the Mount is an organically structured whole. But it cannot be assumed that Jesus presented it to his disciples in one go. Rather, it is the concentrated description of the states, ways of life, and experiences of a pupil on the spiritual path. Jesus will have discussed and explained these aspects of the path with his disciples again and again and in detail. The Sermon on the Mount is thus a guideline to which all pupils can align their life and self-image and through which they can recognize their deviations from the path. All spiritual communities in history have had such "guidelines," for example, in the form of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path of the Buddha or the Golden Verses of Pythagoras. The Sermon on the Mount is in no way a compendium of moral instructions and demands for the earthly personality that strives for piety.

Four Great Contrasts

6:20 *"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. ²¹Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. ²²Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile*

you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. ²³Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. ²⁴But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. ²⁵Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. ²⁶Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.” (NRSV)

Luke’s Sermon on the Mount begins with four great contrasts in keeping with the character of the Gospel of Luke in which the contrast between earthly human being and the spiritual human being plays such a great role. Four beatitudes are opposed by four woes. Apparently, they are juxtapositions of earthly conditions: poor against rich, crying against laughter, etc. But from the terms “blessed” and “woe” and the whole context, it is clear that it deals with the contrast between the states of the pupils on the spiritual path and those of the earthly human beings: between the states of those who strive for unity with the spiritual world and those who expect everything from the earthly world. The opposites are at the same time inside every spiritual pupil, since they are also earthly persons, entangled in the earthly world.

The “now” always refers to life in the earthly world, the “future” to life in the kingdom of God. Thus, conditions before and after death are not being compared but conditions before and after entering the kingdom of God. And this entry is possible at any time.

There are four contrasts. They form a whole, for they describe the contrasts between the spiritual and the earthly human being on four levels on which the entire human existence takes place: on the level of matter, on the level of life processes, on the level of sensations, and on the actual human level – that of judgment and thought.

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”

Are the materially poor meant here, and is the Sermon on the Mount a plea for material poverty? Certainly not. Materially poor people may yearn all the more for material wealth and thereby exclude themselves from the kingdom of God. As always in the Gospel of Luke, it speaks of poverty in the spiritual sense.

The pupils on the spiritual path have not yet reached the goal. They know themselves poor in spiritual experience and yearn for it as a materially poor person yearns for wealth. In this way, they

become free from earthly interests however rich they may be in a material sense, for all of their devotion is towards the spiritual world. In this devotion, the kingdom of God is theirs. This is their bliss, their redemption.

“But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.”

Those who cling to earthly possessions belong to the “rich,” even though they may in fact have little. Earthly human beings cannot help but yearn for material possessions. The meaning of life for them consists of love for earthly life. But everything earthly is transitory. And earthly human beings will lose everything they possess of material things, at the latest at death. They are inevitably faced with hopelessness and emptiness; they have received their “consolation.”

Some free themselves from earthly possessions and in this respect have “nothing” but instead receive everything in the realm of the spirit. Others have “everything” in the earthly realm but ultimately are left empty-handed.

“Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.”

The life energy of the spiritual pupil is wholly directed towards the spiritual world and longs for it as a thirsty person longs for water. This is the “hunger,” the longing of the pupil who feels in the earthly world as if in an infertile desert. But this hunger will be satisfied because the longing of the true self will be answered by the powers from the spiritual world. This answer from the spiritual world and the pupil’s entry into the kingdom of God is bliss, redemption.

“Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry.”

In contrast to this, all energies of the earthly world are available to earthly human beings, and they are satiated with pleasure and suffering. However, if the stream between their desires and the earthly energies that satiates them is interrupted by strokes of fate or death, the great hunger will begin.

Some detach from the streams of earthly life and yearn for those of the spiritual life. Because they break away from the earthly streams of life, they will certainly be satiated by the spiritual ones. The others stick to the streams of earthly life and are satiated by them but will one day face the situation that these streams will no longer reach them.

“Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.”

The soul of the spiritual pupil is lonely in the earthly world. It

grieves because it finds no place and no companions in the earthly world for its feelings of spiritual joy, peace, and love. But in the spiritual world, it will find its place and its companions and be filled with love, peace, and joy.

That is its bliss. It will “laugh.”

“Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep.”

The earthly soul that finds joy in the pleasures of the earthly world, however, has an abundance of conviviality and occasions for transient joy. However, these possibilities are repeatedly negated by illness, disappointment, misfortune, and most rigorously by death. Then the earthly soul will be lonely and grieve.

Some are lonely in the earthly world because it does not meet the needs of their true self, but in the spiritual world, they will experience the imperishable joy of unity, bliss, and redemption. The others now live in harmony with the earthly world and are filled with its joys but will have to experience that these joys come to an end. Then they will be alone.

“Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man.”

The values of the pupils on the spiritual path are different from those of earthly people. The former focus on the imperishable qualities of the Son of Man while the latter strive for more or less short-term goals. Earthly people judge the followers of the Son of Man from their own point of view and feel that their own lifestyle is contrary to theirs. Therefore they exclude the followers of the Son of Man from their community, outlaw them, and revile their name, possibly slander them, and hate them because they are different. The pupils who let the qualities of the Son of Man grow within them will certainly not experience this behavior towards them as bliss. Nevertheless, they are blessed and redeemed because they have inner values that are imperishable and correspond to their true identity, the Son of Man. That is their greatest reward in heaven: they live in harmony with themselves and with the world of the spirit and experiences this concordance as imperishable harmony. They can compare themselves to the prophets of the past, who also attracted the hatred of earthly people because they remained faithful to the qualities of the Son of Man.

“Woe to you when all speak well of you ...”

If earthly people speak well about others, these others can also

only be earthly people whose goals in life do not correspond to the qualities of the Son of Man. They are like the false prophets who tell earthly people what they want to hear and do not embody the values of the imperishable spirit. What will happen to such people who are well-off in the community of earthly people and who organize their lives in such a way that this state is maintained at all costs? The qualities and values of the spirit, the true self in them, do not develop. The true self remains latent; the persons concerned miss their inherent purpose. They do not enter the kingdom of God.

Some develop the qualities of the Son of Man and thereby attract isolation and hatred. But because they develop their imperishable true self, they fulfill their inherent purpose and enter the realm of the spirit in due course. The others only develop the transitory qualities of earthly people. As a result, they live in harmony with the community of earthly people but miss their inherent purpose. Their true self remains latent; they do not enter the kingdom of God.

The four beatitudes and cries of woe at the beginning of Luke's Sermon on the Mount characterize the state of pupil on the spiritual path, which is focused on the imperishable world of the spirit, and that of the earthly person, who concentrates on the transitory world, and this on four levels. No two states could be more opposite. What is valuable to one is worthless to the other. What the one holds fast, the other lets go. While the former first has loss and afterwards gain, the latter first has gain but later loss. Pupils who understand these circumstances – and for this purpose the beatitudes and woes were given by Jesus – will be strengthened in their loyalty to the spiritual world and in their abandonment of earthly entanglements. They will want to leave the dark spaces of the earthly in order to enter the bright spaces of the spirit.

Connection of the Pupil with the Spiritual World

6:27 *“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again.*

31Do to others as you would have them do to you. 32If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. 36Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” (NRSV)

The Sermon on the Mount further describes how the pupils on the spiritual path live in a state of connection with the spiritual world and maintain it. Hardly any section of the gospel has caused as many misunderstandings as this one. For example, what should one do with the demand, “If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also”? If earthly people try to realize something like this, they become hypocritical doormats or pious lambs, unable to cope with life. From this and similar demands of the Sermon on the Mount, the religious ideal of the saint or “good” person was actually derived: people who do no harm to anyone, tame their passions, if they still have them, and dutifully submit to the “commandments of God.” Others have revolted against this. They characterized this ideal of piety as slave morality invented by priests to maintain their rule and opposed it with the natural right to passion and self-assertion. In view of the “good,” the ideal of piety, they passionately pleaded for “evil”: for the struggle and for the will to rule. “Good” and “evil” were redefined. For pious people, natural passions and spontaneous energies are the “evil” that must be fought and suppressed. For the advocates of the “will to power,” this “evil” is actually the “good” that needs to be promoted. For them, the “good,” the ideal of piety, if not “evil” is at least “bad.”

How is the proponents’ ideal of piety, which is often derived from the Sermon on the Mount, justified? With the “will of God.” God wanted people to be pious and good, not passionate and combative. Conversely, the representatives of the “will to power” base their ideal on the “will of nature.” Nature wants people to be passionate and combative not pious and peaceful.

These opposing positions, which are mutually dependent, can only arise when the Sermon on the Mount is applied to the earthly person. But it refers to the spiritual person – Jesus looked up! – to

a dimension that is incommensurable with earthly things, neither “piety” nor “will to power.” This is proven, for example, by verse 35 at the end of which it says, “you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked” (NRSV). The kindness of the “highest” is comparable to the sun. The sun radiates inexhaustibly warmth and light – goodness. It does not care what the beings are on whom it shines – good or evil. It gives its strength to all; it cannot do otherwise. It is warmth and light; it is goodness. Likewise, the Most High – God – is not the “god of the pious” who rewards those who are “good” and punishes those who are “evil” but inexhaustible, productive power and wisdom: goodness. Neither is God the “will to power” and the “god of the wicked” who rewards those who are “evil” and punishes those who are “good.” God *is* love in the sense of promoting all life. God is spirit, unity, love, and freedom beyond all earthly piety and malice. God makes both piety and wickedness possible, both the good and the bad.

The verses in this section of the Sermon on the Mount portray people who live from the spirit. They are like the sun, which is as they are and makes no distinction between good and evil. And verse 35 justifies this way of being. Those who live out of the spirit will become “children of the Most High.” This does not refer to earthly people, whether they live with the ideal of piety or with the will to power. People do not primarily have the task of developing their earthly qualities in one or another direction. Their task and inherent purpose is the unfolding of the spiritual being that slumbers as a predisposition in them, the unfolding of the image of God. When they unfold it, they become “children of the Most High,” true selves, which live in conscious unity with the order of the universe, inexhaustibly radiate the powers of divine love, and develop according to their own inner law, which is also the law of the spirit. That is their freedom.

The evangelist wants us to see verses 27–36 in this perspective. They describe a state of brightness and lack of intention that gradually develops in the pupils. They also provide clues as to how this state of unity with the spirit is maintained. For example, if pupils hate their enemies, hatred will destroy the cheerfulness, clarity, and strength that result from unity with the spirit. So the pupils will make sure that they remain in a state of unity with the spirit and do not hate their enemies. If they hate their enemies, they can only do so in the state of earthly people who love those

who love them and hate those who hate them. Verse 32 alludes to this state: “Sinners,” that is, earthly people separated from God, love people who love them – but what kind of egocentric, limited love this is! – and hate people who hate them. The pupils whose true self lives in harmony with the spirit, however, behave as the spirit itself does: Hatred is not possible for them, and their love embraces everyone, whether friend or foe, for it is not tied to interests as is the love of earthly people.

Likewise, people in harmony with the spirit will necessarily do good. The spirit does nothing but good. It promotes everything that strives towards the spirit and corrects everything that hinders the striving towards the spirit, for the spirit is the basic law of the universe and its development and also the basic law of humanity and its development. On the other hand, earthly people – the “sinners” (verse 33) – do good only to those who also do good to them. It is nothing more than a trade. And they retaliate with evil when others harm them. But the spiritual person, the true self, cannot reciprocate with evil. The true self is the good itself. If pupils on the spiritual path reciprocate evil with evil, then it is the earthly person in them who acts in this way. The pupils then immediately lose the state of cheerfulness, freedom, and magnanimity that characterizes unity with the spirit. So they will take care to remain in this state.

Verse 34 describes the behavior of earthly people in relation to “lending” goods. They lend only in order to get the loan back, perhaps also with interest. Spiritual people, on the other hand, are generous and give and lend from their abundance without expecting anything back, for the expectation would be a shadow that would cloud the brightness and clarity of their state in harmony with the spirit. Should they let the bliss of this state be affected by such clouding? In addition, their inner harmony will radiate from them regardless of whether people are kind to them or curse them: Spiritual people will “bless” others, for if they answered a curse with a counter curse, they would fall back into the state of earthly people, the “sinners,” and through disharmony lose the blissful state of unison with the spirit, which is harmony. And finally, for the same reasons, they will not respond to insults with insults as earthly people do but will send their good wishes to insulters and admirers alike.

Like the sun, spiritual people in unity with the spirit can do nothing other than radiate supportive love for everyone, do good

in the sense of helping everything that strives for the spirit, give generously from its abundance without expecting anything back, create harmony, and spread benevolence no matter what disharmony and insults they encounter. These are five new characteristics of the soul that follow from the state of unity with the spirit. When these develop in the pupils, they become “children of the Most High” who have the same characteristics, for earthly people, separated from God, are not children of the Most High. The pupils support this development, not to be pious and good but because experience shows that these qualities correspond to their innermost, spiritual being and mean the highest happiness. When they are in tune with their true self, they are also in tune with the spirit.

The two sayings in verse 29 depict the pupils who do not allow themselves to be torn out of the state of unity with God through retaliation and revenge. “If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also.” This is not a behavioral instruction for earthly people to special piety. It is a picture taken from the earthly world that describes a spiritual attitude. Do not react with hatred and defense when someone attacks you – “strikes you on the cheek.” Remain in the cheerfulness, calm, and kindness that characterize the true self. Continue to offer the other all of your spiritual cheerfulness, calm, and kindness, “the other cheek.” Do not armor and harden yourself, for as soon as you armor yourself, as soon as you protect your “cheek,” cheerfulness, calmness and kindness disappear. So remain open in all attacks. This applies to the spiritual level. However, since the pupils live on the earthly level at the same time, they remain free and may even have a duty to reprimand attackers. The only important thing is that they do not do it out of vengeance and that their openness on the spiritual level does not disappear.

An example of such behavior is the reaction of Jesus, described in the Gospel of John, to the blow given him by a servant of the high priest. Without losing the calm and openness that harmony with the spirit grants – without going into an inner defensive position – Jesus rebukes the servant (John 18:22–23).

Something similar is expressed in the saying, “from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.” It is not about letting everything happen to you on the level of the earthly life. The saying describes a state on the spiritual level using a picture from the earthly world. The saying means, Do not let

someone taking advantage of your goodness – “who takes away your cloak” – tear you from the state of harmony with the spirit, and do not close yourself off, for when you close yourself off, you destroy the state of oneness with the spirit. So stay in this state no matter what happens to you. No matter what happens to you, let your goodness continue and do not deny it. So do not refuse the “shirt” either. When you remain in this spiritual state, you can also objectively do what corresponds to the requirements of earthly life without falling into the vengeance and defensive stance that are customary on the earthly plane. Then you can defend your earthly coat and refuse your earthly shirt.

Both sayings are parables that work precisely through their paradox. They say, As a pupil on the spiritual path, behave inwardly like someone in the earthly world who, when you hit them on the one cheek, also holds out the other, or like someone in the earthly world who, when you take their coat, gives their shirt too. The reader is taken aback: Such behavior is impossible in the earthly world! Yes, say the parables, but in the spiritual world one behaves like that, very differently than in the earthly world!

Two other similar aspects of the state of oneness with the spirit are described in the Sermon on the Mount in this section. “Give to everyone who begs from you ...” (verse 30, NRSV). The spiritual powers that flow to the pupils in this state must flow on. Only in this way do the pupils remain in a state of unity with the spirit. The supplicant is receptive to spiritual powers, and those who are filled with spiritual powers will give spontaneously and as a matter of course. That is their basic attitude. On the other hand, they will not be able to give to anyone who does not ask even if it pains them. Where there is no receptivity to the powers of the spirit, that is where there is no request for them, those who are filled with these powers cannot give. Their basic attitude, however, remains unaffected.

Moreover, it is justified on the earthly plane too. Also earthly goods must not be withheld when they can serve others and when they rightly ask for them. Only in this way do goods and forces circulate and benefit everyone. Otherwise the owners become hardened in their possessions, become dependent on them, or use them to rule over others. That will rob them of their zest for life and the trust of other people. They have to know whether they want to accept these consequences.

“... and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them

again” (verse 30, NRSV). When unworthy people accept the teaching and preaching of a spiritually connected person and use them for their own benefit, the teacher will not hold them accountable. Why should the teacher take action against the “thief”? The teacher’s spiritual insights and powers are inexhaustible. This does not exclude that the teacher would prohibit plagiarism in an objective manner on the earthly plane.

It is characteristic of the state of unity with the spirit to let the spiritual powers flow – to distribute them to those in need and not to take them back when unworthy people use them. The unworthy will experience the consequences of their actions in due time.

These are the characteristics that mark the state of oneness with the spirit. And pupils who are in oneness cannot help but develop these qualities. They are thus participants in the spiritual world itself, “children of the Most High,” and participate in the currents of the spiritual world, which follow certain laws. The formulations of the Sermon on the Mount remind them of this purpose and make them pay attention to always remain in this state of bliss. Verse 36 sums up all these characteristics again in a formula: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” Turning to all creatures with understanding – this is mercy. When the pupils live in the order and the powers of the spiritual world, they will not be able to do otherwise than turn to all creatures in a loving and giving manner, with recognition, bringing peace and joy. They turn to them just as the Spirit itself, the “Father,” turns to them. With that they are in harmony with the Father.

Verse 31 is the golden rule found in all religions and philosophies of the world. As an exception, this verse is not specifically aimed at the pupils on the spiritual path, but also at earthly people. If the earthly person fulfills the rule, then this is a necessary preparation for the spiritual path. And since the pupils on the path are at the same time earthly people, the fulfillment of this rule is a necessary condition for making progress on their path. It is in the interests of earthly people to consider the legitimate interests of other people. They will feel most comfortable and also get into the most favorable condition for the spiritual path if they behave in the sense of this rule.

Do they want to be respected by others? Yes. So they respect others too. Would they like others to show them sympathy and to trust them? Yes. So they show sympathy and trust others too. Do they want to be honestly informed by others? Yes. So they

inform others honestly too.

And do they want to be robbed of their property by others and to be betrayed by them? No. So they do not rob others of their property either. Do they want to be insulted and slandered by others? No. So they do not insult or slander others. Do they want to be manipulated by others? No. So they do not manipulate others. Do they want to be criticized by others? No. So they do not criticize others.

Relationship of the Pupil to Fellow Human Beings and Environment

6:37 *“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”* (NRSV)

After Jesus has described the state of oneness with the spirit and the characteristics resulting from it in the Sermon on the Mount, he refers to the relationship between human beings and their fellow human beings and the environment. This relationship is subject to the law: With whatever measure you measure, that is the measure with which you will be measured. If the measure that people apply to the environment is criticism and demands on others, they will be confronted with criticism and demands themselves. If the measure is the absolution of others, they will be absolved themselves. If it is promoting others, they will be promoted themselves. The three laws of life follow a development: from mutual entanglement through liberation to mutual furtherance.

No spiritual growth is possible as long as people confront other people in egocentricity. If they want to grow spiritually, they have to lose their egocentricity. If they lose their egocentricity, all the abilities that were previously in the service of the ego can become the expression of the true self.

What is the cause of the judging and criticizing? It is the expectations that we, in our self-centeredness, have of ourselves, of other people, and of situations. People and situations should be such that they correspond to our interests and ideals. If they do

not correspond to them, we become angry and criticize. Why do we have expectations? Partly because the wishes and ideas of our ego want to prevail, partly because sensing the perfection of the true self, we feel the imperfection of our ego. That is why we want perfection to be realized as an ideal by others and ourselves.

Our expectations are the patterns we lay out for ourselves and others. But that is exactly how we judge ourselves. For by identifying with our patterns, we force ourselves into them. With the measure with which we measure, we are measured ourselves. In addition, others will measure us against our own patterns. They will demand that we ourselves do what we expect of them. Thus, criticism creates a network of mutual entanglements. And the critics, trapped in their own standards and the criticism of those who react, can no longer see what reality is like. They only see it through patterns; everything else escapes them. Furthermore, entangled in the struggle of mutual expectations, they cannot perceive the spiritual impulses that want to work in them. With this, they miss the effects of the spirit in other people and in the world.

The only way to escape from this entanglement is to release other people and situations – to absolve them. When we let go of the patterns by which we measure others, we free ourselves from the compulsion that the patterns exert on us. When we absolve others, we are absolved ourselves. And since those who have been criticized so far feel that we are no longer applying any standards to them, their reaction to apply their own standards to us does not apply. We are also absolved by them. The network of mutual expectations and criticism dissolves. This allows people to see reality for what it is, without prejudice. It also becomes possible for spiritual impulses working in them to reach their consciousness. In this way, they can see what potential other people have for spiritual growth and to what extent they are hindered in their development by incorrect reactions or stress. Thus, they can really help.

And how do they help? By giving. Not by giving cheap advice. That would just be patterns again into which they press the others. A gift is only useful if it is made on the condition that the others are free to accept it and continue to go their own way. Therefore the gift that people who no longer expect, people who leave others free, give is above all their own being as far as the true self has already become active in it. They give their calmness, their joy of

life, their knowledge, their love, their freedom and strength simply because they are there and without aiming for results. So the others can solve their problems better. And the peace, joy of life, knowledge, love, freedom and strength that may arise in the others will return to the givers. The givers will experience that what they have sown – through their existence alone – comes back to them as a “good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over” of the fruit.

Criticism and condemnation come back to the critic as criticism and condemnation and bind the critic and the person criticized so tightly together that they can hardly breathe. The only solution to this condition is to acquit the other, which means that the person acquitting is also acquitted. Then the giving of spiritual powers becomes possible, which come back to the giver multiplied. This creates a mutual, free life in unity with the spirit, the special friendship among pupils on the spiritual path, and the brotherhood of all people insofar as they strive for unity with the spirit.

Modern psychology has recognized many of these relationships and applies them to the earthly coexistence of people. The Sermon on the Mount, however, is spiritual psychology. Psychological laws always get their meaning here from the perspective of the spiritual path – the overcoming of earthly egocentricity through the true self. Only such a psychology helps people to fulfill their purpose.

Three Problems on the Spiritual Path

6:39 *He also told them a parable: “Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. ⁴¹Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴²Or how can you say to your neighbor, ‘Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye.” (NRSV)*

Jesus speaks to his disciples of three great problems that all pupils face on the spiritual path due to the tendencies of their earthly being. They relate to the relationship of the pupils to other

people, to the master of the community of pupils, and to fellow pupils. The background is always “insight” as an essential aspect of the spiritual path, which is why Jesus prefers images from the world of sight.

Many earthly people lead their own kind in the earthly world; some lead them well, some badly. However, it becomes problematic when earthly people who are blind to the spiritual world claim to be able to lead others to this world. How is someone who is blind to the spiritual world to help others to fulfill their purpose and to be able to see in the spiritual world? As long as the spiritually blind leaders do not recognize that they are blind, the eye of the spirit that sees the spirit will not open in them. And with that, they and their followers will “fall into a pit.” They will not get into the spiritual world, the kingdom of God. They will either remain in the earthly world and miss their purpose or get into a demonic world in the beyond – because they lack the ability to distinguish between the demonic beyond and the spiritual-divine – and perish there. Only those who have become able to see in the spiritual world can show the light of the spirit to others so that they can orient themselves to this light.

This is the task of spiritual pupils for others: to show them the light, even if only through the nature of their existence, so that they can one day let this light guide them independently. This is how they “lead” others. They can do so only if their eyes have been opened to the spiritual world. This is the point of this parable: All the pupils are to make sure that they can really see. Otherwise they cannot show the light of the spirit to others and, if they did claim the leadership as blind people, they would drag the other blind people with them into the pit.

In relation to their master, who in the powers of the spirit precedes them on the path, they are always in danger of believing that they know better than the master how the spiritual path looks and must be followed. Or they settle on a level they have already reached and imagine that they have already achieved the goal. In doing so, they internally give up their status as pupils and see themselves as masters. In doing so, they do not notice that it is precisely this attitude that shows the greatest distance to the goal of unity with the spirit. They do not yet know that experiences can occur that mark the level reached so far as very low.

But if they overcome this illusion and let themselves be instructed and corrected by the light of the spirit, then the eye of

the spirit will gradually open in them and they will become able to see in the world of the spirit. The pupils who have then really become masters will recognize that the truth in which they now live is the same for them and their previous master. They have become perfect, entered into the truth and, as earthly self, been absorbed in the true self. They are thus equal to the master, and the master is equal to them.

The relationship of the pupil to their fellow pupils suffers heavily from the tendency to work on others trying to change them instead of working on and changing oneself. That is why Jesus admonishes his disciples with the parable of the speck in the other's eye and the log in one's own eye: Concentrate on recognizing your own weaknesses and on working on yourself. Do not constantly observe the weaknesses of others and do not constantly criticize them.

It is mainly about the weakness of the bias, not so much about mistakes at all. If mistakes were meant at all, the image of the speck and log would not fit well in the eye. The eye is an image for the cognitive consciousness. A speck in this "eye" is a prejudice that clouds the clarity of the eye – be it the earthly cognitive faculty in the perception of earthly realities or be it the spiritual cognitive faculty in the perception of the spiritual world.

So strong is the tendency of people to overlook their own mistakes and only see those of others that even the smallest prejudice in the neighbor's eye is noticed and criticized, while at the same time the greatest prejudice in one's own eye, the log, is not noticed. Indeed, the perception of someone else's weakness is often used as a pretext not to have to perceive one's own greater weakness. The weakness of the other is a welcome distraction from your own. This is because it is actually difficult and uncomfortable to discover your own weaknesses. The eye does not see itself; the consciousness is usually directed outward, not turned towards itself – how could it discover its own cloudiness? And is it not easier to operate on others than to undertake painful surgery on yourself? But it is precisely recognizing this distraction mechanism in oneself that is necessary on the spiritual path. The pupils' attention will turn more and more inward, even if it is difficult and uncomfortable.

But if one's own prejudices have been recognized and corrected and the vision of the earthly or spiritual eye has become clear, then the brother or sister can, with all caution, help others to recognize and remove their prejudices for their part.

Accordance of Inner and Outer

6:43 *“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; ⁴⁴for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks. ⁴⁶Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. ⁴⁸That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house.”* (NRSV)

The Sermon on the Mount ends by emphasizing the relationship between the inside and outside of people. First, it is the task of the pupils on the spiritual path to recognize by the external effects from which inner spirit a person lives. Second, it is their task to see that their own external behavior corresponds to their internal spiritual state.

This closes the circle. The Sermon on the Mount began with the spiritual prerequisites and laws of the path and presented them in four great opposites, the beatitudes in contrast to the woes. It continued with the description of how the pupils on the path let the spiritual powers work within them. At the end, it emphasizes the need for the pupils to consolidate their spiritual state by expressing it in action and in speaking.

One of the tasks of the pupils on the spiritual path is to learn to distinguish between spirits. How is that possible, since “bad” people – that is earthly people who live solely out of egocentric motives of lust for domination, honor, and profit – know how to create the impression of being good, while “good” people – that is spiritual people, in whom the true good, God, takes shape and becomes conscious – can appear to others as if they do not live according to the standards of conventional ethics and morals, are therefore not “good”? Jesus and his disciples actually have that effect on the scribes and Pharisees.

So how do you know what the true nature of people is? It cannot

be recognized directly from the behavior but from the long-term effects of their behavior, from their “fruit.” In the long term, the inner nature of “evil” people will show itself in their fruit. If they claim that the meaning of existence lies in earthly happiness and success and act accordingly, their nature can very easily be recognized by their fruit, for they will cause damage everywhere. It is more difficult to recognize their nature when they claim to live and speak from spiritual truth but in reality only exploit the longing of others for truth. But even in this case, the fruit they produce will be bad. Their lives and the lives of other people who followed them will become empty and emptier. They will suffer from spiritual disappointment. Chaos and disorder, disorientation, and psychological problems will arise.

In the long run, the nature of “good” people will also be evident in their fruit. Their effects may initially be struggle and unrest – struggle of other people against them, struggle between people for the truth. The behavior of Jesus’ opponents demonstrates this possibility. But in the end, it will turn out that his life and his words have given evidence of the true reason and meaning of existence and that those who orientate themselves thereby will find inner order and calm.

It shows here again that the Sermon on the Mount is addressed to pupils on the spiritual path, not to earthly people in general, because only people who at least suspect their purpose can distinguish between the “good” and the “evil” person. Anyone who has not yet felt anything of the spiritual meaning of existence has no standard to judge whether a person promotes awareness of this meaning – the “good” person – or numbs it – the “evil” person. This can only be judged by people who already have a “spiritual” compass. Only they can determine whether the fruit is “good” or “bad” and thus the producer of the fruit is “good” or “evil”. Standards drawn from the earthly world are of no use here as is shown by the judgment of the Pharisees and scribes about Jesus and his disciples. On this point, people can only rely on their inner, “spiritual” compass.

In the end, however, the outside, the effect, corresponds to the inside, the cause, no matter how much people hide their inner being behind facades. The heart of “good” people is filled with order and the powers of the spirit. They speak about them and act out of them. There tends to be a correspondence between their actions and their heart. The effects of their actions are “good fruit.”

The heart of “evil” people, on the other hand, is filled with egocentricity. When they express it in words and deeds, it shows itself immediately. But if they speak hypocritically of truth and love for their neighbor, it can be seen from the sound of their voice and their entire behavior, perhaps from tiny details, that their words are only means to egocentric ends. But whether that is recognized or not: The fruit of their speaking and acting will be “evil.”

Correspondence between inside and outside, between attitude and speaking or acting is not a matter of course in the pupils on the spiritual path. Although according to verse 45, it seems as if the outside, words and deeds, naturally corresponds to the inside; if this were so, the pupils would not need to make any particular effort on the way to implement something they have recognized in life. What would have developed in them as spiritual insight would automatically express itself in words and deeds.

It is indeed the case that the inside basically has the tendency to express itself on the outside. Verse 45 describes this principal tendency. But it can also be very difficult for the pupils on the spiritual path to express outwardly what moves them inwardly. The whole old “form” of the pupils, their habits and living conditions, may contradict the new contents of consciousness. This is a major obstacle to manifesting the inside on the outside. Fear can also play a role, for the pupils’ whole environment may oppose what they have recognized. Then they prefer to avoid expressing themselves for fear of isolation and ridicule.

It is crucial that they gradually overcome these obstacles and also *live* their new attitudes and insights. Otherwise the new contents of consciousness remain weak and without consequences. There is little point in calling Jesus, “Lord, Lord!” and not doing what he says. This means, there is little point in merely recognizing or acknowledging the new spiritual perspective on life even though it is a lot. A new horizon appears, with which new powers of courage and hope flow to the pupils. So they *can* step towards this horizon. But now they have to *do* it too. They must also realize the new perspective on life. They have to do what “Jesus,” the true self in them, says.

The parable of the two house builders shows very clearly why the realization of the new perspective on life is necessary. Disposition and insights must be translated into action in practical life. This gives the pupils stability like a house with solid walls, and they

stand on the rock-solid foundation of the spiritual order of the world.

If the disposition and insights of the new perspective on life are not expressed in practical life, the new perspective does not become firm. It does not flow into the actions of the person. The house of the new life has no solid walls. Rather, the order of the old life is then retained. But this is based on the order of the transitory world; it stands on loose “ground.” There is no correspondence between the external order of life and the new internal order. When such people get into trouble and their disposition is attacked – when the “flood comes” – they will be too weak to withstand the attack. And the attackers will find enough areas to attack in the others’ action life and life organization.

That is why the end of the Sermon on the Mount says with this memorable parable: On the spiritual path, all the insights and all the characteristics of the new soul state that are described in the preceding verses must not only remain contents of the consciousness. They have to be proven in life and implemented. This gives them stability; they are really founded in the order of the spirit and can no longer be washed away by the floods of earthly events.

The Power of the “Word”

Two stories that follow the Sermon on the Mount demonstrate how the external can be brought into harmony with the internal through the power of the Word, through the impulses from within.

In the stage of increased activity of the true self, which appears as the Son of Man, its “Word” also gains increased power. When Jesus the Anointed, the pattern of the spirit-filled true self, speaks, the spiritual interior transforms the earthly exterior. No external disorder can withstand the Word of the Son of Man; even a completely burned-out person can come to life again through his Word and “arise” – if there is openness to this Word.

Jesus is the “good person” to perfection. The true self is active in his heart, fully developed. That is why only good can emerge from the good treasure of his heart. His heart is full of the order and power of the spirit. His mouth speaks of it, and his words have corresponding effects. This person produces good fruit.

Healing through the “Word”

7:1 After Jesus had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. ²A centurion there had a slave whom he valued highly, and who was ill and close to death. ³When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, asking him to come and heal his slave. ⁴When they came to Jesus, they appealed to him earnestly, saying, “He is worthy of having you do this for him, ⁵for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us.” ⁶And Jesus went with them, but when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to say to him, “Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; ⁷therefore I did not presume to come to you. But only speak the word, and let my servant be healed. ⁸For I also am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this,’ and the slave does it.” ⁹When Jesus heard this he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, he said, “I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.” ¹⁰When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health. (NRSV)

The servant of the Roman centurion is healed through the Word of Jesus. The passage where the centurion tells of the effects of his own words on the earthly plane shows that this is specifically about the “Word.” When, as earthly authority, he says to a soldier, “Go!” the soldier goes, and to a slave, “Do this,” the slave does it. Equally irresistible are the words of Jesus, which are authorized by the order and power of the spirit.

It looks as if Luke wants to report a miraculous “remote healing” in such a way that the concrete words of Jesus overcome all distances in space-time. However, the narrative is based on the fact that people are connected to one another not only in space-time but also in dimensions outside of space-time. All of humanity is a great soul-spiritual organism. Its cells, the people, are not only externally connected to one another via the concrete language that works in time and space. They are also in contact with one another through soul-spiritual vibrations. What one thinks, feels, and wants is communicated to all others without having to be expressed, provided that they are receptive to precisely these thoughts, feelings, and aspirations. This also applies where the spiritual “Word” works in and through a person. The “Word” is

impulses from the true self of Jesus or any other human being. They act as soul-spiritual vibrations on susceptible people in the human organism, without being limited by time and space, without the need for time and space as media. When people are sick as earthly personality, then these impulses from the true self of other people can strengthen their own true self and cause the order of their true self to remove the disorder of their personality. They do not even need to know about it. This process is illustrated by the story of the healing of the Roman servant by Jesus.

The inside, the “Word,” provides the outside, the earthly personality and its body, even when they may have become “terminally ill,” with new strength and heals them. Even when people, because they lack any meaning in life, only drag themselves through life and no longer have any energy: The impulses from the true self of all those who have become spiritually awake can awaken their true self, give their personality a new meaning in life, and give it courage.

Because in this story the effect of the spiritual inside on the outside, yes, the outermost, the material, is to be demonstrated, the servant of a *Roman* centurion is mentioned. The Romans embody the material. As “people of God,” the Jews are closer to the world of the spirit and embody the religious, the preparation for the spiritual experience. But the Roman centurion and his servant belong to the material. In relation to an individual, it could be understood as the ego and the body of the personality that serves the ego. The impulses of the inside, the words of Jesus, penetrate into the material, right into the body, and change it so that there is conformity between inside and outside. This is what this story tells us.

However, the prerequisite for healing is that there is an openness of the earthly personality for the spiritual powers, that there is “faith.” The Roman centurion does not consider himself worthy to come into contact with the spiritual, but in this case the material – the Roman – has already come into contact with the religious – the Jews – and is open to it. The centurion built a synagogue for the Jews, so he makes his forces available for religious and ethical development. And he is also receptive to the spiritual. Nevertheless, he is clearly aware of the great gap that exists between the earthly and the spiritual world. But perhaps for this very reason, he trusts the spiritual powers, the words of Jesus, to achieve the highest. Especially the people who seem to only live on

the outside, the materialists and atheists, are free from dogmatic considerations and obstructive images of God and often more receptive to spiritual impulses than people who have to approach spiritual impulses through a thick layer of religious traditions or even prejudices. The longing of the atheists for the spirit may at times glow much more strongly than that of the believers, who think they are already close to their goal. That is why Jesus says, "Not even in Israel have I found such faith." Spiritual insights and impulses can even appear in people and change their entire life without the people concerned even suspecting that such impulses are involved. Because people do not need to be in a certain "denomination" or have a "religious affiliation" in order to experience effects from their true self.

Resurrection through the "Word"

7:11 Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. ¹²As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. ¹³When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." ¹⁴Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" ¹⁵The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. ¹⁶Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has looked favorably on his people!" ¹⁷This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country. (NRSV)

Even when the soul's powers have completely dried up and people face emptiness, the powers of the "Word" flowing in from the true self can infuse them with new soul life. Luke shows this through the story of the young man of Nain, who is raised from death by Jesus. Time and again attempts have been made to explain this raising of the dead by supposing that the young man was only apparently dead. Raising the dead seemed an all too impossible miracle. Jesus supposedly only brought back the young man's soul, which had already left the body. But such attempts at explanation are not necessary if one realizes that a completely different miracle is being described here: the awakening of a

person from the state of soul death to new life by infusing new life force and new meaning of life. Those who open themselves to the possibility of a life from the spirit receive a new basis for life and a new life perspective.

The story is modeled on the Old Testament, where the prophet Elijah raised the son of a widow from the dead. “Widow” is the traditional image for a soul that has lost the spirit, its “husband” and “bridegroom,” Her “son,” her ego-consciousness, can therefore no longer find meaning in life. For what is the point of a life that lacks a spiritual foundation? In the Old Testament, the widow’s son died because of her “guilt,” namely the separation of the soul from God (1 Kings 17:18). The prophet Elijah, representative of the spiritual world, gives his life back by calling on the “Lord,” the powers of the spiritual world.

In the New Testament, no information is given about the cause of death, and Jesus, also a representative of the spiritual world, awakens the young man from death. In this way, the desperate, “dead” ego-consciousness of every person whose soul has lost God and is a “widow” can be filled with life again through the powers of the spirit. Jesus says to the young man, “Rise!” The totally resigned consciousness, prostrate as if dead, can be filled with a new perspective through the true self and “arise” again.

Something like this is not only possible for an individual but for an entire culture that feels that it has lost all spiritual life. The only requirement is that its people are receptive to the spiritual possibilities that are inherent in the true self.

And all who are eyewitnesses of such a “miracle” are seized with fear, as the saving power that streams in from the spiritual world appears puzzling to them. The activity of this power contradicts all laws of earthly nature. People could also laugh at this process or not even notice it. But in Luke’s story, the new possibility is accepted, the cause is understood, and God is praised as the author who “has looked favorably on his people.”

Relationship of John the Baptist and Jesus

7:18 The disciples of John reported all these things to him. So John summoned two of his disciples ¹⁹and sent them to the Lord to ask, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for

another?” ²⁰*When the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?’”* ²¹*Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind.* ²²*And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them.* ²³*And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”* (NRSV)

The story of the young man from Nain is the introduction to passages in which the relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus is discussed. It is not for nothing that the story is so faithfully patterned after the story in the Old Testament in which the prophet Elijah – and later Elisha (2 Kings 4:32–37) – raised the son of a “widow” from death, for also prophets, representatives of the period of the law, who point to a time of freedom can “raise from death.” Already the promise of fulfillment brings new meaning and courage in life for a person who has died spiritually for lack of the meaning of life. That is why the story of the young man from Nain also emphasizes the opinion of the people: “A great prophet has risen among us!” The people are of the opinion that this raising of the dead still takes place under the sign of prophethood.

John the Baptist, himself the last and greatest prophet of the Old Testament period, is also considering this possibility. It could be that Jesus is only a prophet, not yet the promised Anointed and realizer himself. That is why from prison, he sends people to ask Jesus, Are you still a prophet like Elijah and Elisha or the Anointed? Do you still belong to the old time or already to the new time? Do you still live under the law or are you free and bring freedom?

Both aspects of the spiritual impulse, the preparatory and the realizing, had worked together from the beginning. They had touched people and then connected closely with them. They also work together in the third phase of this impulse: They become conscious in people. Luke describes how they work together in this phase in the questions of John the Baptist from prison and in Jesus’ characterization of John the Baptist.

In the third phase of the activity of the two aspects of the spiritual impulse, the old thinking that awaited the new time deals with the new. It has to deal with it because in this third phase,

awareness is the guiding principle. Now it is not just intuitive knowledge that counts. At the baptism in the Jordan, John the Baptist had recognized the nature and task of Jesus very well. But now, on the basis of ascertainable criteria, a sober, realistic awareness must be used to check whether the previously unknown powers and possibilities that the soul experiences are really new powers and redeeming possibilities.

So John, the greatest person of the old time, asks about the nature and task of Jesus, the embodiment of the new time. So all people on the spiritual path ask about the nature of the experiences that have become noticeable in them as a result of the activity of the true self.

In the first two phases of the path, they had “felt” intuitively that it was the right path for them. The contact and connection with the new powers happened as a matter of course. But then there comes a time, a time must come, when the pupils also consciously ask whether the path they have taken corresponds to their deepest longing and their highest purpose. They will check responsibly whether the impressions they experience within themselves are actually impressions from the true self.

The old consciousness stands questioningly before the new. It ponders whether the new spiritual experiences are a product of the old possibilities after all. And it gets the answer that Jesus gives in Luke in the form of quotations from the Old Testament. The fullness and irresistible power of the true self is expressed in its effects. It testifies of itself through its effects and in this way can convince the old consciousness. The prophet Isaiah foretold that the new would come with abundance and irresistible power. “Spiritually blind” people will be able to see and look at God. Those “lame” in a spiritual sense will begin to move within the powers of the spirit. Those who are isolated from God and other people – “lepers” – will regain contact with their environment. Those “spiritually deaf” will hear the voice of God. Those who have died in inner emptiness are awakened to new life, and those who are “poor” in terms of the meaning of life receive the message of a new perspective on life. These are all the effects of the true self. Individuals experience them internally as the ability to see the world and people anew, to work with the powers of the spirit, to make new contacts to the world and people, and to perceive God’s will. They experience them as a spiritual power that enables new life and as meaning that enables new abundance of life. These are

the criteria of the new time. The old time could not have produced these effects. On the basis of these criteria, John the Baptist, the old consciousness that is open to the new and awaiting it, can recognize whether and that the new has come. By way of the experiences in their own being, individuals can check whether they are on the right path.

The responsible thinking of earthly people examines exactly what happens on the spiritual path in the being of the pupils. That is even its duty, the duty of John the Baptist, who embodies earthly people in their highest, ethical aspect.

But critical thinking cannot help but examine when new phenomena appear in the pupils' being. It has to investigate what is entering. Is it a dangerous foreign body, just a variation of the old, or the long-awaited and prepared new? It chafes against everything foreign to it. That is why Jesus speaks of "taking offense." The critically examining old thinking encounters the new and takes "offense" because it is unable to recognize the new immediately. The old is earthly; the new is spiritual. They are from different dimensions.

But earthly thinking can recognize the effects of the new, the true self, on the earthly plane. And when it recognizes them, it loses its fear of the strangeness of the new, recognizes that it is what has been long-awaited and prepared, and surrenders to it. Then it does not take offense anymore. Such people come into harmony with their true self, which means blessedness.

Characterization of the Old by the New

7:24 *When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. ²⁶What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' ²⁸I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."* (NRSV)

Luke has shown how the old consciousness that is open to the new, symbolized by John the Baptist, approaches the new with questioning, since it is radically different from the former. It uses certain criteria to make sure that the new has really come. Now Luke goes on to characterize the old consciousness by the new.

Jesus characterizes John. John is not “a reed shaken by the wind.” The conversion, the turning away from the ties to earthly things and turning to the spiritual, is not a weak decision born out of disappointment at the failure of earthly endeavors. It is a necessity that comes from experience. People like John the Baptist have had the experience that all earthly achievements do not offer fulfillment and do not correspond to humanity’s inherent purpose. They know that only a life based on the order of the spiritual world is meaningful and also gives meaning to earthly matters. Therefore they break away from the ties to the transient and attune their life to the imperishable.

This gives their actions single-mindedness, consistency, and strength. They do not change direction with every wind and do not ceaselessly adapt their words and actions to fashion. They cannot be bought nor are they dependent on the applause of their supporters and therefore can also make unpopular decisions.

Their behavior can easily be confused with fanaticism, narrow-mindedness, or pedantry. Fanatics do not look right or left because they are possessed by a fixed idea; the narrow-minded do not because they have no imagination; pedants do not because they are afraid of responsibility and are insecure. But John the Baptist is unbending because he is guided by an inner necessity.

The power of John the Baptist in the individual is also unbending. It does not arise from fleeting despair – need teaches us to pray! – nor from fear of the world or flight into an ideology. It arises from the experience that only the spiritual path is a meaningful perspective on life and that it must be prepared systematically. Therefore, such people are not dependent on praise and blame, cannot be bought, and have stamina. They will not give up after a short time or when there is too much resistance.

John the Baptist also does not wear “soft robes” and does not live “in royal palaces.” Since his experiences are linked to the order of the spiritual world, he differs from everyone who only pursues earthly interests. He is therefore not in the mainstream and has no access to the “royal palaces.” On the contrary: He has few friends and has to accept poverty and contempt. But he prefers to work

rather than to enjoy. He wears “work clothes” because his life is rough and strenuous. It is filled with conflicts that he cannot avoid. He does not surround himself with luxury: He does not wear “soft robes.” That would only be a hindrance to his work.

Likewise, people in whom John the Baptist wakes up and raises his voice, all people who are called by the spiritual world and experience irrefutably that the earthly world without reference to the spiritual offers no fulfillment, behave in the same way. Only a radical turn to spiritual goals still makes sense to them.

John is a “prophet,” a power, a person, who recognizes what the purpose of humanity is, speaks of it, and describes the way to its fulfillment. Yes, he is “more than a prophet”: He is directly connected with fulfillment. He is already surrounded by the splendor of the freedom of the spirit, the “messenger” of light. He has already looked into this light and proclaims it. He works so that the true self can “arise.”

That is why John is the greatest prophet of all prophets, standing on the shoulders of all forerunners in the Old Testament epoch. He establishes the direct connection with the new epoch. He is the greatest earthly person born of an earthly woman and yet an earthly person. He still belongs to the earthly world although he stands directly on the border to the divine world and can recognize its effects. This ability of the John consciousness to recognize the effects of the new spiritual impulse was described in verse 22.

Only that part in the human being which does not belong to the earthly world from the beginning can enter and live in the divine world, the kingdom of God: the true self. It is greater than anything earthly. If the preparer, the power of conversion, is as strong, unswerving, and objective as John the Baptist, how strong must be the realizer! Jesus is not the mild, good shepherd but the extremely strong one. The true self is tremendously strong, stronger than anything earthly. How else could it cure all “fever,” all “leprosy,” all “paralysis”! How else could it drive away the violent “demons,” the fixed ideas, the passions that have become independent, the fanatical ideologies that rage like scourges in humanity! How else could it make the spiritually blind see, the spiritually deaf hear, the spiritually lame walk, replace meaninglessness with meaning and spiritual death with life!

This strength of the true self is based on the fact that it belongs to a different dimension than the earthly. Every true self, even the “least,” is qualitatively different from the earthly being of people. It

is spiritual-divine; as such, it belongs to the kingdom of God and is above everything earthly. Even the most highly developed earthly people cannot cross the border to the kingdom of God. They are mortal while the true self is immortal.

John is the highest function of earthly human being, a consciousness and a power that are indispensable if the true self is to awaken and live in the divine world. People must consciously withdraw from the dominion of the earthly in order to make room for the divine self. This conscious withdrawal is John the Baptist. But the true self is greater than he.

Reactions to John the Baptist and Jesus

7:29 (And all the people who heard this, including the tax collectors, acknowledged the justice of God, because they had been baptized with John's baptism. ³⁰But by refusing to be baptized by him, the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves.) ³¹"To what then will I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? ³²They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not weep.' ³³For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon'; ³⁴the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' ³⁵Nevertheless, wisdom is vindicated by all her children." (NRSV)

People in whom "John the Baptist" works become aware of their separation from God, their existential "sin." They belong to the "tax collectors" and to the people who listen to John. They know that they belong to the earthly world not only with their hidden "morally bad" qualities but also with their revealed "morally good" qualities and that they are existentially separated from the divine world. As earthly people, they cannot enter the kingdom of God. Only the true self can. Because of their "morally good" qualities, however, the Pharisees and lawyers consider themselves "righteous," already connected with the kingdom of God. They lack the awareness of separation from God. And that is why they refuse to be baptized with the "water of repentance." They do not decide to repent; they do not behave in such a way that the true self, which belongs to the divine world, gains room and can live in the

kingdom of God.

The “morally bad” acknowledge the justice of God; the “morally good” do not.

Acknowledging the justice of God or “accepting the counsel of God” means accepting the spiritual perspective of life and the consequences that follow from it. The “baptism with water” symbolizes these consequences. Those who let the power of penance, mediated by John and embodied by him, work in them become aware of their separation from God and turn away from their earthly interests so that the true self, the spiritual possibility of life, finds room in them. Then they can also be baptized with “fire.” The power of the spirit, the new life, will be realized in them.

The “morally bad,” the “tax collectors,” acknowledge the justice of God and accept God’s counsel. They respond to the call of John the Baptist and Jesus within. They accept the help, the powers of the messengers from the kingdom of God. The Pharisees, however, the “morally good” and self-righteous, are not aware of their separation from the kingdom of God and therefore do not recognize the help that the kingdom of God in the form of John and Jesus gives them and do not accept it. In doing so, they reject the counsel of God about them. They reject the realization of their purpose.

The lawyers, the “people of this blind generation” – the Pharisee state in every person – are characterized further by Jesus. They are not receptive to baptism with water or to baptism with fire, neither to John nor to Jesus. They also always have their good arguments for rejection. They reject John because he fasts with his disciples. The fasting from bread and wine, characteristic of John, is an image of the state of preparation. “Fasting” is the turning away from earthly interests resulting from the awareness of the distance from God and is an expression of penance. The Pharisees, however, interpret this practice as compulsive asceticism, as a “demon,” and thus have a reason to reject John. On the other hand, they reject Jesus because, in their opinion, he exaggerates joy. The “feasting” with bread and wine of which they accuse Jesus is an image of the radiant joy that emerges from the experience of spiritual abundance. It is particularly noticeable among the “morally bad,” the “tax collectors and sinners,” who experience unity with God again. This joy can evidently only arise with the moral “sinners,” the “morally bad,” because only they also experience the pain of existential sin, the pain of separation from

God. Because of their self-righteousness, the Pharisees, the “morally good,” are unable to recognize that despite their “moral goodness” they are existentially separated from God and existential sinners. That is why they do not experience the pain of this separation and not the joy when the separation is undone and the pain is removed.

Indeed, the quoted parable is applicable to the Pharisees. If you sing songs of joy to them, they will not dance, and if you play lamentations, they will not cry. They are not on the spiritual path and do not experience the joy it entails nor do they prepare for it and experience the difficulties it entails. In their self-righteousness, they are neither open to the new spiritual life for which Jesus stands nor for the call to repentance that comes from John.

The “sinners,” the “morally bad,” on the other hand, do both. They accept John, inner conversion, and at the same time Jesus, the joy of spiritual realization. In doing so, they “acknowledge the wisdom of God” that in John and Jesus offers them the possibility of preparation and realization, and they prove themselves to be “children of wisdom”: as images of God who, through preparation and realization, dissolve both moral and existential “sin” and experience unity with God again. *Only* the “child of wisdom,” the image of God hidden in people, is able to do this and is “wise” enough to behave in this way. But the “child of self-righteousness,” the Pharisee and lawyer in people, persists in its separation from God without even noticing this condition. The very self-righteousness that causes the separation prevents people from becoming conscious of it and it being removed.

“Sinners” and the “Righteous”

7:36 *One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee’s house and took his place at the table. ³⁷And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. ³⁸She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching*

him—that she is a sinner.”⁴⁰ Jesus spoke up and said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” “Teacher,” he replied, “Speak.”⁴¹ “A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.”⁴² When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?”⁴³ Simon answered, “I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt.” And Jesus said to him, “You have judged rightly.”⁴⁴ Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair.”⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet.”⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.”⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.”⁴⁸ Then he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”⁴⁹ But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” (NRSV)

Luke continues the topic of the relationship between morally bad and morally good people. The story of the sinner and the Pharisee is about the difference between the morally bad and the morally good person in terms of openness to impulses from the true self. It describes how the shock of moral sin can lead people to becoming aware of their separation from God, their existential sin, and how they, shocked by their existential sin, experience gratefully that nevertheless, without their doing, the redeeming power of God reaches and reunites them with God. On the other hand, morally good people who self-righteously believe in their unity with God are not shaken, do not notice their existential sin, and therefore remain indifferent to the redeeming power of the spirit.

The sinner in the story has deviated far from the law of God through her immoral behavior but painfully feels the deep gap that has thus opened up between her and God. Therefore she is open to the Savior who can bridge the gap. How strongly she feels the gap and how longingly she awaits the Savior is shown by the gratitude and love she shows him. The Pharisee, however, believes that he is in harmony with God’s law, feels no gap between himself and God, and believes that he does not need a savior to bridge the gap.

Jesus, the power of the true self, which can bridge the gap

between people and God, is a guest at a Pharisee's house. Even a Pharisee can encounter the power of salvation, the call from the true self, yes, he can invite it and deal with it consciously. But he does not realize that it is about the power of salvation, as he believes he has already been saved. That is why the Pharisee treats Jesus very condescendingly, downright dismissively. He does not give him water to wash his feet, which would be a courtesy. He does not kiss Jesus in friendship or anoint his head, which would have been an expression of his joy and respect for the guest.

The sinner, however, wets Jesus' feet with tears of repentance and dries them with her hair. All her devotion is to Jesus, whom she recognizes as a possible savior. Feeling her sin, she does not even dare kiss Jesus in friendship and just kisses his feet. She approaches him with the utmost modesty. And she dares not anoint his head either, only his feet. She gives him the most precious thing she has, the "ointment," all of her love. While the Pharisee does not even have courtesy, hospitality, and respect for Jesus, the sinner approaches him with all the devotion, humility, and love of her soul.

Simon misjudges Jesus for another reason too. He has heard that Jesus is a prophet and thinks he can conclude from Jesus' behavior that Jesus is not one after all. In his opinion, a prophet would never allow himself to be touched by a sinner as he would become "unclean" as a result.

But Jesus makes Simon's misjudgment clear to him and opens his eyes to the meaning of the whole event to which the Pharisee was previously blind. He does it with the help of a parable, and the Pharisee understands it. Whoever is forgiven a lot of debts will love the creditor more than one who is forgiven a small debt. The parable refers to God as the "creditor" and the Pharisee and the sinner as the debtors. The sinner is forgiven many debts by the Savior, the envoy of God, and therefore her gratitude and love are great. This is shown in her devotion, humility, and willingness to serve. But the Pharisee – who has a small amount of debt – is forgiven a small amount of debt by the Savior, and so he shows little gratitude and love. This can be seen in the carelessness with which Simon as host treats Jesus.

The phrase, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much" (KJV) is often misunderstood. In the original Greek text, it says, "Her sins will be forgiven her, her many, for she has loved much." The "for" does not establish a connection between

love and the forgiveness of sins, something such as this: Those who are full of love will be forgiven because of their great ability to love, no matter how “sinful” this love may be.

Rather, the “for” only explains the words “her many.” Because she loved many men, therefore, she has many sins, and therefore many sins must be forgiven. The further train of thought is then: Since her many sins are forgiven – because she loved many men – her gratitude and love for the Savior is great, so she loves him “much.” The Pharisee, on the other hand, is forgiven few sins – he simply has few – which is why he feels no gratitude and love for the Savior and loves him little.

Jesus says to the Pharisee: Her many sins – for she loved many men – have been forgiven. That is why she shows me great love. You are forgiven few sins because you have few sins. That is why you show me little love. That is the point of this story. Those who carry heavy loads are immensely relieved when the new spiritual perspective on life opens up the possibility of throwing off all burdens. They are the more grateful to the saving spiritual power and give themselves to it all the more intensely, the greater the burden of debt was. On the other hand, those who carry hardly any burden and are very satisfied with themselves will show little sympathy and gratitude to the saving power when they are interested in it for whatever reason – as Simon invites it to come to him.

Only when a person is open to the saving power does it have the possibility to work. This is of what the end of the story speaks. “Faith” saves the sinner. The shocking realization that she is separated from God makes her ready to let the spiritual powers work within her. They reconnect people with God, and when people live from God and the divine order again, the separation from God and all its consequences dissolve: Sins are forgiven. Of course, the shock of moral sin need not lead to an awareness of existential sin and a shock about it. There are many cases where the shock of moral sin only has the effect of making morally bad people want to become morally good people, pious people. They are then “contrite” and “convert.” But with that, they remain in the earthly dimension. The sinner in the story, on the other hand, is shaken because she feels morally sinful and even more because she realizes her existential sin. Thereby she is ready to turn to the divine dimension.

As in the story of the paralyzed man, the eyewitnesses of these

events rightly believe that only God can forgive sins and therefore seem to blame Jesus, who says, “Your sins are forgiven.” They do not realize that God is at work in a person who has become one with God. Such a person can contribute to God working in other people and restoring the unity of the people with God. For the individual this means: God works through God’s power, which can awaken and fill the true self. The true self can then cause the earthly personality to come into a state in which it becomes a servant for the true self. Unity with God is restored for it too. Thus, God forgives sins.

Women

8:1 *Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, ²as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, ³and Joanna, the wife of Herod’s steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources. (NRSV)*

The story of the sinner and the Pharisee gives the evangelist the opportunity to mention that many women who have been healed of evil spirits and diseases follow Jesus. An ever-valid law of life is shown in historical reality: Those who are freed from the burden of their debts to God through the power of God working in them are grateful, follow this power, and give it everything it needs for its effectiveness. Thus, these women follow Jesus as the embodiment of divine power and support him and his community with their resources. This means, ostensibly, their financial assets. But this in turn is an expression of their boundless gratitude and love for the saving power. The real resources with which they support this power are their devotion, loyalty, and willingness to serve as described in the previous story about the sinner.

Seven demons went out from Mary Magdalene. The spiritual power of the true self in her has worked sevenfold and removed a sevenfold bondage. It is possible that this indication reflects very old traditions. In their symbolism, the spiritual path led through seven spheres of purification, often equated with the seven planetary spheres. Each planet represented a force that enslaved people, a “demon.” People had to free themselves from these enslaving forces step by step by “recognizing” the demons and

developing qualities that were stronger than the demons. The true self gave them the strength to do so.

The “Moon” was the enslaving force of surrender to the changeable earthly world. When people gained constancy in the unchangeable world of the spirit, they were free from this demon. “Mercury” stood for the enslaving power of the mind following earthly purposes. People replaced this bondage with the freedom of a mind oriented to the interrelationships of the world of the spirit. In place of “Venus,” the enslaving force of earthly love, came spiritual love, which is never possessive. The “Sun” embodied the ego’s pride and lust for power. These qualities were overcome by the true self’s objectivity and willingness to serve. “Mars,” aggressive anger, was replaced by unshakable spiritual courage; “Jupiter,” the addiction to wealth and greatness, by the abundance of spiritual experiences, and “Saturn,” envy, the inability of people to accept their place in the structure of the world, by consent to one’s position in the universe, which is determined by itself through one’s own being.

After the seven demons had been expelled, the purified soul, the awakened true self, was able to receive the spirit in an eighth step and set off for completely new horizons.

In every spiritual community, not just in the one of Jesus and his disciples, women will support the work of the community with their special devotion and empathy. Wherever they notice a spiritual development or lack, be it in men or in women, they will help through understanding, devotion, and encouragement. And in every single person, whether man or woman, the specifically feminine aspects, balance, calm, and gentleness, promote spiritual development.

The “Word”

Luke takes up the theme of the “Word” again: hearing and doing the Word of God, taking in the order and power of the spirit and putting it into practice through appropriate action.

The “Word of God”

What is the “Word of God”? Is it the Bible? Is it the words that the pastor speaks from the pulpit on Sundays? Jesus embodies the perfect, true self of the human being. When he speaks as an

external person, his words are teaching or sermon, impulses from the divine world, which, clad in earthly forms, contain and convey the order and power of the spiritual world. The teaching gives the receptive pupil insight into the order of the spiritual world, the sermon the strength to realize this order.

If Jesus is seen as the personification of the true self of every human being, as the inner Jesus, then his Word are the impulses that emanate from this true self to the earthly consciousness of the person receptive to it and there bring about knowledge, namely “light,” and power, namely “life.” In this sense, the prologue of the Gospel of John speaks of the Word that becomes the light of people and brings life into being because the impulses from the true self, the “Word,” become knowledge, “light,” and power, “life,” in the human consciousness that is receptive to it.

Seen cosmically, the divine Word is the impulses that emanate from the “Father,” from divine intelligence, and from the “Holy Spirit,” the divine power in the universe, the “Mother.” Divine intelligence and power are invisible force line structures that underlie every creature and all of nature and “speak” in them. They enable the creation and existence of all things and beings and drive their development forward. When God “speaks,” when the divine lines of force that permeate the universe are active, the world and its creatures come into being. What does it mean, “God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light” (Genesis 1:3, NRSV)? Did a mighty being speak into the dark universe, and it became light in it? No, it can only mean that through the divine intelligence working in the divine power, the “waters” (Genesis 1:2), consciousness, “light,” arose. The other words spoken by God in Genesis are descriptions of the process that the divine lines of force bring about the forms of all creatures and natural phenomena, not from the outside but from the inside, similar to how the adult plant gradually unfolds from the genetic information of the plant.

If the divine Word could “speak” directly and undisturbed, then all creatures and things would be its pure expression and in turn “pronounce” it through their characteristics. But an egocentric principle works in creatures and things, which prompts them to go their own way. This principle falsifies the divine Word so that creatures and things do not become its pure expression. Physical light, for example, is certainly only a very weak expression of the divine Word that said, “Let there be light!” Also earthly people in

their egocentricity are not pure expressions of the divine lines of force working in them, of the true self. The impulses emanating from the true self, however, are constantly trying to correct this falsified expression. The dissolution of all earthly forms, death as a phenomenon pervading the whole earthly world, is ultimately the result of the corrections made by the divine Word. So it not only creates but also dissolves what does not correspond to its structure. On the other hand, it tries incessantly to make itself heard in earthly people and to induce reactions in them through which the earthly form becomes an expression of the true self after all. Then the divine Word actually becomes knowledge – light – and power – life – in people.

The Human Word

Human words are also configurations of forces – sounds and tones – through which people's characteristics are revealed just as through the divine Word, God's characteristics are revealed. Herein lies the analogy between divine Word and human words. Compared to the divine Word, however, human words are weak and dull. The divine Word is like a magnetic force line that is enveloped with the material form corresponding to it and thus creates forms directly. Human words can only indirectly produce creations by prompting the hearer to activities.

Nevertheless, human words also have different qualities, depending on their agreement with the order and power of the divine world. When Jesus as an outer person speaks externally audible words, then, as Jesus lives out of the true self, these are impulses from the true self clothed in the external forms of teaching and preaching, and therefore correspond to the order and power of the spiritual world. They are not this order and power but can be used to point others to them. When ordinary people speak, their words are generally impulses from the earthly, egocentric personality. They therefore only convey the order and power of the earthly, transient world.

The same applies to words that are written down. If earthly-oriented people write books, they express only earthly ideas. But when the disciples of Jesus write a text, a gospel, then this is an analogous representation of the divine laws and forces of life, the phases of the spiritual path, the relationships that arise when the divine order and power break into the earthly world and people

react to these in one way or another. Although such a gospel is not the divine Word in writing, it is composed analogous to the divine Word, to the order and power of the spiritual world. It uses earthly pictures and words to point to soul-spiritual issues. Most people cannot hear the divine Word either directly from the true self within nor indirectly when it is clothed in human words because such hearing presupposes that people are at least to some extent directed to the spiritual world. If they conform completely to the earthly order, their “ears,” their consciousness, also correspond completely to the earthly order. They can then only “hear” impulses from the earthly world. But people in whom the image of God is active, be it only minimally, have a touch of divine wisdom, divine Word, in them. When they direct their life to it, their spiritual ears will be receptive. They will “hear the Word.” But they really have to direct their life to the divine wisdom. That is why Jesus appeals so urgently to his listeners, “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!” (Luke 8:8, NRSV). Those who have a consciousness receptive to the divine Word of God, who “have ears,” should also use this consciousness and open it through a suitable lifestyle for the divine Word. If they conform to earthly life, they will not hear the divine Word. But if they hear the divine Word and direct themselves to the order of the divine life, which contrasts with earthly life, they will experience that the divine order breaks up the previous order of their life. They will go a spiritual path on which the image of God in them, called and encouraged by the cosmic divine Word, is unfolded, so that everything that does not correspond to the image of God is re-aligned.

They then hear the divine Word everywhere in life and in the world, for as divine creative wisdom and power, it is active everywhere: in their own development and in that of other people, in situations they get into, and in great life-encompassing contexts related to their destiny. But against this background, they will also learn to clearly discern where the egocentricity of earthly life speaks in them. They will also hear other people, such as Jesus, describe the divine Word with earthly words. And they will discover how the divine Word is expressed indirectly in the earthly words of the Holy Scripture, in parables. A gospel such as Luke’s can foster this opening, yes, even trigger it in people in whom the ears for the divine Word want to open. And in hearers where these ears are already open and who hear the divine Word in life, such a gospel can confirm what is heard.

Reactions to the Divine Word

8:4 *When a great crowd gathered and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable: ⁵“A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell on the path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. ⁶Some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered for lack of moisture. ⁷Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. ⁸Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold.” As he said this, he called out, “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!” ⁹Then his disciples asked him what this parable meant. ¹⁰He said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but to others I speak in parables, so that ‘looking they may not perceive, and listening they may not understand.’ ¹¹Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. ¹²The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. ¹³The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away. ¹⁴As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. ¹⁵But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.” (NRSV)*

The parable of the sower presented by Jesus depicts reactions of people who are open to a certain extent to the Word of the spirit and have already partially absorbed it. Their consciousness, their “ears,” are open to the direct impulses of the divine Word in the heart, which the sower, God, sows, or to the indirect impulses of the divine Word, which reach their ears via the earthly words of other people in order to stimulate the true self in the heart. Even then, the sower is God, albeit working through people filled with God or through their writings.

So the Word of God begins to work in a person’s heart. But now the “devil” comes, the doubt of the egocentric mind, and removes the impulses of the divine Word from the heart again. It says, for example, “There is no divine world; it is only an invention of people who cannot cope with their imperfect world.” Or it says, “The new possibility in life that is so promisingly noticeable in you

is only fantasy.” And in doing so, it destroys the listener’s openness to this possibility of life. It destroys “faith” and prevents this person from following the new direction in life and being rescued from the whirlpool of hopelessness.

In the second scene of the parable, the hearers initially react with great enthusiasm to the new prospects shown to them by the true self in the heart. But they are stuck too much in old habits and do not change their life. The divine Word can therefore not put down firm roots in their life, and when attacks come, when it is a matter of standing on the path that has been chosen, such people are not strong enough and are unfaithful to the new possibility of life. They are like the person from the Sermon on the Mount who built their house on loose earth without solid foundations.

Thirdly, it is possible that people can become so captivated by the worries, the hectic pace, and the pleasures of life that these influences stifle the original openness to a new life.

But people with a fine heart that reacts sensitively to the effects of the divine Word and with a good heart that responds sincerely to the divine Word preserve what has been received without being irritated by intellectual doubts, let it take root by persistently allowing it to permeate all life, and bear fruit. The divine Word in them, the impulses from the image of God, unfolds, and they take care that neither hardship nor pleasure hinder its growth.

Those who can hear the divine Word experience the “secrets of the kingdom of God” (Luke 8:10, NRSV). The divine power and wisdom, which pervade the whole universe and drive all creatures to the realization of their true being, are revealed to these people. In the forms of nature and its creatures, even if they are distorted by egocentricity, the characteristics of God, which are expressed through the creatures, are revealed to them. Depending on the stage of development of the creatures observed, more and more wonderful qualities of God are revealed to these people, for God is infinitely complex. Ever newer and deeper layers of God’s being come to the fore as they gradually build increasingly complex forms of expression. People can recognize these secrets directly if they have developed an awareness for them: “ears that can hear.” Jesus’ disciples are such people.

And if they cannot yet know directly, they can do so indirectly, through parables. They are at least able to recognize a parable as such and to let it point them to what is compared. That also presupposes open ears for the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

Those who are not able to at least have an inkling of spiritual laws will also not be able to recognize an earthly fact analogous to the spiritual as an image, sign, and symbol for what is designated and to allow the symbol to lead them to what is symbolized. They will take the picture for literal fact.

When, for example, the devil is mentioned in Jesus' parable, they will imagine an externally visible being. They will not realize that it is really about the personification and depiction of a force that is at work within themselves: about the egocentric earthly mind that questions everything divine. Nor will they recognize that the so-called miracles of the Bible are images for soul-spiritual facts, such as Jesus' healings of the blind being images for the opening of the spiritual sense of sight. They have eyes that see the external images but do not see the internal facts of which the external images are an expression and likeness. They have ears that hear the outwardly audible words but not the inner facts of which the audible words are an expression and likeness. The parables thus become an additional obstacle for them to see and hear what they signify.

Verse 10 points to this process: "to others I speak in parables, so that 'looking they may not perceive, and listening they may not understand.'" It is a quote from Isaiah 6:9–10, NRSV. There God commands the prophet Isaiah, "Go and say to this people: 'Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.' Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed." Should we assume that God sends out the prophet to prevent the healing of the people? That would be exactly the opposite of God's otherwise always stated intention. No, what is described here is the foresight and the "grim pain of God" that the people do not *let* themselves be healed. God sends the prophet *so that* what is painful can become apparent: that many listeners, precisely on the basis of the prophet's words, build up misunderstandings, which shut them off even more from understanding the spiritual world. About this foreseeable, lawful consequence of the sending out of the prophet, God laments, "Go and preach. Oh, you will see that your words will cause the hearts of this people to harden instead of opening up."

Laws of Life in Connection with the “Word”

8:16 *“No one after lighting a lamp hides it under a jar, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. ¹⁷For nothing is hidden that will not be disclosed, nor is anything secret that will not become known and come to light. ¹⁸Then pay attention to how you listen; for to those who have, more will be given; and from those who do not have, even what they seem to have will be taken away.”* (NRSV)

Those who recognize the “secrets of the kingdom,” directly or through parables, “have lit a lamp.” Their consciousness is illuminated; they recognize a soul-spiritual fact by means of an analogous state of affairs in nature, for example through the parable of the sower. They let this light of insight shine. They can communicate their knowledge to others through their words or through their life, for the people “entering the kingdom” are those who step from the exterior into the interior, from of the outer actuality of things to the meaning of things. They already have eyes that can see the light. Jesus wants to say with this parable (again a parable!), Those in whom the light of knowledge is lit do not hold it back fearfully but let it shine for others so that this light will be lit also in them.

Maybe those coming into the kingdom first develop eyes when they are struck by the light. As the biological eyes have developed as organs under the influence of natural light, the spiritual eye can develop in the light of insights into spiritual facts transmitted to them by others, for all people carry a predisposition for this spiritual organ of vision. As images of God, they are in principle receptive to the spiritual light.

The development of such spiritual organs of perception is possible because, on the one hand, people have the predisposition for it and, on the other hand, the kingdom of God strives to become conscious in its creatures. One after the other, the attributes of God want to become conscious in people. The “striving” of the image of God in human beings for birth, self-awareness, and self-expression evokes in them the organs for perceiving the characteristics of God. So everything that is hidden comes to light; the secrets of the kingdom of God are revealed; they reveal themselves to people's spiritual consciousness.

All form is only there to express certain contents of the world and at the same time to be the carrier of the consciousness that

perceives these contents. The mineral crystal, driven by the physical-chemical laws of nature, unfolds its structure in order to give expression to these laws and to perceive them with a “consciousness” that is still very dull. The plant, driven by life in the cosmos, unfolds its organism in order to give expression to the life of the cosmos and to perceive it with an already less dull consciousness. The animal, driven by the forces of perception and motivation present in the cosmos, develops its flexible body in order to have perception and motivation itself and to feel these forces of nature more or less consciously. Human beings, driven by a tendency to think inherent in nature, additionally develop a brain in order to express the ability to think and to recognize with clear awareness the “thinking” of nature with which it builds up its structures and creatures.

And so it continues. The earthly person, receptive to the Word from the true self, develops an ever better understanding of this Word. And the spiritual being, the image of God, struck by the call of the divine Word, develops spiritual ears and eyes, a spiritual thinking in order to become aware of the spirit, the divine intelligence and power, and to give it expression. All religions in the world, originally impulses from the world of the spirit, work on the spiritual consciousness of people in order to enable them to experience ever deeper layers and characteristics of God. No characteristic of nature and God will remain secret; all will be revealed to the creatures.

Take heed how you hear, Jesus continues. Take heed with which organs you hear and what consciousness you develop. You have a sensory consciousness with which you receive sensory impressions from the earthly world. This includes the rational mind, which evaluates and orders the sensory impressions and enables targeted action. However, this consciousness will only recognize and focus on connections determined by the natural laws of the earthly world. The more it is used, the more it will develop, and the less other types of consciousness that are also predisposed in you will awaken.

But as earthly beings, you also have the predisposition to a consciousness that can understand the impulses from the true self, the divine Word, and can tailor its actions accordingly in a rational manner. It is the consciousness that is embodied by John the Baptist. But above all, as a spiritual being, you have the predisposition to a spiritual, intuitive consciousness, a true self.

You can develop “ears” that directly hear the “Word of God,” life-contexts and impressions from the spiritual world. Take heed therefore, that, above all, this type of consciousness develops, these “ears.” When they develop, you hear the Word of God better and better, be it with the earthly, be it with spiritual consciousness, and can tailor your actions accordingly. Sensory consciousness can then continue to exercise its functions in the areas where it is responsible. On the other hand, if you put it first, you suppress the spiritual consciousness and miss your inherent purpose.

Predispositions to an organ that are active develop into that organ. What is active develops. In those who are receptive to the “Word of God,” the spiritual life context, who “hear” it, and actively apply their insights, the spiritual ears develop. To those who have and use such predispositions, more will be given, for the predispositions will develop and ever new insights will be given to these people. But from those who have such predispositions and do not use them, even these rudimentary “ears” will be taken from them. They will wither like any organ that remains inactive. Thus, that is Jesus’ conclusion, develop the rudimentary spiritual consciousness that you have by using it. React to spiritual impulses, receive them, and put them into practice. If you do not do this, even the predispositions to a spiritual consciousness will wither and you will become slaves of your rational mind.

The Divine Word as the Power Truly Connecting Human Beings

8:19 *Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. ²⁰And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.” ²¹But he said to them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.” (NRSV)*

Even blood relationships have become secondary for people who hear the “Word” – which does not preclude that they meet their blood relatives with love. But primary are their spiritual nature and the tasks resulting from it. Primary for them are also their kindred spirits, all people who also try to live from the sources of the spirit: “those who hear the word of God and do it.” Jesus is concerned with tasks that follow from his spiritual being. He heals and teaches. Therefore his blood relatives cannot get close to him.

All duties and claims resulting from blood relationships do not come close to the spiritual tasks of the human being. They are on a different level.

It is the inherent purpose of people to grow beyond the determinacy of their biology and thus also their consanguineous dependencies and as spiritual human beings, as images of God, to live out of the divine Word. The resulting spiritual kinship with similar people is therefore the kind of interpersonal relationship that corresponds to the true human essence. It is a harmonious unity in spirit, in freedom and love, since all members of this community live out of the same divine Word, which is unity, freedom, and love. Such a spiritual kinship is indissoluble and eternally anchored in the order and power of the spirit, while blood kinship as a relationship between earthly people never provides a secure hold and is always threatened by conflict and loss. The message of Jesus' discussion with his mother and brothers is that there is a new level of interpersonal relationships for people on the spiritual path that lies above the old level of consanguineous ties without necessarily having to break them.

Stilling the Storm: Experiences of the Community of Pupils

8:22 *One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they put out, ²³and while they were sailing he fell asleep. A windstorm swept down on the lake, and the boat was filling with water, and they were in danger. ²⁴They went to him and woke him up, shouting, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he woke up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; they ceased, and there was a calm. ²⁵He said to them, "Where is your faith?" They were afraid and amazed, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?" (NRSV)*

The story of the "stilling of the storm" describes the experience of a group of pupils on the spiritual path. Jesus had gathered a group of disciples around himself and assigned tasks to them according to the twelvefold order of the spirit. They are currently in the second phase of their spiritual path. Their task now is to implement the spiritual powers absorbed in faith and to work with

them. Their relationship with these powers, whose source is personified by Jesus, is the topic of the story.

The disciples form a spiritual community. The “boat” is a picture for this community. It symbolizes their common basis of consciousness. Their consciousness is open to the spiritual impulses and reacts to them. With Jesus, the source of spiritual power, they form a “power field” that is sustained from the order and power of the spirit. On this basis, they can sail across the “lake” to the other side. They cross the sea of life, of the passions, desires, and movements of the earthly soul. The boat is in motion; the disciples are on the way in their “power field,” the boat, and this spiritual power field carries them over the waves of earthly passions and desires.

Usually, the spiritual power, personified by Jesus, is in their midst and “awake” in each one of them. That is, they feel this power; through it, they are led further on the path and strengthened. There is harmony among them because they all live out of this same power. But there can be times when this power withdraws and “sleeps.” That always happens when pupils have become too accustomed and take for granted the regularity of their path and have become complacent. They have found their way, and their longing for spiritual development, at the end of which is the entrance into the kingdom of God, has become weaker. Therefore, they no longer feel the power. For them, it “sleeps.”

Especially at such times of “sleeping” of the spiritual power, storms occur. Disharmony arises in the group because the connecting spiritual power is missing. Divergent ideas about the spiritual path collide with each other; different attitudes of the group members to the social environment lead to disturbances entering from the outside. Whether from inside or outside, such “storms” stir up the souls of the pupils. Passions, mutual accusations, and despair strike the “boat” like wild waves. The common basis of consciousness of the pupils is threatened with destruction.

Then wild fear grips the pupils: fear for the existence of their common endeavor, fear of missing their spiritual objectives. They could now try to take organizational measures against the chaos, to discipline themselves, and to close ranks against the hazards from the outside. But this would not still the storm but only increase the chaos. The only sensible possibility in this situation is that they “awaken” the spiritual power in their midst, in their own essence.

The disciples of Jesus become aware through the storm that they could not go the path out of their own earthly powers and would drown in their passions and fears. The storm rekindles their longing for the spiritual powers, which were “asleep” in them. Their longing for the spiritual goal, their fear of missing it, and their realization that through their own strength they produce only chaos result in the spiritual power being activated again, in it being drawn into and felt in their consciousness. They “wake up” Jesus.

Immediately the spiritual power in their midst is activated. Divergent opinions are recognized as insignificant and disturbances from outside as factors that cannot really affect the spiritual development of the community. This creates unity again among the pupils on a spiritual basis. There are new confidence, joy, and love, and fears, excitement, and hectic bustle abate. The storm is stilled; the waves are smoothed; the boat is safe and on a safe course.

And all pupils are amazed, marvel, and are “afraid.” Because all recognize that in this situation, the new unity and confidence are not due to their own efforts and services. These were hopelessly insufficient. Unity and confidence arose from a dimension that is inaccessible and unavailable to human intentions. It is so irresistible and powerful that it appears “frightful” to weak earthly people.

When Jesus addresses the lack of faith in his disciples, saying, “Where is your faith?” he means, You are still too afraid. You still have too little trust in your true self, even if it is “sleeping.” You have let yourselves be overwhelmed by fear in the storm instead of having calm confidence that the true self is always with you. Nothing can happen to you yourselves and your community in spiritual terms. Your fear to go down as pupils and as a community is lack of trust in the activity of the true self, even when it may not be noticeable at times, that is have “fallen asleep.” Pupils with quiet confidence would not have lost this confidence even in the worst storm and would have awakened the source of the spirit within themselves in their longing for the power and order of the spirit, without panicking.

This depiction of a still imperfect relationship to spiritual powers is timeless and applies to every group of spiritual pupils in the second phase of their path.

Driving out Demons: the Demons at the Graves

8:26 *Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me"— ²⁹for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. ³¹They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss. ³²Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. ³⁴When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. ³⁷Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹"Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him. (NRSV)*

In the first phase of the pupils' path, Jesus had cast out a "demon." Mental and emotional areas of the earthly personality that had slipped away from the guidance of reason and become independent, the demon in the synagogue, had again been placed under the rule of reason by the true self. The man possessed by the demon of religious obsession had become free. Now, in the second phase of the pupils' path, Jesus' casting out of demons relates to the desire life of the earthly personality, for the stronger the

spiritual powers personified by Jesus work in a person, the deeper are the layers of the soul they penetrate and free it from alien compulsions. Gergesa is opposite Galilee. It is a city that has retained its pagan-archaic character. It did not go through the religious and cultural development of Judea and Galilee. In the human soul, Gergesa, located on the “opposite shore” of the lake, corresponds to an archaic, sinister area into which Jesus, the spiritual power, now penetrates on his way through the earthly world. This representation of a still imperfect relationship to the spiritual powers is timeless and applies to every group of spiritual pupils who are in the second phase of their path.

Someone possessed by a demon lives there. The type of demon is again characterized by the whereabouts and habits of the possessed person. He lives in the “tombs” and graves, that is, where there are dead people who are bound to the earthly world by addictions and drives and who inhabit the hereafter. He does not live in a “house”; he has no place of residence in the realm of reasonable consciousness, morality, and social and cultural order, to which also corresponds the detail that he is naked and does not wear any clothes. He only obeys his drives.

In every person, there are repressed urges that do not obey reason and conscious control by the ego. They are innumerable – the name of the demon is “Legion”: unleashed sexual urges and perversions, urges for power, ambition, avarice, aggressions up to self-destruction and lust for murder, furious vengeance, jealousy, greed, and many others. The weaker an individual’s social ties and anchoring in traditions, the more impetuously these urges force their way into the light of day. Yes, entire societies can become victims of such previously tamed energies through the collapse of traditional value systems, which then stimulate each other to the point of collective madness. Drive energies flood over the individual, the drive energies of many individuals add up to collective energies, and these nourish and increase the individual demons retrospectively. The possessed person is not only in the grip of his own unleashed instincts but also in the grip of collective powers that incessantly stimulate his instinctual potential.

No matter how strong the ego, it cannot tame these energies from the unconscious once they are unleashed. They tear apart any “bonds” that reason or will might impose on them.

This is a parallel to the story of the stilling of the storm, for also there it becomes apparent that the normal self-consciousness of

the pupils is too weak to control the elementary soul powers. The only power that can master these demons is the power of the true self, embodied by Jesus, for the spirit is the source of all being, while the conscious self is just like an island in the ocean of unconscious life energies. The creative order, which originally also ordered the demonic and driving forces of the earthly personality and assigned their functions to them, proceeds from the primal ground of all being. Only the rebellion of these forces against the primal ground of the spirit could lead to a state where they have to be tamed with difficulty by reason and culture and where they threaten to throw off these bonds again and again. Only from the primal ground of the spirit can they finally be brought back to order. Their presumptuous dominion over people is broken by the power of the true self.

This story also shows that the energies of the drives, rooted in the deep unconscious layers of the human being, immediately recognize the true self as such when they encounter it, while the conscious ego of the human being, limited to the sense world, is initially unable to do so. The demon immediately recognizes Jesus as the “Son of the Most High.” It knows that it must give way to this spiritual power. The collective energies that have established themselves in the possessed man and cannot be integrated into his psyche see themselves forced to retreat.

They have to leave the human realm, the realm of reason, which is strengthened again through the power of the true self. But they hope to still find a means of expression in the animal kingdom, the realm of instincts. In the “underworld,” in the beyond, they do not have this possibility of expression because there they lack the bodies of people or animals of which they could take possession. Therefore, they choose swine as their future hosts. Their essence corresponds to what is traditionally the most impure animal, the pig. And they ask Jesus to let them go into the pigs.

But just as the unbridled collective energies in a person have overridden the rational order and replaced reason, so in the pigs, they override the direction of instinct. The instincts direct the unreasonable animal so that it can fulfill its task in the larger life. But the demons, unleashed instincts without any order, destroy these instincts in the animal they possess and take their place. The animal becomes an instrument for their unbridled, chaotic impulses that do not fit into any meaningful order. This can be seen in the behavior of the herd of swine that the demons entered.

The pigs lose every instinctive order that would guarantee their life and become the prey of the chaotic driving forces that drag them down into the “lake.” “Lake” is a symbol for the underworld, for the great reservoir of all animal emotions and urges, into which their energies enter again also after the death of humans and animals. The demons dig their own grave by pulling their host animals into the chaotic reservoir of the driving forces and destroying them there.

A larger contrast can hardly be imagined: on the one side, disordered, chaotic driving forces that dissolve every individual order, be it shaped by instinct or reason, driving the creatures into the abyss, on the other side, the true self, that represents the order of the spirit but also enables the order of the reasonable ego and of the instincts. It builds up. And it turns out that the constructive forces in the cosmos are stronger than the destructive ones. With the help of the true self acting in him, the possessed man has become free from the controlling collective, demonic driving energies. We find him “clothed”: He lives morally and in the structure of meaningful social conventions. And he is “in his right mind”: As an ego, he is capable of commanding his drives and directing them to their right functions in his life. So he sits “at feet of Jesus”: He keeps close to the true self and reveres it and knows that it has freed him from the bondage of the demons.

Just as the disciples of Jesus in the foregoing story are gripped by fear at the might of the spiritual powers, which can calm a storm over which the rational ego has no influence, so the inhabitants of Gergesa fear the power of spirituality. They are not yet ready to allow this spirituality entry into their own being, which is why they ask Jesus to leave their country. The healed man, however, is asked by Jesus to testify in his area of the power of the spiritual powers of the true self. His task is not yet to follow a spiritual path under the guidance of Jesus, for which he begs Jesus, but only to prepare the people in his area for such a path by serving as an example of the effectiveness of the true self.

Thus, it turns out that the power of the spirit is able to penetrate into the deepest and most secret layers of the human soul and there to break the power of drives and chaotic energies that are becoming independent. Such unordered drives destroy all morality and reasonable social coexistence. But after the expulsion of the demons, after the liberation of people from the tyranny of unbridled drives, this morality becomes possible again and under a

new sign: under the sign of order and the power of the spirit: “at the feet of Jesus.”

Healing the Sick: Life Energies

8:40 Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. ⁴¹Just then there came a man named Jairus, a leader of the synagogue. He fell at Jesus' feet and begged him to come to his house, ⁴²for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, who was dying. As he went, the crowds pressed in on him. ⁴³Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years; and though she had spent all she had on physicians, no one could cure her. ⁴⁴She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his clothes, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. ⁴⁵Then Jesus asked, “Who touched me?” When all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the crowds surround you and press in on you.” ⁴⁶But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; for I noticed that power had gone out from me.” ⁴⁷When the woman saw that she could not remain hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before him, she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. ⁴⁸He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.” ⁴⁹While he was still speaking, someone came from the leader's house to say, “Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher any longer.” ⁵⁰When Jesus heard this, he replied, “Do not fear. Only believe, and she will be saved.” ⁵¹When he came to the house, he did not allow anyone to enter with him, except Peter, John, and James, and the child's father and mother. ⁵²They were all weeping and wailing for her; but he said, “Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping.” ⁵³And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴But he took her by the hand and called out, “Child, get up!” ⁵⁵Her spirit returned, and she got up at once. Then he directed them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶Her parents were astounded; but he ordered them to tell no one what had happened. (NRSV)

Jesus also performs healings in this second phase of the path of his disciples. These healings are now related to the life energies of the personality. While Jesus goes to the daughter of Jairus, who is “dying” – she has lost her purpose in life – a woman with “hemorrhages” touches him. Blood is nothing but the life energy

itself pulsing through the body. But this woman has no inner support that would allow her to use her life energy sensibly and reasonably. If she had a purpose in life, she would be the master of her energies and would make them subservient to her purpose in life. But she is directed from outside of herself, dependent on innumerable environmental influences. She has become prey to external stimuli and has to watch powerlessly as the vital energies are withdrawn from her by institutions and collective currents – for twelve years. Twelve is the number of completeness. In her weakness, she has lost her vital forces to all conceivable areas and authorities of the outside world – politics, work, entertainment, leisure, consumption, etc. – to their benefit but to her own detriment. And none of the entities that claim to convey “meaning in life” and stability could help her, neither doctors nor psychiatrists, neither representatives of traditional religions nor ideologues. As a rule, they belong to those who want to guide people from the outside.

How can such a soul gain inner stability? This story is best read as a process in individuals. How can they gain inner stability? Only by encountering the true self, their actual identity. If they are even vaguely aware of this, they come to rest, can recognize where their energies can be used sensibly, and can also use them accordingly. At first, it is enough that they only meet their true self indirectly. For example, meaningful dreams from the unconscious can convey impulses of the true self to them. It is only essential that there is an openness in them for their true self, for the spiritual world: a “belief” in the “inner” Jesus. If they come into contact with the spiritual world through this openness, even if only with the “clothes” of Jesus, with the “garments” of the spirit – for example through dream symbols – then already powers of the spirit flow into the individuals and give them independence. They gain support on the basis of their true self.

However, through contact with the “garments” of the spirit, they come into contact with the center of the spirit-filled true self, as if through a kind of electrical circuit. The outpourer of power “seeks” the recipient of power through this circuit until it is found. Now a direct encounter between the true self and the sick person can take place. Jesus, the true self, has noticed that a flow of power has emanated from him, that a connection has been established between him and the recipient, and along this connection, he is looking for the woman. But only when there is really an openness

for the spirit in a soul, “faith,” does such a contact come about. The many other people who crowd around Jesus and accidentally touch him do not trigger a flow of power and do not establish a connection with him. For example, someone who is given a symbolic dream without being open to the spirit will not understand this dream and will not notice the power it emanates.

Nevertheless, access to the true self through dreams and symbols is not the proper kind of approach. It is a rapprochement from the “back,” via the unconscious. The way from the front goes over the consciousness that absorbs directly what comes to it from the true self. This is the free, independent way of receiving, which is appropriate to the spirit, for also the spirit is free and independent. A consciousness open to the true self will receive from the true self step by step the revelations and powers of the spirit.

It is understandable that the woman suffering from “hemorrhages” chooses the hidden way, her illness consisting of dependence, so that she does not dare or is not capable of receiving the powers of the spirit consciously and freely. She approaches them via the unconscious. And yet, the spirit cannot help but acting freely and independently and to making those approaching it free and independent. That happens to the woman in this story: She can and finally has to emerge from hiding and face the spirit openly. This too is an aspect of her healing.

While the woman with hemorrhages symbolizes a personality without inner stability and independence that loses life energies uncontrollably, the daughter of Jairus represents a personality that has totally lost the purpose of life. She has passed through all twelve areas of earthly reality – she is twelve years old – and nowhere found real, workable meaning of life. All areas of earthly life appear meaningless. She is empty inside and as if “dead.” New life can come to her only through the spirit, the spirit-filled true self. And so Jesus as embodiment of the true self and Peter, John, and James as the main aspects of the earthly consciousness working with the true self, will (Peter), feeling (John), and mind (James), along with the girl’s parents enter and awaken the “sleeping” girl. Because in reality, this consciousness has not died but is only not awake to the spiritual world. Wakefulness, however, comes when the true, spiritual self enters a soul and enables it to independent life in the spirit. Such a soul strengthened by the spirit arises and takes up its duties in the world again and under new auspices. It is strengthened by “food” for these duties. It goes

back to the metabolic cycle of earthly life.

Jairus as “father” of the girl represents the will of this personality. As is the woman with hemorrhages, he is filled by faith in “Jesus,” that is, open to the spiritual healing powers from the true self. In contrast to her, he approaches the spirit directly and asks directly for help. Here, a conscious will acts independently without needing any detours over the unconscious.

Thus, together with his daughter, Jairus is a picture for a personality that has lost all earthly life purpose but that turns with its independent will to the source of the spirit from which the new, unearthly life bubbles. Jairus is also presented as a “leader of the synagogue.” This means that, in connection with his independent turning to the spirit, he symbolizes those representatives of the Jewish tradition who have become aware that this tradition has fulfilled its function and has no more spiritual life in itself after “twelve years.” But they still have so much strength that they openly turn to the new spiritual impulse, which gives new life to the soul of the people.

As before, Jesus also orders here again to say nothing of the occurrence to others. People in whom spiritual powers from the true self become active, providing them with new life energies, have to quietly allow these powers to do their work in their own being. They must not vent them to the outside by talking about their inner experiences to uncomprehending outsiders. That would weaken the new powers and possibly cause negative reactions that would rob them of their effectiveness. That is the reason for Jesus’ prohibition.

Both stories are artfully interwoven. One personality continuously loses her soul energy. The powers from the true self that she invokes give her independence and stability. The other personality has lost her soul purpose. The powers from the true self give her new, living soul purpose. On the way to rebuilding the soul purpose, on the way to Jairus, the spirit – in the encounter with the woman with hemorrhages – puts a stop to the reduction of soul energy.

Sending out the Pupils

9:1 *And summoning the twelve, he gave them power and authority over all the demons and to cure diseases, ²and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.*

³And he said to them, “Take along nothing for the journey—neither a staff, nor a traveler’s bag, nor bread, nor money, nor to have two tunics apiece. ⁴And into whatever house you enter, stay there and depart from there. ⁵And as for all those who do not welcome you—when you depart from that town, shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony against them.” ⁶So they departed and went throughout the villages, proclaiming the good news and healing everywhere. (LEB)

In this second phase of the spiritual path of his disciples, the power stream of the spirit in Jesus has become so strong and his connection to the disciples as the twelve aspects of this power stream so effective that they can be sent out as carriers of this spirit to drive out demons, to heal, and to proclaim the teaching of the “kingdom of God.” Earlier, on the ship, they were still busy invoking and securing the powers of the spirit in their midst. Now they have come so far that they can pass them on.

Rules for Spiritual Work

How do they pass them on?

Jesus gives the rules for this. But how can we understand that the disciples should take no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money nor an extra tunic with them on the way? In the Gospel of Mark, they may at least take a staff and put on sandals! If such passages were taken literally, Jesus would contradict himself from gospel to gospel and demand apparent absurdities. Why should the disciples not lean on a staff when walking, why not at least take a small supply of food with them? Then they would not be too much of a nuisance to their hosts! Or are they to elicit the charity of their hosts? Then why does it say at Luke 8:3 that the women provided for them out of their resources? No, these statements about staff, bread, bag, and tunic are to be taken as parables. And they apply not only to those times when people traveled on foot and on horseback but also to other times with faster means of transport.

When the true self asks its pupils not to use a staff on their journey through the world, this means that they should not rely on their earthly merits. Do not be so self-confident; do not trust your neat appearance and your polished rhetoric, says Jesus, but leave all that aside. Lean on the spiritual power in your heart. Also do not try to collect spiritual powers and abilities – “bread” and

“money” – and to keep them in your memory – your “bag” – in order to always have as large a supply as possible for yourself and others. Get rid of this reserve thinking. The spiritual powers and abilities will be there when they are needed and will always flow anew and up-to-date. Always appear as the same people, with the same behavior. If the external behavior corresponds to your interior, it will always be alive and not get old. You do not need an “extra tunic,” no substitute behavior that is to have an effect on the audience when you think you are not coming across with what you are used to doing.

These are parables that work through paradox. When you go on a journey in the earthly world, Jesus explains to his disciples, you naturally take a staff along, stock up on supplies, and bring a spare tunic. But in spiritual work, something like this would be counterproductive. There, you are not to lean on anything outside of yourself but are only yourself. You are not to gather supplies but can always draw from abundance. You can trust that your external behavior will always remain spirited because it follows from the spirited interior. So you have to act like a traveler who, paradoxically, does not take along a staff, supplies, and an extra tunic.

On the other hand, when pupils concentrate fully on their spiritual work and adhere to its rules, the external means of their work will not cause them any problems. Of course, they will need a walking stick and travel supplies and clothing. But when the spiritual work is primary, circumstances will give them the outer means.

When Jesus sent the disciples out into the towns, it does not mean that the disciples were to do missionary work. Everyone can let the spiritual powers that have come into circulation in them work in the social environment in which they find themselves on their journey through life. They work on their own and do not need to be forced. Only then do the hearers or recipients remain free and can pick them up according to their receptivity. The spiritual powers can cast out the “demons” in them and heal “diseases.”

The other rules correspond to this. When the pupils turn to other people, they turn to them fully and exclusively and do not already think about the next person. Only then will the spiritual power emanating from the pupils have the quiet that it needs to be effective. When the conversation or contact is over, there is still time to think about the next meeting. So always just focus on one

“house,” and when the work is done there, move on to the next one. Otherwise there is only confusion. If, however, it turns out that people whom the pupils meet are not receptive to the spiritual powers, it would be completely nonsensical to insist on contact and mediation of these powers. The pupils do not even have to physically leave this “town.” It closes itself off from the spirit and will therefore not be able to participate in the liberating and healing effects of the spirit. But the pupils will shake off the “dust” of earthly life – corruption, lust for pleasure, and lust for power – that has attached itself to their feet and thus show what this “town” is like. This completely unintentional testimony is the “testimony against” the people that “do not welcome” them.

In this sense, the disciples of Jesus, pupils of the spirit, walk the path of their life not based on their ego and knowledge but live out of the powers of the spirit and spread them without personal ambitions. They do one thing after the other, always fully involved inwardly, and where there is no receptivity in their fellow human beings, they quietly withdraw. These rules follow from the order of the spiritual world itself. The spirit works spontaneously, freely, and in a focused way. It leaves others free, too.

Reactions to this Work

9:7 *Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was greatly perplexed, because it was said by some that John has been raised from the dead, ⁸and by some that Elijah had appeared, and others that some prophet of ancient times had risen. ⁹And Herod said, “John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?” And he was wanting to see him. (LEB)*

The more the powers of the spirit work in the earthly world, the more observant this world becomes of them. They are alien to it, but it will notice their effects. When it notices them, it will ask about their nature. In his time, John the Baptist had asked about the nature of the spiritual powers. He too had noticed the power of the spiritual movement emanating from Jesus, and he wanted to know exactly whether it was a movement that still belonged to the old prophetic days or the new time of the fulfillment of the promises. Now it is Herod, representative of the secular power using the religious tradition, who poses the question of the identity of Jesus, of the origin of the powerfully expanding new spiritual

movement.

Herod, belonging to earthly life, cannot recognize the identity of Jesus. The spiritual world remains closed to him. At most earthly powers that point to the spiritual world – “prophets” – are accessible to him. Therefore Herod lets three possibilities pass before his consciousness: Jesus could be the resurrected John the Baptist, the reappeared Elijah, or another of the great prophets. But Herod seems to suspect a qualitative difference between a prophet and Jesus, for he does not want to identify Jesus with John the Baptist. Apparently Jesus is greater than the Baptist who has now been beheaded by Herod. The earthly consciousness is attracted by the power of the new spiritual movement, puzzles about its origin, suspects its meaning, and investigates it more closely. Herod wants to see Jesus.

Incidentally, his consideration as to whether the beheaded John was raised from the dead in Jesus is not so absurd, for Jesus has now taken over the function of John the Baptist. Up until now, the preparatory and realizing aspects of the spiritual impulse had worked together. But now Herod, embodiment of the earthly will to power, definitively removes the voice of the caller in the wilderness. He kills the call for ethical behavior. But ethical principles remain valid for the disciples of Jesus and the people. Only the calls for ethical behavior are now taken over by the true self. The realizing aspect of the spiritual impulse has become so strong that the preparatory aspect can be absorbed into it. For the pupils, ethical behavior follows from the call of the true self and has become a matter of course for them.

It is no coincidence that Luke places King Herod's questions exactly between the sending of the disciples by Jesus and their return as well as the report on their activities, for in the second phase of the spiritual path, in which the disciples of Jesus are currently, it is about the implementation of the spiritual powers through work for others. But this implementation leads to the third phase of the spiritual path: becoming conscious of these powers. Hence, the disciples' work raises questions in their environment. The spiritual powers touch the earthly consciousness more and more and fascinate it. When applied to an individual, this means that the stronger the spiritual powers circulate in the pupil, the more they urge to be recognized by the consciousness. They want to step over the threshold of consciousness; they want to become recognized. Thus the second phase of the spiritual path

powerfully urges the pupil to the third phase: the awareness of the spiritual powers in the pupil.

The Feeding of the 5000: Illustration of the Activity of the Pupils

9:10 *And when they returned, the apostles described to him all that they had done. And he took them along and withdrew privately to a town called Bethsaida. ¹¹ But when the crowds found out, they followed him, and welcoming them, he began to speak to them about the kingdom of God, and he cured those who had need of healing. ¹² Now the day began to be far spent, and the twelve came up and said to him, "Send away the crowd so that they can go into the surrounding villages and farms to obtain lodging and find provisions, because we are here in a desolate place. ¹³ But he said to them, "You give them something to eat!" And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps we go and purchase food for all these people." ¹⁴ (For there were about five thousand men.) So he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." ¹⁵ And they did so, and had them all sit down. ¹⁶ And taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them and began giving them to the disciples to set before the crowd. ¹⁷ And they all ate and were satisfied, and what was left over was picked up by them—twelve baskets of broken pieces. (LEB)*

The "feeding of the 5000" is nothing other than the pictorial representation of the sending out of the disciples of Jesus and their activity. The images used by Luke describe the soul-spiritual processes, which are not externally visible.

Jesus calls on his disciples: You feed the hungry. This corresponds to the sending out. Go out to the people receptive to the spirit and give them soul nourishment in the form of insights and powers, for the loaves and fish are nothing other than spiritual insights and powers. The loaves symbolize the teachings of the spirit, spiritual soul nourishment. There are five loaves simply because five is traditionally the number of soul, hence soul nourishment. Do the teachings of the spirit not arouse new thoughts about the meaning of human existence, new feelings of joy and devotion that accompany these insights, new aspiration to

realize this meaning, new corresponding actions, and overall a new consciousness, which as fifth element includes these four factors? The two fish, on the other hand, symbolize the powers of the spirit, which on the one hand arouse an inextinguishable hope for the new way of life and on the other hand, the willingness to realize this way of life.

And these contents and powers are in fact inexhaustible, indeed, they increase the more they are distributed. A hope – “fish” for the soul – does not become weaker in the giver when communicated to other people; on the contrary, it becomes stronger. And an insight into new possibilities of life, imparted to other people, can evoke the same insight in them. The insight – “bread” for the soul – is not exhausted by the distribution; on the contrary, it remains with the giver, “multiplies” with the recipient, and thereby strengthens the same insight in the giver. At the end of these transfer and reaction processes, there are “twelve baskets” with pieces of bread left over. The spiritual teaching is received in all its aspects – twelve is the number of completeness – and all possible positive reactions of the recipients are noted.

The disciples sent by Jesus distribute these inexhaustible spiritual supplies and energies, always in connection with their source, the true self, Jesus, for they can draw insight and power in order to then pass them on only from the true self, never from the ego. The true self, Jesus, is in turn connected with the spiritual world. Jesus is the Anointed, the Christ. That is why Jesus, holding loaves and fish, looks up to “heaven,” and therefore he thanks heaven for its gifts. The true self knows that it did not create the spiritual gifts that the disciples will give out. They were given to it and the disciples from the spiritual world. Eventually, Jesus “breaks” the gifts. Experiences with the spiritual world cannot be communicated directly to hungry souls. They must first be put into language and words, structured in terms of thoughts and concepts, or transformed into parables and images in order to be accessible to a consciousness that is not yet directly open to the spirit. Jesus, as the real dispenser of the spiritual gifts, “breaks” them first. He brings them into a form that is comprehensible to the hungry.

So his disciples can pass them on to the “people,” the 5000 men. 5000 meaning that they are innumerable – 1000 – who are receptive to the food of the spirit according to their soul – 5. And when they are to camp in 100 groups of about 50 men each, this symbolically means that the one, which represents the spirit, is in

charge of everything that happens. Each soul group – 50 – is under the direction of the one, which, when it acts on the level of forms, appears as “100.” The soul’s receptivity to the spirit is a consequence of the activity of the spirit, which controls the intake of spiritual nourishment for the human soul.

It is no coincidence that this feeding takes place in “Bethsaida,” which means “house of fishing,” for have the disciples not become “fishers of people” (see Mark 1:17, NRSV) as Jesus had predicted when he called his first disciples? They can satisfy all people whose souls hunger for the spirit and thus fish them out of the sea of earthly life.

The story of the feeding of the 5000 is no “miracle” in the sense that physical-chemical laws would have been broken by these events. It is the representation of processes that can happen again and again where a new spiritual impulse radiates into the earthly world and finds pupils who consciously absorb the energies of this impulse and pass them on to others who are receptive to them. When they do this with ever greater intensity, the moment comes when the energies of the spirit circulating in them break through into their consciousness and they become aware of the spiritual world. Therefore, at the end of the second phase of the spiritual path of the pupils and at the beginning of the third phase, they become aware of the spiritual powers within them.

Becoming Conscious: Third Phase of the Spiritual Path of the Pupils

9:18 And it happened that while he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, saying, “Who do the crowds say that I am?”¹⁹ And they answered and said, “John the Baptist, but others, Elijah, and others, that one of the ancient prophets has risen.”²⁰ And he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered and said, “The Christ of God.” (LEB)

John the Baptist, the earthly ego-consciousness directed towards the spiritual world, had asked about the identity of Jesus. An answer had come to this consciousness. It was able to infer from the effects of the true self, the deeds of Jesus, the spirit-filled true self, the Christ. And if it did not “get angry” and offended at the spirit as the completely other but surrendered completely to the

spirit, it could become “blessed.” It could be filled with the joyous certainty that the spirit existed. But it could not experience the spirit directly.

Herod, a self-consciousness directed towards the earthly world, had also asked about the identity of Jesus. He had received no answer. He could only infer from the actions of the disciples of the spirit that Jesus was possibly a prophet.

Now, however, neither the consciousness directed towards the spiritual world nor the one directed to the earthly world asks about the identity of Jesus, but conversely, the spirit asks the consciousness directed towards the spiritual world – the disciples of Jesus. An impulse for insight goes out from the true self, from Jesus, to his disciples. And these are so transformed in their consciousness and being through their work with the energies of the spirit that they can now recognize independently. They can distinguish. The consciousness directed towards the earthly world, the “people” and Herod, perceive the true self only indirectly, through its impulses. Therefore they cannot recognize the actual character of the true self and consider Jesus to be a prophet. In the disciples, however, the true self has matured so far through their spiritual work for others that the Holy Spirit can illuminate it. This enlightenment affects their ego-consciousness in such a way that it independently recognizes what the true self really is. Jesus asks the disciples, “Who do you think I am?” And urged by the Holy Spirit, to which the purified ego-consciousness opens, the independent realization breaks through in Peter as the disciples’ spokesman, “You are the Anointed of God.” The identity of Jesus, the true human identity as the image of God, is shown to him. It comes from the dimension of the spiritual world; it does not belong to the earthly world as the prophets do. And this image of God, the true self, carries the powers of the spirit, which flow through it. It is the one “anointed” with the powers of the spirit.

Again we can understand this discussion between Jesus and his disciples best by regarding it as a process in the individual. The moment comes on the spiritual path of the pupil where the Holy Spirit enlightens the true self and also enables the ego-consciousness to have independent insight. The ego-consciousness now notices powers and laws in the human being that cannot come from the earthly world, neither from this side nor from the beyond. They are the powers and laws of the true self, the actual human identity. And at the same time, the ego-consciousness

notes that this true self is now filled with the Holy Spirit, that it is “anointed.” The Christ, the Anointed, has awakened in the pupil and is also noticeable to the ego-consciousness.

Back to the encounter of Jesus with his disciples as external persons: Their realization that Jesus embodies the image of God, the true self, and yes, as Christ embodies the spirit-filled true self, is only possible because the true self in them too has been filled by the Holy Spirit. By becoming aware of their own true nature, the inner Christ, they also become aware of the true human nature embodied in Jesus, the external Christ. Or vice versa: By becoming aware of the true human nature embodied in Jesus, they also become aware of their own true nature. Cause and effect are interchangeable here.

This process corresponds exactly to the third phase of the spiritual path of Jesus, which began with the “anointing” of Jesus after the baptism in the Jordan. At the third milestone of the path of Jesus, he became aware of the spiritual powers in his own being through the activity of the “Father” and the Holy Spirit. He became aware of his task. Consciously “anointed” with spiritual powers, he could act publicly in the world from then on.

Timeless Meaning of these Processes

What has occurred in the second phase of the journey of the disciples of Jesus when applied to the individual on the spiritual path?

The ego-consciousness of this person – the “disciples” – which is open to the spiritual impulse from the true self – Jesus – is “put in order.” The faculties of willing, feeling, and thinking, each connected with the four energies active in human beings (mental, emotional, vital, and motoric energies), making a total of twelve aspects, twelve disciples, are subordinated to the spiritual impulse and firmly connected with it. In this way, in the form of the Sermon on the Mount, this person becomes aware of the new perspectives on life in various ways. Other powers of consciousness, namely, sensitivity and devotion – the female “disciples” – make themselves available to the spiritual impulse. Moreover, through the activity of the true self, the person gains insight into the mysterious laws of the kingdom of God (Chapter 8:4-21) and despite great turbulence within (storm), acquires a

new, trusting relationship to the realm of the spirit. The person is now enabled to distribute the powers of the spirit under the guidance of the true self, be it by healing illnesses (daughter of Jairus), be it by teaching and preaching (sending out the disciples, feeding the 5000). As a result, the powers of the spirit circulate more and more intensely.

At the same time, through the spiritual impulse from the true self, a new order (diseases are healed) and freedom (demons are expelled) emerge in the personality. As far as into the material body (servant of the Roman centurion), a new order is built up by the power of the “Word” from the true self, yes, a completely demolished ego-consciousness lives again through having been given new meaning (young man of Nain). The personality is also freed from unbridled drives and wins back its reason. The life energies that had lost their stability and content receive new stability and content (woman with hemorrhages and daughter of Jairus).

But the dogmatic-religiously bound mind – the “Pharisees” – is not silent also in this phase of the path and self-righteously opposes the feeling of this person to be separated from God by a deep chasm (Simon and the “sinner”).

Finally, corresponding to this phase, three times a question is raised about the nature of the spiritual impulse. First, John the Baptist as the embodiment of the powers of repentance asks, then Herod as the embodiment of the passions exploiting religion, and finally the consciousness opened to the spirit – the “disciples” – reacts and recognizes the true self. They become aware of it.

From now on, the spiritual path of the pupils who have entered the third phase takes on a new quality. On the one hand, the effects of their true self become stronger. They became aware of it in their encounter with the “Anointed.” On the other hand, these effects especially evoke the resistance of the characteristics of their earthly ego and the “demonic” powers in their own being. This again corresponds to the third phase of Jesus’ path. He, too, was confronted all the more intensely with the “devil” in his own being just after he had been “anointed” with the powers of the spirit. In the light of the true being, the false being really brings out its darkness. Both developments in the third phase of the spiritual path of the disciples of Jesus will also be described in a memorable way.

Destiny of the Son of Man in the Earthly World I

9:21 *But he warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, "It is necessary for the Son of Man to suffer many things and to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and to be raised on the third day."* (LEB)

After the pupils have become aware of the innermost basis of the human being, the true, spiritual self, then Jesus, embodiment of this true self, can speak to them about the secrets of human development and religion. But now he must talk about them, for from the becoming conscious of the true self also follow the becoming conscious of the position of this true self in the earthly world and the becoming conscious of its purpose. And since all religion is nothing else than the revelation of these mysteries and the path that leads to becoming aware of them, the words of Jesus are also the central core of every religion, particularly the religion of Christianity.

Jesus begins by explaining to his disciples the fate of the Son of Man in the earthly world. It is not just the fate of Jesus but the fate of every "image of God," every Son of Man, every true self, in the earthly world. This fate, prefigured by Jesus, is total rejection, even being killed by the earthly powers, for there is no greater contrast than that between the divine spirit and the principle of earthly egocentricity, which revolts against the spirit in self-will and regards itself as absolute.

The principle of earthly egocentricity is embodied in the Gospels by the elders, chief priests, and scribes – that is, not so much by political as by religious-dogmatic powers. For it is precisely in religious dogmatism, in adherence to one's own ideas about salvation and justice, that humanity's turning away from the divine spirit manifests itself most clearly. Two great aspects of the principle of egocentricity are at work in earthly people. On the one hand, there is the conscious self, which sets itself up as absolute and as separate from others and comes to terms with them one way or another. It is embodied by the political authorities – the emperor or king. On the other hand, there are the "demonic" powers rooted in the unconscious depths of the soul – the fanaticism and dogmatism of religious and ideological leaders.

When the divine spirit comes into the world, "demonic" powers

and the ego feel threatened. They feel that they have no right to exist as themselves, hence the inexorable enmity of egocentricity towards divine love, freedom, and unity, hence the murderous struggle of egocentricity against the divine spirit.

Thus, the spirit appearing in the earthly world will always have to suffer much and be rejected, yes, “killed.” It can embody on the stage of a people in a person such as Jesus. All earthly institutions, especially the religious and dogmatic ones that feel threatened in their status quo, will then fight this person. The same fight also takes place on the stage of each individual person in whom the image of God wants to unfold again and encounters the “demonic” tendencies in the unconscious and the ego. These will try everything to neutralize the spirit – to suppress it, to doubt it, to deny it, in other words, to “kill” it.

But what does it mean that the Son of Man is raised on the third day? When the image of God unfolds in people and becomes aware of itself, that is already a raising: a raising of the immortal soul, for the true self has then freed itself from all suppression, doubt, and denial by the earthly tendencies. It has overcome the “death” of latency and ineffectiveness.

But “raising” goes further. The personal carrier of the spirit, the earthly personality, is killed in the case of Jesus. But when the image of God, the original image of humanity, unfolds in a person, it also shapes the personality of this person. Such a person receives new thoughts, feelings, and aspirations from the spiritual world, and finally also the physical ability to implement these influences from the spiritual world. Gradually, a new personality living out of the spiritual world in regards to thinking, feeling, and willing arises, which is also equipped with new physical faculties, a “spirit body.” It replaces the old personality permeated by egocentricity together with its earthly body. When then the earthly personality dies – and it will die because it is a product of the transient world – this personality living out of the spiritual world is preserved together with its spirit body, for it has been built up from eternity – how could it die?

This manifestation of an immortal personality with a spirit body is the resurrection of which Jesus speaks. It is the raising of the “body.” It happens in three days. First of all, the new personality disengages definitively from all earthly influences – first day. Then, there is a stage of rest – second day. And finally, the impulses of the cosmic spirit completely permeate the newly built

personality – third day. The death of the earthly personality can no longer affect this spirit personality with its spirit body. It has overcome death. Jesus is a person who had built a new, invisible spirit personality with a spirit body from the awakened “image of God” already during his life. When his earthly, visible personality died, this immortal spirit personality with a spirit body arose.

This is the second task for which Jesus came into the world. First, the spirit awakened the true self, the immortal soul. That is enlightenment, the resurrection of the soul. Second, with the powers of the spirit, this enlightened soul built up a new, immortal personality as far as into the physical. That is the resurrection of the body. It can already happen during life but only manifests itself in full clarity after the death of the earthly body.

The words of Jesus about the Son of Man, his fate in the earthly world, and his purpose are introduced by the strict command of the master to his disciples to be silent about these connections in front of other people. Why? Jesus is in the process of completing the process of breaking down the earthly ego personality and building up the spirit personality. He does it in the special powers of the spirit with which he is “anointed.” This is nothing other than the spiritual path that he is walking. His disciples, who are closely connected with him soul-spiritually, are involved in this process. In his power, they go with him on the spiritual path. While this process is going on, they should not “talk about” it. It must take place within the human being without being disturbed by earthly forces. A complete separation must be maintained between the soul-spiritual processes inside and the earthly environment outside. If it were not so, the egocentric thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of the ego personality, which are supposed to be broken down in this process, could again and again be strengthened from the outside. And the newly emerging thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of the spirit personality, if mixed with earthly influences from outside, could again and again be misused by these for earthly purposes.

Therefore, it must be strictly ensured that such a mixture does not take place: that this double process can take place undisturbed in the human being and that none of it is carried into the outer, earthly world – that it is not “talked about.”

However, once the process is completed, once the structures and forces of the ego personality have been overcome and the spirit personality, firmly connected to the realm of the spirit, has risen,

there is no longer any danger of external interference. Then, on the contrary, the risen spirit personality has the duty to “speak” into the world and to work into the earthly world.

As it turns out, the disciples do not understand what Jesus is telling them. In what follows, he explains the processes to them two more times, that is, altogether three times. And the second and third time, it is explicitly stated, “But they did not understand this saying” (Luke 9:45, NRSV) and “they did not grasp what was said” (Luke 18:34, NRSV). Until the resurrection of Jesus, even afterwards, they do not understand, for they are “foolish” and “slow of heart” (Luke 24:25, NRSV).

What can they not understand? That the true self and a new spirit personality will be raised, not the earthly ego personality; that the kingdom of God, to which the true self is raised, is a state of the true self and of a spiritual community, not a perfection of earthly humanity and earthly society; that, on the contrary, the raising of the true self means the downfall of egocentricity, and the rise of the kingdom of God in the long run means the downfall of all egocentric social and political structures; but that for the time being, the true self must suffer a lot and be rejected on its way to resurrection and that the body in which it lives must be killed because the earthly powers in their egocentricity feel threatened by the true self and believe that they kill it by killing its body.

Why can Jesus’ disciples not understand? Because they are caught in the illusion that their ego personality will be elevated to splendor and power on the spiritual path. They believe that Jesus will establish an earthly realm of peace with them as rulers and that he will powerfully put his enemies in their place instead of being killed by them.

Jesus has not yet personally experienced the raising of the true self with a spirit body. Only when he has experienced it himself will his disciples, strengthened by his power, be able to experience it as well. They will be so strengthened in the true self that they can dissolve the egocentricity in their own being and endure the persecution from outside. Only when Jesus has accomplished the resurrection of the true self with a spirit body will they have the strength to overcome the fear of these processes and to dissolve the illusions that their ego constantly creates about the spiritual path. Only then can they themselves also experience the awakening of the true self and understand through their own experience what that means.

Task of the Human Being: to Follow

9:23 *And he said to them all, "If anyone wants to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross every day and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life on account of me, this person will save it. ²⁵ For what is a person benefited if he gains the whole world but loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of this person when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. ²⁷ But I tell you truly, there are some of those standing here who will never experience death until they see the kingdom of God."* (LEB)

The subjective experiences on the spiritual path, while they are being lived, must not be told to outsiders. That would cause interference. But general philosophical information can be given about the goal, steps and conditions of the path. This is what Jesus does by speaking "to them all." He explains the conditions that must be met by someone who walks the spiritual path.

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." Jesus is saying, If people want to fulfill their purpose as individuals like me, namely, to overcome death and be resurrected as image of God and as spirit personality, then they must meet three conditions.

First, they have to deny themselves. This means: The pupils on the spiritual path, urged by the image of God in their own being, must dissolve the obstacles that stand in the way of the development of this image. All of their egocentric behaviors and ultimately also their drive for self-maintenance must dissolve in the true self, in unity with the spiritual world.

Second, the pupils on the spiritual path must take up their cross on a daily basis. This not only means that they patiently accept all the blows of fate and annoyances that usually afflict earthly people. The image of God begins to grow in the pupils. Because this image of God follows completely different laws than the earthly world, incomprehension, hatred and persecution by the earthly world are the result. This is the special "cross" that the pupils take upon themselves on a daily basis on the spiritual path.

Third, they must follow Jesus. On their own, they can neither deny their ego nor take up their daily cross. They can only do this in the footsteps of the "Anointed." All people are spiritually and emotionally connected to one another like the cells of a large

organism. When a person such as Jesus paves the way to the resurrection of the true self and the corresponding spirit personality, this path is opened to all other people, the “cells” of the organism of humanity. In the spiritual powers of the Anointed who brings these powers into the world, they can also walk the path of the Anointed. They can follow Jesus. They can awaken the image of God and the corresponding spirit personality, at the same time denying their ego and taking their daily cross upon themselves. That is the role of the Anointed as Redeemer. He does not miraculously resurrect believers from death and thereby redeem them. Rather, he enables them to walk a spiritual path in his powers through which they themselves overcome the cause of death. That is redemption from death.

In accordance with this, the explanations of Jesus about the spiritual path describe exactly what he experiences and will experience. He denies himself, that is, he gives up all the egocentric tendencies of his earthly being. He takes up his “cross,” namely, the persecution by the elders, chief priests, and scribes and being killed. And he is raised: The true self in him becomes conscious and through a spirit personality becomes active. His path is identical to the path of those who follow him. Conversely: The path of those who follow him is identical to his path. They too accomplish in the powers of the spirit to which he gives them access what he accomplishes in the power of the spirit.

Jesus further explains the need for the spiritual path. This is the realization of the inherent purpose of humanity. When people fulfill their purpose, they again become consciously one with the eternal spiritual world from which they emerged as images of God and live forever. When they do not fulfill this purpose, they remain separated from the spiritual world and subjected to death. “For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.”

Wanting to save *their* life means wanting to maintain at any price the life of egocentricity and revolt against the spiritual world. But this maintains the rift between the ego and the world of the spirit, for the ego continually recreates this rift through its self-absolutization and arrogance. Someday, exhausted by this constant struggle against the spiritual laws and over its own existence, it will die. Losing *their* life “for my sake” is the opposite behavior. Some people recognize that egocentric thinking, feeling, willing, and acting conflict with the spiritual order inherent in

them. They gradually dissolve egocentricity in a process whereby the rift between them and the spiritual order disappears. One with the spiritual order, the true self begins to recover and build up a spirit personality appropriate to it, which is its perfect expression. It can no longer die, the people save their true life, their immortality.

The words “for my sake” are essential. Individuals can give up their egocentricity also for a master, an ideology, an ideal, a people, and a faith. They can lose their life for their own ideas and for outside influences. But thereby they do not save their true life. On the contrary, they will then become a weak-willed victim of *their* master, *their* ideology, *their* ideal, *their* people, or *their* faith. They become dependent on external factors or “demons” that dominate them. They only serve their inherent purpose when they lose their life “*for my sake,*” that is, for the sake of “Jesus,” who embodies the true self of every human being. Only those who lose their egocentricity for the sake of their true self, for the sake of *their actual identity*, will save this true identity and thus their true life. They will unfold the image of God in themselves and thus gain their real freedom. Even suffering a martyr’s death for Jesus would be a relinquishment of the ego for an external authority not for the image of God in their own being. Such a martyr would not have saved the real life, the immortal image of God.

In order to emphasize his words, Jesus even appeals to people’s self-interest. “What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?”

But it does not help them to save their egoic life even if they would gain the whole world. The self-willed ego strives to gain the world; that is its innermost urge. It wants to dominate, to have prestige, to possess. But that is exactly what opens and maintains the rift between it and the spiritual world. That is exactly what makes people mortal and brings them death and doom. Yes, it additionally brings them “punishment” because through their efforts for worldly gain, through their striving for power, prestige, and possessions, they call up the resistance of other people. When many want to gain the world, there must necessarily be conflicts. The consequences are constant struggle, inevitable defeats, and hatred, quite apart from the inner state of such world conquerors. They have to be incessantly worried about safeguarding their assets and afraid of opponents. This is truly a “punishment” they suffer due to themselves. So it is not in the interest of people to

save *their* life, even if they would gain the whole world thereby.

If people were independent of each other, they might not find it difficult to follow the voice of the image of God and lose their life to unfold their true identity. They would realize that the decisive value is the image of God, immortality, while the pursuit for power, prestige, and possessions is without value in comparison. They would be able to devote themselves to the crucial value. But individuals live among other people in a world whose highest values are power, prestige, and possessions. And they are only too easily swayed by the judgments of others. This is one of the greatest obstacles on the spiritual path, perhaps the greatest: people's dependence on the opinions of others. They are ashamed of their own insights, evaluations, and actions when they contradict the evaluations of the environment, and therefore they omit doing what would be in their highest interest.

Jesus addresses this obstacle: "Those who are ashamed of me and of my words." Those who do not hold to the image of God in their own being and to the effects, the "words," emanating from it and who behave in this way because they fear the judgment of the world, its ridicule, and its persecution will not receive the power of the spirit, for the spirit can only stand by those and will not be "ashamed" of them if the people concerned hold to the image of God. Only an uncompromising turn to the path recognized as correct and to the spiritual powers that make it possible gives these powers the opportunity to support the pupils on their path. But the divine world cannot turn to and make its power available to those who out of weakness and fear of the opinions of the earthly world turn away from the values of the divine world and are "ashamed" of them. The divine world will be "ashamed" of these people.

This is true as long as the earthly world is triumphant and its values are the ones that count. However, this is also true when the earthly values are overridden and exposed as valueless. Then also the people who held to them will be exposed as to their lack of value. The divine values will manifest their validity. The Son of Man will be apparent in his glory, in the glory of the "Father," that is, the spiritual world, and in the glory of the "angels," the essence of the spiritual world. But then there is no bridge to those people who denied these divine values. The Son of Man will "be ashamed" of them.

When will that be? When will the values of the divine world be

apparent in all their glory and apply everywhere, while the values of the earthly world are exposed as worthless? When will the kingdom of God, the validity of the values of the divine world, which are unity, freedom, and love, have come and be visible? It will have come when Jesus has gone his path to the end and in the power of the spirit has overcome the egocentricity of the earthly world: the drives for power, prestige, and possessions. Then the values of the earthly world are overcome and the values of the divine world are set in their place. The earthly values are overcome in *one* human being, Jesus. At this one place in the organism of humanity, the kingdom of God will have come and the new values will have been realized. In the consciousness of Jesus, the glory of the image of God, the glory of Father and the angels will be realized; the kingdom of God will have been brought to the earth. But also all those who go the path to unfolding the image of God as he did will realize the kingdom of God in their being and become aware of it: see it.

Some listeners of Jesus to whom he explains these facts at the moment will have attained to this state still before their physical death. Also in their being, the image of God will consciously show itself and reveal the glory of God and the Son of Man. They will see the kingdom of God still before their physical death. Their “imminent expectation” is thus completely justified, for the return of the Son of Man consists of people becoming conscious of the image of God in themselves, whereby they become conscious at the same time of the spiritual world and the glory of the risen Son of Man, the Father, and the angels. The absolute validity of the divine values, the kingdom of God, manifests for them.

Again and again, since those explanations by Jesus, there have been people in whom the return of the Son of Man occurred. It has occurred in individual people throughout human history to the present. Nobody needs to wait for a day of judgment in an infinitely distant future to experience the return of the Son of Man. Anybody can experience this return still before their physical death when they are on the spiritual path.

Another thing is the return of the Son of Man not only for individual people but for all of humanity. Will there be a time when the earthly values will be unmasked to the whole of humanity as worthless and the spiritual values become apparent and manifest? When the kingdom of God will come for and be seen by all of humanity? This point in time depends on how many

people who are disappointed by the earthly values and exhausted from the struggle for their realization recognize their real interest: the realization of the values of the divine world, whereby death is overcome and the life in the immortal image of God is saved.

The task of the Son of Man is to lose the old ego personality in the powers of the spirit in order to build up the true life, a new immortal spirit personality: and not only for himself but also to make this process possible for all other people. The consequences of this process are illustrated by the story of the “transfiguration of Jesus.” It shows in a kind of snapshot the state of the new spirit personality of Jesus at this stage of its activity. And it demonstrates to the disciples of Jesus concretely what Jesus means with the resurrection on the third day.

Fourth Milestone of the Gospel of Luke: Transfiguration

The “transfiguration” of Jesus is the fourth milestone of the Gospel of Luke. It signifies the fourth phase of the activity of the spiritual impulse in the world and at the same time the entry of Jesus into the fourth phase of the spiritual path. That it is a decisive milestone follows from the world of the spirit appearing directly as “light” and “voice” and from Jesus thereby being in direct contact with the spiritual world.

The first phase of the activity of the spiritual impulse in the world was that it *touched* the world: the announcement of the birth of John of the Baptist and Jesus; the second phase that it firmly *connected* with the world: the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus; the third that it became *conscious* in a human being, Jesus, whereby this person, and thus humanity, was “anointed” by the spirit. The powers of the spirit were poured into this person, and thus into humanity. They now act in a healing and liberating way in humanity.

The fourth phase is that these powers *change* the whole world and provoke positive or negative reactions. The positive reactions come back as fruits to the giver of the powers, the negative as resistance, which leads in the fifth phase to the “cross.” The fourth phase is thus a phase of the changing, transfiguring activity of the spiritual impulse.

An individual goes through the same phases on the spiritual

path. After the period of contact by the spiritual impulse, which meets a receptive, “believing” soul, follows a phase of the implementation and consolidation of the spiritual powers in one’s own being – a phase of soul work; then a phase of becoming conscious of these powers, resulting in special consequences – the temptations; and fourth the phase of a new way of life out of the spiritual powers. This way of life is determined by the spirit-filled true self, no longer by egocentricity, and changes thinking, feeling, and willing of the human being into a new personality.

John the Baptist is seemingly no longer active in this fourth phase. He has been beheaded by Herod. The voice of conscience has been silenced by the political power cynically abusing the religious tradition. But John the Baptist has already been raised. The preparatory aspect of the spiritual impulse has arisen in the realizing aspect and continues in it.

There is always a connection between the development of the master and that of his pupils. The development of the master is dependent on his pupils and vice versa. When the pupils make progress, this enables the master to stimulate the next phase of the spiritual path in them, activating new powers in himself. And only if certain phases of development have taken place in the master can he help the pupils who are following him on their way. So far, Jesus, standing in the third phase of his spiritual path, had called his disciples (the first phase of their spiritual path), organized and sent them out (their second phase), and led them to their third phase, the awareness of the true self.

The third phase of the pupils is now in a special relation to the fourth phase of the master. Therefore, the transfiguration of Jesus follows the recognition by Peter.

The “Transfiguration” of Jesus

9:28 *Now it happened that about eight days after these words, he took along Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹And as he was praying, the appearance of his face became different, and his clothing became white, gleaming like lightning. ³⁰And behold, two men were talking with him, who were Moses and Elijah, ³¹who appeared in glory and were speaking about his departure which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem.*

³²Now Peter and those with him were very sleepy, but when

they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men who were standing with him. ³³And it happened that as they were going away from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here. And let us make three shelters, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah," not knowing what he was saying. ³⁴And while he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered into the cloud. ³⁵And a voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to him!" ³⁶And after the voice had occurred, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen. (LEB)

After the becoming conscious of their true self, the disciples of Jesus are now able to "see." They have an awareness of the spiritual world and the processes in it, albeit it is still very undeveloped. Thus, they can see what happens with their "master" in the fourth phase of the spiritual path. Jesus takes the three leaders of the group of disciples: Peter, who represents the conscious will purified by the spiritual impulse; John, embodiment of conscious feeling permeated by the spiritual impulse; and James, representing conscious understanding illuminated by the spiritual impulse. And these three disciples in the third phase of their path will now learn to consciously see in the spiritual world.

The event takes place "eight days" after the recognition of Peter and the explanations of Jesus about the spiritual path. This is not primarily an indication of time but means that the disciples, as part of their becoming conscious, have concluded a seven-stage development in which the explanations of Jesus have worked in them and prepared them for the concrete vision of the explained facts. The "eighth day" the first day after a complete creative cycle, refers to a new level on which new opportunities open up: possibilities of seeing into the spiritual world.

But also Jesus himself has prepared for this event. He goes with his disciples up on a "mountain," symbol for a spiritual locale, thus leading them to the dimension of the spiritual world, and he "prays": He stands as the "Anointed" in closest connection to the spiritual world and its powers and now consciously connects to them. He raises his consciousness and his being to them.

The nature of Jesus' consciousness and personality at this stage of his path becomes apparent in the light of this spiritual dimension. It is shown what his healing and liberating activity for others has brought about retroactively in him: how his activity in

the third phase of the path, his work with the disciples and for others, has elevated him into the fourth phase of the path, the phase of the glorification of the whole being through the spiritual powers.

The “face” of Jesus is an image for his consciousness, his “clothes” a picture for his personality in its three hitherto changed aspects. (The material body as the fourth aspect of the personality is not yet decisively changed in this phase of development.) Thinking, feeling, and willing surround the soul, the true self, like sheaths, like “clothes.” But Jesus’ personality has become “dazzling white.” The totality of his thoughts, feelings, and aspirations has become as bright as the light of the spirit, as they were built up on the spiritual path from the true self, which is “anointed” by the spirit, and now live out of it.

The ordinary human egoic personality as a totality of the thoughts, feelings, and aspirations (and the material body) is dark: thoughts, feelings, and aspirations (and the material body) are permeated by egocentricity, which is why they cannot be open to the light of the spirit. They are only open to impressions of the sensory world and therefore transient as these impressions are. A spirit personality illuminated by the spiritual world, on the other hand, is attuned in its structure to this eternal spiritual world – according to thoughts, feelings, and aspirations – and is immortal. (Jesus does not yet have an immortal spirit body as a fourth aspect of the spirit personality in this stage of his path.)

Such a spirit consciousness, clothed by a spirit personality that is its expression, is conscious of the structures and beings of the spiritual world. That Moses and Elijah as beings of the spiritual world are speaking to Jesus, namely about his “departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem,” shows that Jesus mission and task are determined by and embedded in the spiritual world. Moses’ burial place was not found (Deuteronomy 34:6) – a hint that his true self and personality had withdrawn from the earthly world and were living consciously in the world of the spirit. Moses is the representative of the “old covenant,” the “law giver,” who prepares people for the spiritual path through external laws. But at the end of the “old covenant” stands Elijah, embodiment of the consciousness that the external law is only an image for the inner law inscribed in the true self. Elijah “ascended into heaven” (2 Kings 2:11, NRSV) – a picture that he had left the earthly world with a conscious true self and a spirit personality. He is the one

who prepares the way for the new covenant and marks the transition from the external law to the inner law inscribed in the true self: a prefiguration of John the Baptist.

When these two beings stand with Jesus, the Anointed, this shows that his task has been prepared long beforehand from the spiritual world and that there is a continuous chain of messengers from the world of the spirit – also that is an ever more extensive revelation of the spiritual world in the earthly world. First, the outer law – Moses – which consciously makes humanity aware of its state in the earthly world and inaugurates a development towards the inherent purpose of humanity. Then, hope for freedom on the basis of the inner law – Elijah – the realization that there is a true self that will eventually manifest, a true self whose inner structure is only represented by the outer law. And finally, the Anointed, the crowning and fulfillment of the developmental path of humanity: the true, spirit-filled self, which unfolds according to its inner lawfulness, which is also the lawfulness of the spiritual world, and is therefore freedom. So Moses and Elijah are only conceivable in view of the Anointed, and the latter is not conceivable without the preparation by Moses and Elijah.

Thus, the “transfiguration of Jesus” is not only a demonstration of the nature of his consciousness and being, a demonstration of the spirit personality under construction, which, after the death of the physical body, will be resurrected for eternity. It also presents the fact that this process is the inherent purpose of humanity – prepared and enabled by the spiritual world. And when the three talk about Jesus’ “departure” in Jerusalem, it shows that the spiritual world accompanies the process Jesus is currently going through until the end: the final demise of the egocentric personality and the final resurrection of the true self with its spirit personality, including a spirit body.

“Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep.” They are initially in the state of earthly sense consciousness. Such a consciousness sees in a person such as Jesus none of the thoughts, feelings, and aspirations that are permeated by the light of the spirit. It also does not see the structures and beings of the spiritual world. Such people “sleep” in relation to the spiritual world although they may be wide awake to the sense world. But now Peter and his companions “awaken.” Their consciousness for the spiritual world opens. And only such a consciousness is able to

see the spirit personality of Jesus and the beings of the spiritual world in their glory. Such a consciousness too is already permeated to some extent by the light of the spirit and as an “eye” of the spirit can perceive its world. Nevertheless, when it looks for the first time into the realms of the spirit, it is still disoriented. It cannot properly judge what it encounters and does not draw the right conclusions from it, thus, the comment about Peter “not knowing what he said.”

Namely, Peter wants to set up three new cults in regard to the three spiritual beings, who represent three developmental states of humanity. The suggestion, to “make dwellings,” refers to Exodus, Chapter 24 and 25, as the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain is modeled in many respects after the Old Testament account told there. Moses receives the order from God to provide “a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8, NRSV). And Moses built the “tabernacle,” symbol of the presence of God among the people of Israel. Later, the tabernacle gives way to the temple built by Solomon. Thus, a cult is established that expresses the special connection of God with humanity at this stage of their development. Humanity is to follow outer laws, rituals, and sacrificial regulations as a preparation for a later spiritual path.

But Peter is mistaken in two ways. First, the stage of preparation – Moses – and the stage of transition – Elijah – are now over. The prophetic stage of the outer law, in which it was meaningful and necessary to give people outer rituals, laws, and cults because their consciousness was generally not yet ripe to recognize the inner, spiritual law of the true self, has come to an end. And secondly, Jesus is the representative of fulfillment. He embodies freedom based on the divine law inscribed on the true self. He cannot be assigned to the Old Testament stage because he is qualitatively different from Moses and Elijah. At the moment of fulfillment, there is no need for external cults and “dwellings.” The human being becomes a “tabernacle” and temple of God. Jesus is such a temple in which the image of God and thus also the “Father” lives, for he and the father are one. The religion that is valid from now on is the religion of freedom on the basis of inner, consciously recognized spiritual laws. If there are perhaps still outer temples or places of worship, then these exist only to support the development of this inner freedom; they are no longer absolutely necessary. In principle, “parables” are no longer necessary from the moment of fulfillment because now people look directly into

the world of the spirit and no longer need any signs that point to it.

The scene intensifies. After showing the state of Jesus as a spirit personality and his being embedded in the structures of the spiritual world, the spiritual world itself becomes active in order to anchor the activity of Jesus in the world. A “cloud” comes just as in the Old Testament account of Moses’ stay on Mount Sinai. The cloud is an image for a concentration of the powers of the spiritual world. One can speak of a special “power field” or “radiation field” that is formed around Jesus and his disciples. The disciples who get into this “power field,” this divine activity, are “terrified,” for not only their earthly consciousness, also their just forming spiritual consciousness is still very undeveloped compared to the power of this divine concentration of forces. They feel their weakness and powerlessness in the face of this glory of God; they are “terrified.”

If the “cloud” is a concentration of powers of the spiritual world, then the “voice” is its structure, the creative “Word” that emanates from it and gives structure and development to all existence. The passage refers to the baptism of Jesus. At that time, the “voice” said, “You are my son, today I have begotten you” (Luke 3:22 in some ancient manuscripts, Hebrews 5:5, NRSV). In Jesus, the spiritual world became conscious; the image of God, the mature true self, was filled with the spirit of God and was born as the Son of God, who received his life from the “Father.” Now, at the “transfiguration,” the Son of God has “grown up.” A spirit personality has grown out of the spirit-filled true self through its activity in the world, which will radically change the world and humanity. The “voice” of God refers to this great change when it says, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” Back then on Sinai, Moses was commissioned to bring the outer law to humanity. Now Jesus is being affirmed by God as the “Son,” the pattern of the spirit-filled true self, chosen to show to humanity that pattern through his life. And not only to show it but to awaken the dormant true self in other people through the power emanating from its existence and also to invite and enable them to follow a spiritual path. God gives humanity this living pattern so that people can orient themselves to it, awaken the image of God in their own being, and thus fulfill their purpose. This impulse from the spiritual world is directed not only to the hearts of Jesus’ disciples but to all people: “listen to him,” says the “voice” from the cloud.

The disciples, however, who have seen and heard all of this in the spiritual waking state, “keep silent” about it. If they were to “talk” about it, that is, to reveal their new experiences and capabilities to the earthly world, they would drag them down to a level that does not correspond to the “mountain.” This would weaken them and rob them of their effectiveness in their own being.

Driving out Demons: the Demon “Self-Compulsion”

9:37 Now it happened that on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. 38 And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, saying, “Teacher, I beg you to look with concern on my son, because he is my only son! 39 And behold, a spirit seizes him and suddenly he screams, and it convulses him with foam and rarely withdraws from him, battering him severely. 40 And I begged your disciples that they would expel it, and they were not able to do so.” 41 So Jesus answered and said, “O unbelieving and perverted generation! How long will I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here!” 42 And while he was still approaching, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. 43 And they were all astounded at the impressiveness of God. (LEB)

In the third phase of the spiritual path of the disciples of Jesus, the focus is on their task to allow the true self to unfold, while the ego, the earthly personality, learns to give itself completely to this true self and to be its expression and instrument. This is only possible because the disciples have become aware of their true self. Because only in this way can they, in contrast to this, also become aware of the full extent of the egocentricity of their being. And the awareness of egocentricity in the powers of the spirit is the only way to gradually dissolve this egocentricity.

Parallel to this spiritual confrontation of the disciples with their egocentricity, Luke describes a case of demonic possession. The possessed is the “only son” of a man from the crowd. “Son” is the essence of the father in traditional symbolism, which emerges from him, be it as a concrete descendant, be it, in relation to an individual, as his conscious ego, which emerges from the background of the unconscious. From this indication by the

evangelist, “only son,” it can be concluded that the narrative concerns problems of the ego.

If we continue to assume that the diseases and possessions of the people described in the gospel always reflect the level on which the disciples are currently working spiritually, then it must concern a demon that has to do especially with problems of the ego of the personality. It could have split off from the ego such that the ego forces itself to manifest a certain soul state. The ego ideal of this person has become independent and practices a tremendous compulsion on him. It tries to bring his ego – with the ego – forcibly into a state corresponding to this ego ideal. His striving is all the more furious and fanatical because he secretly knows that his ego cannot possibly achieve the goal and is therefore tormented by a justified fear of failure. In this fear he doubles his efforts, the fear increases – a veritable vicious circle.

The demon of “self-compulsion” does not allow the ego, the “only son” of the supplicant, to think, feel, and act sensibly. It is dragged and tortured in this and that direction, like a manic depressive person whose state alternates between euphoria and depression. One time, the person harassed by this demon is optimistic that he can achieve his ego ideal and rejoices over apparent progress. Another time, when all his accomplishments give way to a yawning inner emptiness, he torments himself with self-accusations and pessimistic thoughts.

Why can Jesus’ disciples not cast out this particular demon? After all, sent out by Jesus, they had been able to cast out demons heretofore!

The previous demons, corresponding to the first and second phase of the path of the disciples, were about ideas, emotions, and aspirations becoming independent or about unbridled drives. They can be driven out by powers of consciousness that are open to the spirit. But now the disciples are in the third phase of their path. After they have become aware of their true self, their task is to also become aware of the characteristics and functions of their ego. They have to deal with the tendencies of the ego in their own being conflicting with the true self.

In this situation, they encounter the “demon” of self-compulsion. Its way is: The ego forces itself – always in vain – to realize a certain ego ideal. The disciples, themselves preoccupied with the problem of the ego, are unable to impart strength and insight to others to correct this demonic convulsion of the ego. They have too

little faith, that is, their own openness to the true self, from which alone healing powers could flow, is not a given at the moment. This is to what Jesus' reproach refers: "You faithless and perverse generation."

Applied to the individual, this story means that when parts of the ego have become prey of the demon of self-compulsion, then other parts of the ego (the "disciples") that have already opened to the true self are in a difficult position. How should the conscious parts of the ego (the "disciples") recognize the nature and function of the ego when they are affected by the demon of self-compulsion? Their own openness to the true self is currently called into question – their faith is weak – which is why their strength is not enough to recognize and overcome the demon of self-compulsion. Only an absolute trust in the true self could cause it to act in this precarious situation and to cast out the demon.

Jesus, representative of the true self, undoes the urge of the egoic consciousness to achieve a particular ego ideal. The pupil in the third phase of the path who surrenders to the impulses from the true self will experience that they are stronger than the demonic tendency of the ego to force itself into an ideal state. The ego can breathe again; demonic self-compulsion has disappeared. The ego can reflect on its task and properly do the activities for which it is intended. It is given back to its "father," the overall organization of this human being.

No stronger contrast is conceivable than that between the state of Jesus that is described in the "transfiguration" and the condition of the person possessed by the demon. On the one hand is the total surrender of all thoughts, feelings, and aspirations, together with the egoic consciousness to the spiritual world, which dissolves all egocentricity and transfigures the whole personality into a spirit personality, irradiated by the powers of the spirit. On the other side is the demonic attempt, with thoughts, feelings, and aspirations including the egoic consciousness, to take the reins into one's own hands and force oneself into an ideal state. This only leads to unbearable tension, to the highest degree of separation from the spiritual world and to rebellion against it. The symptoms of possession of this boy have been associated with the "falling sickness," epilepsy. And in fact, the rebellion of the ego against the spiritual world leads to intense cramping at the psychic level. It can sometimes lead to explosive seizures, where – as known by epileptics – the spiritual world can flash into

consciousness and disappear again. A definitive solution to this cramping can only come from the true self, which, when the person surrenders to its impulses, gradually dissolves all egocentricity and transfigures thoughts, feelings, aspirations, and egoic consciousness.

Destiny of the Son of Man in the Earthly World II

9:43 *But while they were all marveling at all the things that he was doing, he said to his disciples, ⁴⁴“You take these words to heart, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.” ⁴⁵But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they could not understand it. And they were afraid to ask him about this statement. (LEB)*

For the second time, Jesus tries to explain to his disciples the fate of the Son of Man. “Let these words sink into your ears.” The task of the pupils in the third phase of spiritual path is the growth of the spiritual consciousness and, against this background, an intensive bringing to awareness of the egocentricity of earthly humanity. At the beginning of this stage, they had become conscious of their true self, the true self of the human being, which they also encountered in Jesus as the “Anointed.” From this consciousness, the insight would gradually have to mature of the fate that awaits the true self of the human being in the earthly world.

Therefore, Jesus describes again the consequences arising from the true self becoming conscious and active in the earthly world. Since the earthly world is regulated by completely different values than the spiritual world, it must be hostile to the spiritual world. When the Son of Man lives from the true self and shows this life to others and enables it in them, he must inevitably be delivered into the hands of earthly people. And all his disciples trying to live in his power from the true self will have to share this fate.

No wonder that they do not understand this saying since the values of the earthly world, power, honor, and possessions, are still active in them even though they are already on the spiritual path. They believe resurrection means a glorification of their egoic personality. They believe the kingdom of God is an ideal earthly society with Jesus as king and they as his helpers. They believe Jesus will defeat all his enemies. How should they not be afraid of

the outcome that Jesus predicts, which is just the opposite of these ideas!

And this fear blocks their cognitive faculty. It does not allow insight into this connection described by Jesus. The meaning of the words of Jesus was hidden to them. They are even more afraid to investigate this connection between life from the true self and threat to the earthly ego and to ask Jesus about it. The passage clearly shows the internal conflict between the spiritual impulses and the earthly aspirations of the disciples in this phase of their path. The impulses from the true self stimulate their thinking into gaining insight into the relationship between the nature of the true self and the fate of true self. But their thinking is hindered from opening to this insight by the fear resulting from their earthly aspirations. It is as if the fear does not want them to understand. Thus, the formulation, “its meaning was concealed from them, so that they could not perceive it.” The fear hid the truth in front of them so that they did not understand it.

As long as Jesus has not yet set the example of the resurrection of the true self, has not yet completely dissolved egocentricity in the powers of the spirit, which always produces illusions, and has not fully endured the hatred of his enemies and the killing by them, the disciples are not yet able to do so. Therefore, they are filled by tremendous fear, have to maintain their illusions, even for self-protection, and cannot possibly understand.

Temptations of the Pupils

Craving for Recognition

9:46 *And an argument developed among them as to who of them might be greatest. 47 But Jesus, because he knew the thoughts of their hearts, took hold of a child and had him stand beside him 48 and said to them, “Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For the one who is least among you all—this one is great.”* (LEB)

At the same time, Luke also describes a source of their fear: the craving for recognition. The thought arises in them as to who is the greatest among them. This too is typical of the third phase of the spiritual path. When the true self becomes conscious and this

consciousness begins to unfold, the tendencies of the ego spring up even more. They deliberately push themselves into the foreground because they feel threatened by the powers of the spirit. Previously, people naturally lived habitually with these tendencies. They did not have the inner distance to them to notice them. But now they become conscious of the order of the spirit; they gain a new basis of consciousness. The powers of earthly people appear in contrast before their consciousness and can be recognized as to their nature. Jesus had experienced exactly the same thing at the beginning of the third phase of his path in the form of the temptations in the wilderness.

Jesus, the knowledge that arises in the pupils from the true self, explains to them in the face of the increased activity of the craving for prestige what takes the place of the craving for prestige in the spiritual world: the pure being of the spiritual people who live in unity with the world of the spirit. They are without presuppositions out of themselves, therefore do not need any recognition from outside, and give away their strength to everyone else.

The opposites of the craving for prestige in the earthly world are modesty and humility, also earthly traits and beautiful traits when they are genuine and not just a disguised craving for prestige. But in the spiritual world, the absence of the craving for prestige means far more than just modesty. There, new powers and values take the place of the old ones. The true self is pure function: not thinking of oneself and not putting oneself in the foreground. This is perfect objectivity that only does what the moment requires and does not set egocentric demands and expectations on the environment. In terms of the earthly values of honor and fame, this is really the least: not the slightest demand for prestige. However, in relation to the values in the world of the spirit, it is the greatest: unity with the order of the spirit. It is real strength, independence from all needs for recognition, resting in the stream of spiritual powers, moving in this stream.

Jesus illustrates this condition through a “child.” The child still possesses characteristics analogous to the spiritual world. Compared to adults, it is unselfconscious, not calculating, spontaneous, and without intentions. It lives in the present and acts according to first impressions. Adults, on the other hand, judge according to the experiences of the past, which provide them with firm standards, and think about how they could make the

present serve the future. The child shows itself how it is; adults tend to disguise their behavior. They manipulate things and people in a calculated manner. So the “child” can become a parable for the spiritual person who lives spontaneously from the true self. It is small in ambition and calculation compared to the adult.

When Jesus says, “Whoever welcomes this child in my name,” this does not mean that he asks people to adopt children for his sake. It is to be understood again as a parable and means: Admit into yourself the essence of the child in so far as it symbolizes the characteristics of the true self – that is, in my name, for the sake of the true self. Admit this essence completely. When you do that, you admit me, the role model of the true self. And with that you admit “the one who sent me”: the “Father,” the spirit.

Collective Craving for Prestige

9:49 *And John answered and said, “Master, we saw someone expelling demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him, because he does not follow in company with us.”⁵⁰ But Jesus said to him, “Do not prevent him, because whoever is not against you is for you.”* (LEB)

The craving for prestige can manifest individually but also collectively. The collective craving for prestige claims that one’s own spiritual community is the most eminent and the only one that can bring salvation.

The spiritual community of Jesus’ disciples works out of the power of the spiritual world. They have cast out “demons” in “Jesus’ name” and helped other people to inner freedom. In “Jesus’ name” means by the order and power of the spiritual world, the true self, which Jesus symbolizes. Other spiritual communities and individuals also work in this sense in “Jesus’ name” and cast out “demons” on this basis. So it was in Jesus’ time; so it is in all times.

When they work in the name of the true self, in “Jesus’ name,” they do not need at all to outwardly carry the name of Jesus or of Christianity on their banners. What is essential is that they work out of the powers of the spirit, no matter under which outer religious or philosophical label they appear.

Do all of these communities have to come together outwardly? Jesus denies it. Why should there not be in the world several

spiritual communities with different organizations and designations as long as they work on the same spiritual basis and with the same spiritual goal – in the “name of the true self”? As long as they work out of and in the power and order of the spirit and not against them, they work for the kingdom of God.

It would be unreasonable to demand that there should be only a single spiritual community in the world or to claim this or that community were the only legitimate one. The craving for prestige with its delimiting and competitive thinking is misplaced in the spiritual work for humanity. The multiple communities, their working methods, forms of organization, and cultural conditions have their legitimacy. Decisive is only whether a community really works in “Jesus’ name,” that is, in direct or indirect connection with the spiritual world.

It is not a coincidence that the pupil John asks this question, for he represents the feeling aspect of consciousness. The root of the craving for prestige lies in sentiment, in the feeling one has to represent something, less in the mind and will.

Craving for Power

9:51 *Now it happened that when the days were approaching for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵²And he sent messengers before him, and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans in order to prepare for him. ⁵³And they did not welcome him because he was determined to go to Jerusalem. ⁵⁴Now when the disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to call fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” ⁵⁵But he turned around and rebuked them, ⁵⁶and they proceeded to another village. (LEB)*

The craving for prestige can increase to fanaticism, to a megalomania that does not allow anything beside itself as counting and considers itself as a measure of all things. If it connects also with the drive for power, the craving to act as judge and executioner of other people, it can lead to devastating effects. That these possibilities are also present in the spiritual pupil is shown in the story in which John and James in a collective power mania want to destroy people who think differently. In John, the craving for prestige in the form of megalomania has pushed into the foreground, and in James, who represents the mental aspect of the

pupils, power mania controlled by the dogmatic mind.

The principal contrast between “orthodox” believers and those differently minded is represented in this story by the concrete contrast between Jews and Samaritans. The orthodox Jews used to worship God in Jerusalem. The Samaritans who lived in the Jewish tradition but had also taken up “pagan” ideas prayed to God on their “mountains” and had their own sanctuary on a mountain. They now reject Jesus, who had his “face set to Jerusalem,” as a Jew and do not take him into their community. To this rejection, John and James react with extermination intentions.

What is behind such a violent reaction? What is behind the collective megalomania and power mania that leads people to believe their own spiritual community is the only valid one and that they have the right, even the duty, to destroy other communities that diverge from “orthodoxy”?

The disciples feel challenged. Dissenters are a danger to their own “basis of faith,” for the power and the order that they believe they have built up on the spiritual path so far. However, how weak must such a basis of faith be that it sees itself at risk from other beliefs and must defend itself so fanatically! What way of life cannot tolerate other convictions and the resulting rejection! People with a fanatical striving for prestige and power know secretly that they are nothing, that there is nothing in them. This is the only reason that they have to secure recognition from others or superiority over others at all costs; only because of this do they have to acquire a dogma to which they can cling in their weakness. Their ego inflates to such dimensions as to compensate for the feeling of nothingness. And when apparent stability and apparent truth are questioned, the truth of nothing threatens to emerge. That causes great fear. This truth must therefore by no means come to light. Therefore, those who think differently must be fought, best of all, extinguished. This would eliminate the risk of being questioned.

But when the true self unfolds, reality takes the place of nothingness, fear, and inflated ego. Spiritual power, which reaches down into the depths of God’s infinity and from there ceaselessly gushes up, takes the place of feelings of inferiority that must be continually compensated by striving for prestige. The unshakable spiritual source, which underlies all existence and all development, takes the place of impotence that must be constantly compensated

by striving for power.

That is why Jesus emphatically puts his disciples in their place: He "rebuked them." He makes it clear to them that, as spiritual pupils, they are children of the Spirit of God and are no longer subject to their earthly drives. The living out of these earthly drives is not permitted to any person, especially not to pupils on the spiritual path. The pupils do not have to constantly persuade themselves of the spiritual reality as "true believers." It is just there, pure being. It cannot be challenged and questioned because it lies in a different dimension than the dogmas and beliefs that are supposed to give stability to the ego. It is calm and strength. Therefore, retribution cannot possibly come from it. On the contrary: The true self recognizes the endangerment to other people who seek support in dogma. It recognizes the fear of nothing in the others and the striving for prestige and power that arises from it. And it flows over to the others in order to awaken the true self in them as well, their true identity. In other textual traditions, Jesus therefore adds to his "rebuke" of the disciples, "You do not know what spirit you are of, for the Son of Man has not come to destroy the lives of human beings but to save them." The true self, the Son of Man, saves human lives. It awakens real life, the true self, in other people and frees them from the crutches of their dogmatic convictions.

The persecution and destruction of those who think differently is not in the sense of the purpose of human beings. Jesus, the true self, prohibits such persecution, also when formally done in his name. Any annihilation of "heretics" or people who believe differently springs from the striving for prestige and power and fear for one's own beliefs or possessions. Those who are carried away by this prove that they are not acting from the true self, that they are not acting in the name of Jesus.

The "fire coming down from heaven" is an allusion to a story in the Old Testament where the prophet Elijah caused fire to fall from heaven on Samaritan captains and their troops, which consumed them. The disciples of Jesus refer to this story and thereby legitimize their intention. In the same way, in human history, zealots have always tried to legitimize their extermination campaigns through sacred scriptures. But the disciples of Jesus and comparable religious zealots overestimate themselves. They are not prophets like Elijah. And they interpret the scriptures according to their own mentality, not according to the actual

content of the scriptures. For example, they do not understand the statement that the prophet Elijah sat “on the top of a hill” in the Old Testament story (2 Kings 1:9). Elijah acts out of the spiritual world – this is the meaning of the allusion to the “hill” – his activities are of a spiritual nature, and when the captains and their troops are destroyed by “fire,” this is not to be understood as concrete people but rather as “Samaritan” soul powers in every human being. The “fire” of the spirit called up by Elijah destroys the “pagan,” earthly aspirations in people, for example, the craving for prestige and power. That is the task: to let the true self, the spirit, destroy the “pagan,” earthly, dogmatic thinking in oneself, not to kill those who think differently.

***The “Journey to Jerusalem”:* First Day**

Beginning with chapter 9, verse 51, Luke inserted into the original Mark template a new text explaining the events in the third and fourth phases of the spiritual path of the pupils and goes further afield than Mark had done. This insertion builds on chapter 9, verse 21, where Jesus speaks of the fate that the chief priests and scribes would prepare for him and predicts his resurrection, as well as on chapter 9, verse 31, which speaks of the “departure” of Jesus, “which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”

The section ends at chapter 19, verse 44, but does not form a unified composition within the gospel of the Luke but is repeatedly interrupted by parts of the original template of Mark. It consists of numerous parables and sermons of Jesus with only a few reports about the deeds of Jesus and corresponds to experiences made by pupils in the third and fourth phases of their spiritual path.

The insertion begins with Jesus’ journey to “Jerusalem” at the end of which he is to be “taken up” (Luke 9:51, NRSV) into “heaven,” which means the completion of his days. He completes his task of building an immortal spirit personality that manifests in the resurrection and the ascension into “heaven.” When Jesus sets “his face to go to Jerusalem,” that does not primarily mean that he wants to travel outwardly to the geographically localizable city of Jerusalem, for “Jerusalem” is a symbol with two meanings.

First, it is a symbol for the temple of God, which is the representation of the kingdom of God in the earthly world. Jesus is

directed to the kingdom of God and the spiritual journey hither with the aim of finally entering it consciously and being “resurrected.” This inner orientation is the reason why the “Samaritans,” who are caught up in “pagan customs,” do not receive Jesus. Second, “Jerusalem” is also a symbol of the degeneration of the temple of God. It is the place of dogmatists and teachers of the law who have suffocated the living spirit through their dogmatism and self-righteousness and debased religion, which should be a way to experience the spirit, to an instrument of their interests. Caught in this consciousness and existence, they cannot possibly accept the living spirit active in Jesus. They have to consider him as a threat to themselves and their position. That is why they kill Jesus in “Jerusalem.” When Jesus sets “his face to go to Jerusalem,” it also means that he is preparing himself inwardly for his execution in Jerusalem.

The journey to “Jerusalem” in its two meanings is the spiritual path, especially the third and fourth phases: the alignment to the kingdom of God on the one hand, the daily cross of persecution and rejection on the other. Those who walk the spiritual path follow Jesus who, as the “Anointed,” paves the way for all people.

The first “day,” the first section of the “journey to Jerusalem,” brings primarily teachings of Jesus and events that relate to the dissolution of ties to the earthly world by the disciples on the spiritual path.

9:57 *And as they were traveling on the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go!”* ⁵⁸ *And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”* ⁵⁹ *And he said to another, “Follow me!” But he said, “Lord, first allow me to go and bury my father.”* ⁶⁰ *But he said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead! But you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”* ⁶¹ *And another person also said, “I will follow you, Lord, but first allow me to say farewell to those in my house.”* ⁶² *But Jesus said, “No one who puts his hand on the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God!”* (LEB)

Those who orient themselves directly towards the kingdom of God, towards “Jerusalem,” will no longer find support and security in earthly conditions. Everyone who takes this path must be aware of this, be it Jesus himself as a model of the true self, be it a spiritual pupil who follows him. The pupils experience this

homelessness simply because, as soon as eternity begins to appear in them, they recognize the unreliability and fragility of all earthly relationships in comparison to this. They experience it all the more because the earthly values are in opposition to those of the spiritual world and the representatives of earthly values hate and persecute people who are oriented towards the kingdom of God.

Whoever serves the values of the earthly world, be it the “evil” ones of the will to power, be it the “good” ones of moral perfection, is at home in the earthly world and its value systems. Their homeland is either in the sphere of the earth on this side, like foxes have their holes, or in the sphere of the hereafter, like birds have their nests. But the true self, the pupil on the spiritual path, like Jesus, has no anchor in the earthly realm, neither on this side nor in the hereafter. The pupils on the spiritual path have to count on this homelessness in the value systems of the earthly world. They have to consciously look for their homeland in the spiritual foundations that are growing within them. If they do not do this, the need for security will draw them back into the earthly world.

Those who want to enter the kingdom of God, so Jesus continues, must also no longer be preoccupied with the duties of the earthly world, even if they are the most holy. When the pupils hear the call of the true self, they must immediately and decisively follow it – otherwise the call remains inconsequential. And when they have followed it, they must see to it that earthly constraints and duties do not regain power over them.

Luke expresses this necessity on the spiritual path again through parables that work precisely through their paradoxes. In the first parable, Jesus says to the disciples, If you want to enter the kingdom of the spirit, behave like travelers who long so much for their destination that they do not even bury their relatives before leaving. Anyone who acts like this in the earthly world would violate piety. The excessive longing for the destination would not justify this violation. But, and therein lies the paradox, one has to behave so radically in the spiritual world. The call from the spiritual world must be so urgent that one detaches inwardly from all entanglements and all attachment to the earthly world – immediately. One has to break away from the spiritually dead. Seen from the spiritual world, the most sacred things in the earthly world and the purest earthly love are spiritually dead. But the disciples have become spiritually alive. Jesus says to them, For the spiritually dead, preoccupation with the spiritually dead is the

highest. Let them. Occupy yourself with those spiritually alive because you belong to the spiritually alive.

In the second parable, Jesus says to the disciples: If you want to reach the kingdom of the spirit, behave like travelers who long so much to reach their destination that they do not even say goodbye to their families at their departure. In the earthly world, such behavior would be against good manners. But in the spiritual world, you have to act in such a way. Those “who put a hand to the plow” should not become engrossed again in their interpersonal ties! They should not let their consciousness and being, which are filled with the powers of the kingdom of God, be monopolized again by old ties. Jesus says to the disciples, Make sure that you put your connection to the spiritual world first and do not allow it to be destroyed through considerations of interpersonal ties. Of course, you will make such considerations on the spiritual path. But they will not fetter you and make your spiritual orientation impossible.

If pupils would take the two scenes literally and radically stop fulfilling their earthly duties and cut off any considerations of interpersonal relations, this would be spiritual egoism. They would egoistically put their spiritual goal in first place and reject their earthly tasks as soon as they seemed to be obstacles to their goal. That would be hardheartedness and certainly not conducive to spiritual development. In their spiritual egoism, the pupils would misunderstand the remarks of Jesus as demands and rules to help them on their path. But the spiritual path is not a goal of the ego of the pupils. It is a new reality arising from true self that is contrary to any egoism. It is experiences of a new unity, freedom, and love that dissolves all egoism. This new reality calls the pupils. And here applies: Do not postpone the life from the new reality. And if you live out of it, live consistently out of it and do not allow yourself to be pulled again into old life patterns and values. When you behave in this way, unity, love, and freedom will also permeate your earthly life and you can live your duties and interpersonal relationships under a new sign.

Sending out the Pupils

Increased Influence of the Pupils

10:1 *And after these things, the Lord also appointed seventy-two others and sent them out two by two before him into every town and place where he was about to go. ²And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest that he send out workers into his harvest. ³Go! Behold, I am sending you out like lambs in the midst of wolves! ⁴Do not carry a money bag or a traveler’s bag or sandals, and greet no one along the road. ⁵And into whatever house you enter, first say, “Peace be to this household!” ⁶And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on him. But if not, it will return to you. ⁷And remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the worker is worthy of his pay. Do not move from house to house. ⁸And into whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat whatever is set before you, ⁹and heal the sick in it, and say to them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.” ¹⁰But into whatever town you enter and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹“Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you! Nevertheless know this: that the kingdom of God has come near!” ¹²I tell you that it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town!*

¹³Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes! ¹⁴But it will be more bearable for Tyre and for Sidon in the judgment than for you! ¹⁵And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No! You will be brought down to Hades! ¹⁶The one who listens to you listens to me, and the one who rejects you rejects me. But the one who rejects me rejects the one who sent me.” (LEB)

Seventy-two disciples (or 70 in some manuscripts) are sent out by Jesus to tell other people of the nearness of the kingdom of God and to bring in the “harvest.” Compared to the sending out of the twelve disciples told about in Chapter 9:1–10, here there is an intensification and activity on a higher level. Previously, it was about the implementation of the spiritual powers at the end of which stood the awareness of the true self. But now, a spiritual

consciousness has emerged in the disciples allowing them to have completely different powers. This corresponds to the number 70. It is the number of more comprehensive activity extending to all facets of earthly life. Some manuscripts of the Gospel of Luke have here the number 72, which indicates even more clearly this meaning. In traditional Judaism, 72 described all possible parts of a structured whole. For example, the whole of humanity consisted of “72” peoples, and there was a total of “72” languages.

The sending out of the 70 (or 72) is modeled after a story in the Old Testament where 70 elders climb the “mountain” with Moses to see God from afar (Exodus 24:1).

The task of the pupils of the spirit in the world is to bring in the “harvest.” What is this “harvest”? It is the connection of all the people receptive and ripe for the spiritual world with the spiritual world. Countless people have at all times and in all places the opportunity to walk on a spiritual path that connects them directly with the spiritual world. But most are not aware of this opportunity, and it is not supported and encouraged by the social environment. But when they meet people who consciously realize this possibility, they may also become conscious of it. Encouraged by such examples, they consciously work internally on themselves and walk the spiritual path that connects them to the kingdom of God. The more “workers,” pupils on the spiritual path, there are in the world, the more people with receptivity to this path can be “addressed” and confronted with the spiritual potential in their own being.

The “harvest” of a period of time therefore also depends on the number of pupils who recognize their responsibility for other people. Thus, the disciples of Jesus are to ask the “Lord of the harvest,” the spirit itself which both causes receptivity to the spirit and establishes the connection between the recipients and the givers, to awaken as many of these givers as possible.

When Jesus sends out his disciples, it does not necessarily mean that they are really going on a journey. It primarily means that on their “journey through life,” they pass on the spiritual powers that they have received. The conditions under which the disciples have to perform this task are harsh. Because they work in the earthly world, whose values are hostile to those of the spiritual world, persecution and hatred must be expected. The working disciples themselves attract hatred and persecution not only because of their consciousness and being, but the representatives of earthly

values fear that those who are susceptible to the spirit will be taken out of their sphere of influence. They try everything to prevent this bringing in of the “harvest” of the spirit. They behave like “wolves” towards “lambs.” Their “will to power” rages against the disciples who strive to live and act solely out of the love and freedom of the spirit.

The rules of the spiritual harvest work of the 70 (or 72) correspond to those of the sending out of the Twelve. They are first symbolized by three paradoxical parables. On an ordinary journey, it is very appropriate to carry supplies in bags and pouches. However, when doing spiritual work, reserve thinking is a hindrance. Accumulating esoteric knowledge in one’s memory in order to draw from this reservoir would only disturb the free flow of spiritual powers. Nevertheless, the pupils who tell others about the spiritual world must of course have spiritual knowledge. What is meant is that they do not rely on their memory but speak spontaneously from their own spiritual experience.

On an ordinary journey, shoes are also necessary to protect and hold the feet, which would otherwise be hurt quickly. But on a spiritual journey, it is a hindrance to rely on external forms such as organizational provisions. On a spiritual journey, the form is revealed from within. The inner law of the true self determines the course of the external work. That does not exclude that the workers plan and organize their work appropriately. It is important only that the spiritual work is not a mere program but arises as a matter of course from their innermost core, from their true self.

The pupils should not even “greet” anyone on the way to their spiritual work. Of course, on an ordinary journey, you naturally greet acquaintances that you meet and maybe have a chat with them. But in spiritual work, you do not look right or left, are directed unwaveringly to your goal, and do not let yourself be distracted by personal relationships. Such an internal attitude is a prerequisite for the success of spiritual work. It is possible even when the pupils acknowledge everything encountered on the way and greet acquaintances.

When harvesters meet a person receptive to the spirit and a closer contact occurs – the pupils “enter a house” – then the pupils will testify through words and behavior of the power of the spiritual world unfolding in them. They say, “Peace to this house!” They transfer to the other person – maybe without really speaking

but only through their being – the spiritual power of peace, which is the unity with the spirit. If the possibility of receiving the peace of the spirit is present in the other person, it will be strengthened by the greeting of peace. If it is not present or if disapproval is stronger, the power of peace will not be able to have an effect. The pupils will then quietly allow the contact to be broken by the other person but will themselves remain in the power of peace.

So complete freedom is preserved. The pupils keep to themselves and are at peace. They are not zealous and do not want to convince and proselytize. A contact has been made without their doing. And also the result of the contact, whether positive or negative, does not depend on the pupils and their missionary zeal but only on the factual circumstances: receptivity for peace or rejection.

The pupils who work for the “harvest” have to live from something. It is possible that they have a profession and finance their activity in the “harvest field” from their professional income. This is the best solution, as both sides, the person who receives peace and those who give peace, maintain their independence in this way. Under certain circumstances, the pupils are fully occupied by their activity in the “harvest field” so that they cannot earn a livelihood otherwise. Then their “wages” will be given in the form of contributions that the people receiving peace voluntarily make. If they are really “children of peace,” they will gladly make these donations, thankful for what has been received and trusting that the givers will not accept more than they really need. And the givers will really not accept more if they are also children of peace. Thus, on the basis of mutual trust and the inner nature of both sides, independence would be guaranteed. An example of such an arrangement is offered in the Gospel of Luke itself, in chapter 8:2–3, where women healed by Jesus provide for his and his disciples’ maintenance from their assets.

Of course, there is a possibility that people will only pretend to be harvest workers. They appear as “children of peace” without being internally legitimized to do so and turn it into a source of income. Despite this possibility, there is also the other: that really “children of peace” meet “children of peace.” And then the “laborer deserves to be paid.”

The pupils should also not go “from house to house.” When there is contact between “children of peace” and the pupils, this contact needs time to develop and mature. Only when one task has been completed does it make sense to move on to the next. Fleeting

work is an impossibility in the realm of the spirit. Hence Jesus' warning to the disciples not to rush prematurely from one house to another.

The relationship to the individual, to the "house," is like the relationship of the pupils to a collective, a "town." If there is contact at the level of orientation to the "kingdom of God" and the pupils are "welcomed" by the collective, then the receptive people are called to the spiritual path through the powers of the spirit that radiate through the words and behavior of the "workers." The receptive people can be "cured" by these powers and thus experience that the "kingdom of God has come near." In gratitude, they will give to the pupils what is needed for their livelihood.

However, if there is no contact, then the pupils will retire without persistently imposing themselves. But they will make clear to themselves and to their listeners – on their "streets" – what happened. In the "town" of these people, the dregs of injustice, greed, hypocrisy, and ambition, the whole "dust" of earthly life, has clung to the pupils' feet. They consciously free themselves from all this. This shows to the inhabitants how they are inwardly constituted – it happens "in protest against you." And the pupils also tell them once again, as they told the listeners who had responded positively, what would be the inherent purpose of humanity: "The kingdom of God has come near." This is not a railing shaking of fists out of revenge for a failure. It is a factual statement that serves to make the realities conscious.

But whoever *knows* what the inherent purpose of humanity is and still makes no attempt to fulfill it, whoever still clings in consciousness and being to the earthly world, will be painfully corrected by the order of the spirit "on that day," when this order is powerfully manifested in humanity. It will be worse for such a town than it was for Sodom.

Judgment by the Spiritual World

Jesus compares a town of antiquity, Sodom, with the towns of his time.

Why will it be more tolerable for Sodom "on that day" than for "this town," which has rejected Jesus' disciples? Sodom was still under the law of the Old Testament. On "that day" when all accounts will be settled, it will only be "punished" for its transgressions of this law. The towns of the time of Jesus,

however, have been confronted with the freedom of the New Testament. They *know* of the “kingdom of God” and of the inherent purpose of humanity. They have directly encountered the “image of God” in Jesus and his disciples. This is a much higher standard and measure than those of the law of the Old Testament. With greater receptivity, they could also have received far greater powers to meet this standard. But since they have not reacted and did not fulfill their highest inherent purpose, to live as an image of God, their fall will be all the greater.

Jesus also compares pagan towns of his own time with Jewish towns in which he has appeared. According to the words of Simeon, he “is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel” (Luke 2:34, NRSV). In Jesus, the true human being, the image of God, appears in full clarity. From him emanates the call and demand to all people to develop this image of God in their own being. Not only the demand but also the power for this development emanates from him. He and his disciples had released these powers in Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, and many other Jewish towns. But in their self-righteousness, these towns have not responded positively. The more clearly the demand was given, the greater the power that was offered for the fulfillment of this demand, the more they solidified themselves in their self-righteousness and illusion to be chosen, to “be exalted to heaven.” (Jesus plays on a passage in Isaiah (14:13–15) where the king of Babylon is imagining “ascending to heaven” but is soon thrown into the realm of the dead.) They would have to first “repent” in the power of the spirit and disengage from their self-righteousness and illusion in order to then develop the image of God in themselves, to “arise,” and thus to fulfill their inherent purpose. But the more they were caught up in self-righteousness and illusion, the more painful will be their disengagement, their “fall,” on that day of judgment. Capernaum “will be brought down to Hades.” If the germ of the image of God was not unfolded, consciousness and being remain in the transience of the earthly realm, in the “realm of the dead.” The people of Tyre and Sidon, however, towns of heathens, would have “repented” and entered the spiritual path when confronted with the standard of the image of God and the corresponding powers.

By way of these concrete examples, Luke describes timeless laws. Since the true human being has manifested in Jesus exemplarily, he acts in humanity, in the “collective unconscious” of every

human being, as a call, a standard, and a power. Every human being is challenged in principle to meet this standard. There are always “harvest workers,” at that time the disciples of Jesus, who can enliven and strengthen from the outside the germ of the true self within human beings. However, people react differently to this opportunity as did the towns mentioned by Jesus. Apparently unreceptive people, comparable to Tyre and Sidon, react positively, “repent,” and “arise.” Others, comparable to Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum, in whom great receptivity is present and to whom also many spiritual powers are offered, nevertheless persevere in their self-righteousness and illusion and do not fulfill the standard of the image of God. They “fall” back into the darkness of a consciousness and being only directed to the earthly.

But whether listeners accept or reject the disciples of Jesus, thereby they always accept or reject the spirit of God itself, for Jesus and his disciples act out of the spirit of God. The spirit of God flows from top to bottom: from the world of the spirit to the ones anointed by the spirit and from the ones anointed to their pupils. So it is to the spirit itself to which the listeners react, be it positively receptive, be it negatively rejecting. By reacting positively, they fulfill their inherent purpose as human beings. By reacting negatively, they remain captives of the earthly order and will someday experience that this bond is painfully dissolved and they themselves “fall” into the nothing since nothing eternal has become conscious and active in them.

Return of the 72

10:17 And the seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!”¹⁸ So he said to them, “I saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ Behold, I have given you the authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will ever harm you. ²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are inscribed in heaven.” (LEB)

The 72 return and report on the result of their activity as harvest workers. The decisive factor is their experience that even the “demons” are subservient to the spiritual powers that are active in the workers. The spiritual world, indicated by the “name” Jesus,

the essence of Jesus, is at the basis of all of existence and maintains it – even if parts of existence revolt against the spirit. Nothing is more powerful than the divine spirit. And since it has achieved a certain strength in the disciples of Jesus in this phase of their development, the usual fixed ideas and passions that have become independent, the individual or collective “demons,” must give way to the spirit and submit to it. The unconscious energies of the personality become subservient to the order of the spirit whereas they had previously made themselves independent and enslaved the human self.

“Satan” is the embodiment of the demonic trend in human beings to rebel against the order of the spirit and make themselves independent. He is the ruler and the quintessence of all “demons.” He can hold single persons but also entire groups, yes, humanity, in the compelling grip of the delusion to be capable of everything oneself. He is located in the invisible beyond of which people are not conscious, in the “heaven” of the earthly world. The invisible beyond, the “heaven” of the earthly world, is the abode of all unconscious individual and collective illusions and delusions of people – the abode of “Satan.”

But when in individuals or in whole groups, yes, in humanity, a group of “72” pupils of the spirit is active and integrates all people receptive to the spirit in the spiritual order, then this order is increasingly reinforced. The moment can come when the spiritual powers will be so strong that “Satan” is expelled from “heaven.” He can no longer hold himself in the individual or collective unconscious of people. Like an electric charge in the atmosphere that has to make way to a more powerful charge, “Satan” like a flash of lightning leaves the unconscious of people, the earthly “heaven,” the beyond. “Satan,” the embodiment of individual or collective delusions, falls out of the unconscious, the beyond, and we become conscious of him. He is recognized in this world by the conscious human self and can thereby be made harmless. The unconscious delusions of the individual and of humanity to be capable of everything oneself are dissolved. And their place is taken by conscious truth, by the true ideas of humanity about its inherent purpose and the way thereto. So people become free. This is what Jesus sees within at the moment when through his work and the work of his disciples, the spiritual powers in the world have become so strong that the satanic is no match for them anymore. The unconscious delusions are forced into the forum of

the consciousness where they can be detected and thereby dissolved.

So Jesus, the true, spirit-filled self, gives human beings the power to tread on “snakes” and “scorpions,” to dissolve delusions and fixed ideas, and to break “all the power of the enemy,” the concentration of these delusions and energies. When something such as this is experienced by a pupil on the spiritual path, there is truly cause for joy. Finally, the development of the true self has progressed so far that “Satan,” who worked like darkness, like tension in the unconscious, can be expelled from the “heaven” of the soul. Brightness then reigns in the soul again. It feels reborn, free and independent in spirit, unbound, and receptive to the truth. Its “name” is “written” in the “heaven” of the spiritual world. Its essence, as true self, is once again one with the structure of the spiritual world and impressed on this structure, while conversely this structure is also impressed on it.

At this stage of their development, the pupils are able to break the dominion of satanic-demonic delusions and to live up to the inherent purpose of humanity to be one with the spiritual world. Both are cause for joy. But they should be careful. If they rejoice about their ability and power, the demonic in them, the drive for power and prestige, could revive and Satan could regain power over them. That is why Jesus makes his disciples aware of the source from which their power over Satan springs. It is the fact that they are one with the spiritual world, that their “names,” their true selves, are written in the “heavens” of the spiritual world. Their power arises from the powers of the spiritual world to which neither Satan in them nor their conscious self have access. When they are exclusively rejoicing over the fact of their unity with the spiritual world, they remain aware that it is alone the spirit in them that affects their deeds, and the danger that they would become proud of their deeds and abilities is eliminated.

Jesus' Hymn of Joy

10:21 *At that same time he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to young children. Yes, Father, for this was pleasing before you.”²² All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father*

and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wants to reveal him.”

²³ And turning to the disciples, he said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see! ²⁴ For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them.” (LEB)

At the moment when the powers from the world of the spirit break the power of the demons and spread out in the “heaven” of the beyond, “joy” arises not only in Jesus’ disciples but also in Jesus himself. The powers of the spirit are freed and can breathe where they had formerly been suppressed. This condition is already joy, is a ray of the Holy Spirit in the world, is new life and sense of life of the true self. The disciples and Jesus become conscious of this new state, which represents a highlight of their effectiveness, and Jesus describes it in a hymn of joy. At the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, Mary, Zacharias, and Simeon also filled by the Holy Spirit had struck up a hymn of joy. They had experienced inwardly that spiritual powers in the form of John the Baptist and Jesus were coming into the earthly world and would cause a revaluation of all values.

What was still future at that time has now become present. Jesus, the perfect true self of the human being, causes a powerful arising or fall of many in Israel, and the order of the spiritual world drives out “Satan,” the order of the earthly world, in a great revaluation of all values.

Jesus praises the “Father,” the order and power of the spirit, which encompasses the beyond and this side, heaven and earth of the transient world. He also praises him because the revaluation of all values is hidden from “the wise and the intelligent” but revealed to “infants.” At the time, Mary had described this revaluation with contrasting images: The low are exalted, and the high are humbled. Jesus speaks of a further contrast: The new order remains hidden to the wise people of the earthly world; it is revealed to infants.

The “wise and intelligent” are those people who, proudly trusting their mind and their strength, believe that they can know and regulate everything, and precisely because of this, they close themselves to the influences of the true self. The “infants,” on the other hand, know as do children that they cannot know and regulate everything. They recognize the limits of the earthly mind

and are ready to forego its activity where it is not appropriate. They allow other types and organs of knowledge to work in them, which can only develop when the inquiring mind subordinates itself.

But why is it a reason for joy and the praise of God that the order of the spirit and the revaluation of all values it brings about is hidden from the “wise” and revealed to “infants”? Is it gloating that the proud earthly great minds have to fail in their knowledge of the spiritual world? No, the joy that is experienced by Jesus arises from the experience of the clarity and brightness that pervade his consciousness when it is filled and enlightened by the Holy Spirit. An illumination, a revelation of the spiritual order, occurs in Jesus. In contrast to this, the inadequacy of the earthly, sophisticated mind becomes clear to him. And he feels, How wonderful that this dark mind cannot enter the bright spaces of the spiritual world, indeed cannot even draw them towards itself in order to darken them as well! How wonderful that there is another kind of knowledge that I now experience in its brightness and in which the bright spaces of the spirit in which I can move freely are immediately shown to me! How glorious that the power of the dark mind on which the wise and intelligent rely is now broken while the spirit-enlightened consciousness that is only available to “infants” is finally coming into its own! That is the correct order of precedence: The spiritual world encompasses and orders the earthly world, and correspondingly, the consciousness enlightened by the spirit encompasses and orders the earthly mind, which is relevant for earthly things. So it is “pleasing” to the “Father,” the spirit, because this order is the order laid down in the spirit, the source of things.

The content of this knowledge, this enlightened consciousness, is also described in more detail by Jesus. It is directed towards the “Father,” the spiritual world. The “Father” is the creative order of the spiritual world, the original source from which all existence emerges and is kept in motion in order to one day gain awareness of this original source and to live consciously according to the creative order of the spirit. The “Father” gave everything to the “Son.” The “Son” is the awareness of the original creative order of the spirit, the “light” that illuminates all “Sons of God,” the images of God, emerging from the original source. To this “Son,” the enlightened consciousness, has been given all power over the demons but also the knowledge of the Father, for the enlightened

consciousness recognizes the order of the spirit and from it is able to consciously shape the development of all beings and things. Only the original creative order itself, which is recognized in the enlightened consciousness and is the content of this consciousness, knows of this consciousness since this order is its basis: Only the "Father" knows who the "Son" is. And only this consciousness in which the original creative order reveals itself knows who the "Father" is.

Just as the "Father" and the "Son" are in human beings as the basis of their true self and as awareness of this true self, the mutual interpenetration of "Father" and "Son" also takes place in human beings. In Jesus, this interpenetration, this mutual awareness of "Father" and "Son," has become a fact. In him, the "Son," the enlightened consciousness, the "Anointed," has fully appeared. He can therefore awaken the "Son" in other people who are susceptible to it: The true self can also become conscious in other people, and an enlightened consciousness that is not dependent on the earthly mind can arise. It will then also recognize the "Father," the foundation and source of the true self. That is why Jesus says, Everyone to whom the "Son" wants to reveal it knows who the Father is.

Jesus is not describing any verbal messages that are mysteriously transmitted from the Father to him and from him to other people. Rather, he is describing processes of consciousness. The original source of all being, the "Father," becomes conscious in the true self, his likeness and Son. The enlightened true self of a person can stimulate such an awareness in other people so that the same process of the knowledge of God takes place in them. And that is not limited to the time of Jesus but is possible at all times, for the original source of all being is constantly active, and the true self of human beings can participate in enlightenment at any time. In this, all "Sons" of the Father, who, like Jesus, continue to work in the organism of humanity as enlightened ones through the ages, are helping.

The disciples of Jesus are specifically people whose spiritual eyes have been opened. Their consciousness is enlightened by the spirit. That is why they are "blessed." They experience a time in which the enlightenment of the true self of many people takes place in a special way. The image of God, the true human identity, is revealed in them.

Many before them had foreseen this possibility and then longed

for it to become reality within them. “Prophets” knew that it would become reality; “kings” were aware of it. With these prophets and kings, the most spiritually developed people of the Old Testament period are meant.

But humanity as a whole was not yet ready in that period for the possibility of the illumination of the true self to become full reality. It became full reality in Jesus. Since then, the pattern of the true human being is anchored in the consciousness of humanity. Anyone therefore has the possibility to experience the illumination and becoming active of the true self.

The time of preparation, which stood under the law, is over. Now the time of fulfillment has come in which the freedom of the true self applies. That is why the disciples of Jesus are happier than all the people of the time of preparation, for they live in the time of fulfillment, of freedom. The smallest in the kingdom of God is greater than the greatest prophet and king of the time of the law.

Conditions of the True Self

Experiences of a person in whom the kingdom of God is active as order and power are described in detail in the parable of the Good Samaritan and in the story of Martha and Mary.

The Merciful Samaritan: Unity of Humanity

10:25 *And behold, a certain legal expert stood up to test him, saying, “Teacher, what must I do so that I will inherit eternal life?”* ²⁶ *And he said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?”* ²⁷ *And he answered and said, “You shall love the Lord your God from all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”* ²⁸ *And he said to him, “You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.”*

²⁹ *But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”* ³⁰ *And Jesus replied and said, “A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who both stripped him and beat him. After inflicting blows on him, they went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by coincidence a certain priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. ³² And in the same way also a Levite, when he came down to the place and*

saw him, passed by on the opposite side. ³³But a certain Samaritan who was traveling came up to him and, when he saw him, had compassion. ³⁴And he came up and bandaged his wounds, pouring on olive oil and wine, and he put him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵And on the next day, he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him, and whatever you spend in addition, I will repay to you when I return. ³⁶Which of these three do you suppose became a neighbor of the man who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷So he said, "The one who showed mercy to him." And Jesus said to him, "You go and do likewise." (LEB)

Also in the period of preparation in which people were under the dominion of the outer law, God and one's neighbor were already supposed to be at the center of their life. For the vast majority, this rule was still a demand from the outside, which they sought to fulfill with good will and all the powers of their ego – as an outer law. They tried to follow the law with their ego; they could only understand the law with their ego. Therefore, also God, the giver of the law, was an external authority for people to whom they directed all aspects of their ego: their feeling – the heart, their consciousness – the soul, their energy, and their thinking. This orientation was the love for God that was possible for their ego.

But a "neighbor" for them was a member of their people – this is expressly formulated in the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18). Every member of their own people – which in Judaism meant every member of their religion – was their "neighbor." Anyone who did not belong to their own group, for example, a Samaritan, yes, even a Jewish "sinner," who violated the laws of Jewish religion, was not a "neighbor."

The commandment of charity applied only to the members of their own group: Love your neighbor as yourself. All others were excluded from this love. And the "as yourself" meant: As a member of your people, you are not more and not less than any other member of the people. Whatever good you would do for yourself, do this also for any other members of your people, for to them, you are a neighbor, and they are neighbors to you. A pious Jew would do as much for other pious Jews as the Samaritan in the parable did for the man who was robbed and injured. They would care for them and ensure their recovery as if the others would be themselves.

In the state in which the kingdom of God becomes active as order and power in people, the inner law of freedom applies. The order and power of the spirit are also the order and power of the true self. Human beings have then become the image of God again, and their state is God's love, as the true self is the order and power of the spirit. They no longer need to make an effort to fulfill an outer commandment about love, and God is no longer an external authority for them. As true self, they are in God, the spiritual world, embedded as a cell in its organism, connected with God as a branch with its vine. The power of God flows into them like the juice of the vine, and they respond by releasing the same power. This is their love for God, which is spontaneously lived as a matter of course with renewed feeling, enlightened consciousness, purified will, and illuminated thinking.

But for them, a "neighbor" is a person in whom the image of God lives, the true self. In principle, this is all human beings for them in whom the true self is present as a predisposition. Currently, it is those people in whom the true self wants to become definitive for life again. Thus, a neighbor is no longer necessarily a member of their own group that is defined biologically or religiously or culturally. Every human being in whom the true self is present as a predisposition is a neighbor. In the true self, which is the order and power of the spirit, there is no principal difference between human beings. Every true self is a branch on the same vine of the spirit. From this fact arises the principal spiritual connectedness of all bearers of the true self. Everyone is a neighbor.

It is obvious that every true self, because it is connected with every other true self, loves another true self like itself – after all, it is one with every other true self. And it will care for other human beings as bearers of the true self and ensure their recovery when they have "fallen into the hands of robbers." This can be a real physical emergency situation, but it can also mean that the true self has fallen into the hands of the "robbers" that are earthly interests, passions, and demonic influences and is mortally wounded.

This is the message of this parable. It is commonly read as being especially a summons to mercy. And it is that as well. But decisive is that the circle of people in which the commandment of mercy applies has expanded in the transition from the time of the law to the time of freedom, from the time of the ego to the time of the true self. According to Old Testament law, a neighbor was a

member of one's own group. According to the freedom of the gospel, every member of humanity as a carrier of the true self, the image of God, is a neighbor.

The parable opens its meaning only when one assumes that the person fallen into the hands of robbers is neither specifically a Jew nor specifically a Samaritan but simply a "human being" as it is expressly formulated: "A man fell into the hands of robbers." The priest sees that it is not a Jew, not a member of his own group. He says, He is none of my business, and passes by him. The Levite sees that it is not a Jew, not a member of his own group. That is why he says to himself, He is none of my business, and passes by him. If it had been explicitly a Jew, then both the priest and the Levite would have remembered the definition of "neighbor" in the meaning of the Old Testament and shown mercy as would have been their duty towards this neighbor.

The Samaritan, on the other hand, turns to the "man" even though he is not expressly a Samaritan but simply because this human being is a bearer of the image of God. The Samaritan has understood the new time. He is portrayed by Jesus as a person with such an understanding. He recognizes that mercy has to be given to every human being as an image of God because every human being is a "neighbor" to every other human being. A Jew is not the neighbor of the Jewish priest; a Jew is not the neighbor of the Jewish Levite; a Samaritan is not the neighbor of the Samaritan. The priest does not know this yet nor does the Levite, but the Samaritan knows it. And that is a second message of the parable: Especially the most pious – the priest and the Levite – are not able to understand in their dogmatic narrowness the freedom of true self and to act accordingly. But someone not so orthodox – the Samaritan – has the ability to open up to the comprehensive love of the spirit and to send it to every human being.

When the lawyer wants to "justify" himself and asks Jesus, "Who is my neighbor," this question aims directly at this different definition of "neighbor" in the period of the Old Testament and in the period of the New. The definition depends either on biological, religious, and cultural characteristics or on spiritual characteristics. The lawyer would like to enmesh Jesus into a discussion about the usual, hitherto valid, and partly disputed criteria for "neighbor." However, Jesus points out that the definition can only depend on a spiritual criterion, which overrules all previous ones.

This solves another difficulty. Luke has been accused specifically in connection with this parable of not even being logical. Jesus answers the question of the lawyer who his neighbor is by reference to the needy person. The subsequent answer of the lawyer, however, refers to the helper. First the neighbor seems to be the needy person, then the helper. But this parable is not primarily about the virtue of mercy, which is assumed. It is about to which circle of people it should refer. Seen in this way, the above apparent contradiction is resolved. When “neighbor” is understood to be either a member of one’s own group or a human being as a member of all of humanity, it makes no difference if it is about the helper or the needy person. The helper is also a member of the group or of humanity as is the needy person. They are neighbors to each other in the sense of the respective definition criterion. And when Jesus prompts the lawyer at the end, “Go and do likewise,” this does not refer to merciful actions as such, but Jesus is thereby saying, Do not restrict your merciful actions, as before, to your own group but direct them to all of humanity!

Jesus marks the transition from the time of the ego to that of the true self, of the outer law to the inner law of freedom, of the period of the Old Testament to that of the New. But this transition did not only occur then but has been occurring uninterruptedly since then. Again and again, people, whether Jews or not, leave the period of the Old Testament to enter the period of the New. And many people and groups of humanity stubbornly remain in the Old Testament phase even when they call themselves Christians. How difficult it is to love foreigners, people of different faith, people of different races, people of different sex, members of another social class, another city, another place as you love yourself! Members of your own group: Yes, that is possible; you can make sacrifices for them; you can show mercy to them. The ego, which is composed of the properties of blood, religion, social group, and so on, can identify with them. But to love all people, only the true self can do that because all ties to culture, race, people, and locality cease in it.

Martha and Mary: Doing and Not-Doing

10:38 *Now as they traveled along, he entered into a certain village. And a certain woman named Martha welcomed him. ³⁹And she had a sister named Mary, who also sat at the feet of Jesus and was listening to his teaching. ⁴⁰But Martha was*

distracted with much preparation, so she approached and said, "Lord, is it not a concern to you that my sister has left me alone to make preparations? Then tell her that she should help me!" ⁴¹ *But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things! ⁴² But few things are necessary, or only one thing, for Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."* (LEB)

This narrative has often been interpreted as if the *vita contemplativa* (the life of reflection) were contrasted with the *vita activa* (the life of action) and the *vita contemplativa* was preferred by Jesus. Other interpreters, permeated by the value of action for the spiritual world, have protested against this interpretation and emphasized the importance of Martha's activity for the "kingdom of God" against the "unfruitful," merely absorbing passivity of Mary. That is difficult to reconcile with the wording of the story, however.

But the story is not about the question of whether the active or the contemplative life as such is preferable. It is about the question of how pupils on the spiritual path react appropriately with their ego to impulses from the true self. Both Mary and Martha are pupils on the spiritual path who stay in the vicinity of Jesus, the true self. They are touched by the impulse from the true self. Martha picks it up and works busily for the good of the true self as she understands this good. She wants to serve her true self. But her ego takes things into its own hands. She responds to the spiritual impulse with zeal. This is exactly what the words of the narrative describe. The ego serving the true self according to its own ideas always has to worry because it does not know whether it is doing the right thing and whether it is doing enough. This only increases its zeal. It also always looks at others to see whether they are doing it right and doing exactly as much as it is doing. Indeed, Martha even asks Jesus to commit Mary to her, Martha's, ideas.

But with this, the ego does not do justice to the spiritual impulse and its "intention." The "intention" of the spiritual impulse is to *change* people. This can only happen if the people, their ego, listen to what the true self wants to say to them, understand what it is telling them, and *allow* the change. But this is what Mary does. She does justice to the "intention" of the spiritual impulse.

So this is the message of the narrative. There are two types of responses to the spiritual impulse at a particular point on the spiritual path. Martha picks it up, but reacts to it with activism and

remains as she is. Her ego becomes the servant of the impulse but according to its own ideas. So she does not do justice to the “intention” of the impulse and does not fulfill her inherent purpose. Mary, however, opens up to the spiritual impulse, hears, understands, allows herself to be changed, and thus chooses the “better part.” She does justice to the “intention” of the impulse and fulfills her inherent purpose.

Moreover, when people behave as Mary does, their actions will also change. The narrative does not portray this consequence; it focuses on the need for openness to the spiritual impulse and its intention to bring change. But when an ego can be changed by the spiritual impulse, completely new effects will emanate from these people in accordance with the order of the spirit, not in the sense of the ideas of the ego. These people’s actions will be a not-doing, a doing without intent. They are in the service of the commandments of the true self and accomplish these commandments, not their own conceptions. The ego, changed, will become a real servant of the true self. The question is not whether or not acting in the service of the true self is necessary. There is no question that a pupil on the path acts for and serves the true self. Rather, it is about the nature of this service: activism or not-doing, loud abreaction or quiet reaction in harmony with the order of the spirit. The loud abreaction can consist of forced meditative reflection as well as busy activism. And the quiet reaction will not be limited to meditative reflection but will also include unpretentious activity.

The narrative contrasts two possible behaviors of a pupil on the spiritual path: wrong service and right service in relation to the true self. It emphasizes the difference between the two behaviors by contrasting “many” and “one.” Martha is worried about “many things.” But only “one thing” is necessary: the quieting of the ego, openness to the spiritual impulse, calm, and listening, from which also follow new actions. Such a thing is little by earthly standards, but by spiritual standards, it is the “better part.” Not “many things” are necessary but only “one thing”: not alignment with the earthly multiplicity but alignment with the unity with the spirit.

Prayer: Conscious Connection with the Powers of the Spirit

11:1 And it happened that while he was in a certain place praying, when he stopped a certain one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples.” (LEB)

On the spiritual path, it is a matter of the pupils consciously opening to the powers from the true self, which are also the powers of the world of the spirit, and letting these powers act according to the order of the spirit in their own being and in the world. These possibilities, their realization, and the failure of their realization are the topic of the following passages of the gospel.

John the Baptist and Jesus can pray. They are in a special relationship with the spiritual world and are able to consciously absorb its powers in order to consciously direct them to the goal that the powers of the spirit are to serve because “praying” is nothing other than the conscious reception and application of the spiritual powers for the goal appropriate to them. Therefore, not every person can pray from the outset. The ego-directed personality cannot receive and apply spiritual powers. When it “prays,” this means that with mundane motives, it connects with earthly powers – namely the earthly conceptions of the divine – and uses them for mundane goals. Therefore, the first thing that a person has to learn is discernment. Only the true self can contact spiritual powers, not the ego with its earthly motivation. In addition, the true self must first learn how to connect with the spiritual powers, secondly, how to use them, and thirdly, to what goal to apply them. That is learning to pray. In the prayer that Jesus gives to his disciples, these three aspects are included. Not only does it describe the goal of praying but also gives guidance on how people connect with and apply the powers of the spirit.

Two spiritual “goals” of praying are possible corresponding to the developmental phase of a person: a goal that corresponds to the preparatory stage and one that corresponds to the stage of realizing the spiritual impulse. Luke does not describe the kind of prayer of John’s disciples. But John the Baptist embodies the preparatory aspect of the spiritual impulse, baptism with “water.” Accordingly, the disciples of John, touched by the spiritual impulse of the “Father,” would only have prayed that the “paths of

the spirit” would be made straight in them: that the “Father,” the spirit, would dissolve egocentricity in them. Their praying was an orientation to the world of the spirit with the aim of changing one’s ways and letting oneself be purified. In the realization that the egocentric personality cannot connect to the Father, they prayed for the silencing of their egocentricity.

The second spiritual “goal” of praying corresponds to the stage of realization. It is the “goal” of praying of the disciples of Jesus. For a long time, John the Baptist had the reputation of making the paths straight and accompanied their inner development, and praying to silence egocentricity remains necessary as a prerequisite for the praying of Jesus’ disciples. But when the true self has awakened, pupils have to learn to live directly from the realizing aspect of the spiritual impulse. And now they can pray to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, with “fire”: that to them – that is to say, to their true self – the powers of the spirit are given directly also in their realizing aspect.

The Lord’s Prayer

11:2 *And he said to them, “When you pray, say,*

“Father,

may your name be treated as holy.

May your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴ And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

And do not lead us into temptation.” (LEB)

The objective of the whole prayer that Jesus teaches his disciples corresponds to the realizing aspect of the spiritual impulse.

Making the right connection with the powers of the spirit is represented by the address “Father.” Who, then, is the Father, and who is the son who makes the connection with the Father? The Father is the cosmic spirit itself, the all-pervading creative intelligence, power, and love. From him emerges the “son,” the individual spirit, the spirit-filled true self of every human being, the image of God. The relationship between “Father” and “son” is like that between organism and cell, between vine and branch. The image of God is embedded in the world of the spirit, reflects this

world, like a cell reflecting its organism, and gives it expression.

Only the true self can turn to the “Father” in prayer, that is, to consciously open itself to the spiritual world from which it has unconsciously lived until then. The self-centered personality, on the other hand, creates images of God for itself. It imagines the “Father” in the manner of a person who is its highest authority. It approaches him like a child its earthly father. The father administers punishment or mercy. Based on this idea, the child asks the father for forgiveness. It asks for certain gifts or entrusts itself to his mercy. But when praying like this, people remain attached to the earthly world and their earthly ideas whereas it is important in prayer to make a connection to the world of the spirit. Only the true self, which itself comes from this world of the Father, can attain this connection. And it attains it only when self-centeredness is silent.

The first request of the prayer is, “May your name be treated as holy.”

The “name” of God stands for the essence of God, for the order of the spiritual world. This order is inviolable since it *precedes* every development in this world and the beyond. In this sense, no one would need to pray that it would be kept holy. But it is polluted and darkened in the earthly world on this side and in the beyond by the fact that the creatures in it, especially human beings, put their own interests in the foreground. This desecration of the “name” of God must be reversed, and the true self, which is itself a victim of this desecration, prays for this goal. It has become aware that it is itself the order of the spirit, itself the name, the essence of God, and yet it is profaned by the interests of the ego. It has realized that it is no longer able to let the name of God shine brightly and to express it. That is why it longs for sanctification. It also longs for sanctification of God’s name in every other true self. This longing is its first request. The divine order, which is continuously desecrated and darkened by the wrong development of creatures, is to be restored, “made holy” or sanctified.

One aspect of the desecration of the name of God in the earthly world is that the earthly ego uses the name of God for its own purposes. It falsifies the term “God” or “Father” and imagines “God” as anthropomorphic, as a being with the highest earthly virtues. The removal of this falsification is also part of the sanctification of the “name” of God. “God” is the all-encompassing, all-pervasive wisdom, power, and love that are driving everything

towards its inherent purpose. It also pushes people towards their inherent purpose. The true self prays for this fulfillment of its own inherent purpose, for this sanctification of the name of God.

The second request is, "May your kingdom come." The true self does not just pray that it becomes enlightened in the order of the spiritual world but also that it is filled by and expresses the powers of the spiritual world. May the "kingdom of God" come. May the powers of the spiritual world become active in human life so that all their actions bring about nothing other than the realization of the order of the spirit. May the powers of the spiritual world overcome all the demonic powers and all forces of egocentricity, redirecting them and thus turning them into energies that serve the order of the spirit. And may this happen not only in the true self of the person praying but in the true self of all people. Then the realm of the self-aggrandizing ego and of the demons will have been destroyed and replaced by the realm of the spirit.

In Luke, the third request as found in the Gospel of Matthew is missing: "Your will be done" (Matthew 6:10, NRSV). For Luke, the realization of the will of God follows as a matter of course from the activity of the order and power of the spiritual world.

When the order and power of God become active in the true self, the human ego personality changes fundamentally. Through the impulses from the true self, the ego personality gradually becomes a spirit personality, which carries out the will of God. This new spirit personality is an organ of expression of the spiritual order and power and consciously expresses them. Like the old ego personality, it possesses four aspects: thinking, feeling, willing, and doing. All four old aspects are transformed on the spiritual path through the influences from the true self. The last three requests in Luke refer to the transformation process in the first three aspects.

The pupils on the spiritual path need new knowledge and insights to respond to everyday situations in the way the true self in them demands. These insights, new every day, are the daily "bread" for which Jesus has his disciples ask: the manna with whose help the disciples recognize themselves and others and are enabled to serve the development of their true self and the spirit in humanity. The powers of the spirit gradually change the thought life of the pupils in this way.

In addition to the new thought life, the new personality corresponding to the order of the spirit develops also a new feeling

life. The construction of this new life of feeling is the subject of the next request: “Forgive us our sins.” The pupils ask for the spirit to replace their egocentric feelings with new feelings, for these old feelings – the passions, lusts, and desires – cause separation from God, “sin”; yes, they are this separation. When this separation is dissolved, it creates unity with the spiritual world in people, and encompassing love and mercy can flow through them. The consequences of these egocentric feelings – entanglements in conflicts and dependencies – then lose their impact. The pupils can calmly deal with them in a different way and do not get entangled still deeper by negative counter-reactions. So their “sins are forgiven.”

When the powers from the true self build a new thought and feeling life, a clear, alert calmness arises in the pupils. This peace would be destroyed immediately if they reacted angrily towards others who treat them unfairly. If they behaved aggressively in such cases, it would be over with the clear calm in them. Therefore, they “forgive everyone indebted” to them and dissolve every impulse for retaliation already in its arising. As a result, they remain in unity with the true self of others. “If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt” (Luke 6:29, NRSV).

The pupils let the powers of the spirit dissolve their egocentric feelings that lead to egocentric actions towards others. So they receive forgiveness by the spirit. And they dissolve injuries that others give them through their egocentricity by not reacting with egocentricity. They forgive. Forgiveness by the spirit creates a state of the serene power in them. This state makes it easier for them to forgive. And when they forgive, they in turn create better possibilities for the spirit to give them power. In this way, their own forgiveness and the forgiveness given within to them by the spirit strengthen and depend on each other. Through both, the new feelings of the pupils remain in a relaxed tranquility.

Finally, the pupils on the spiritual path also develop a new life of will in accordance with the true self and the new thought and feeling life. They receive great spiritual gifts: new insights and feelings. These gifts will tempt them to use them egocentrically. When Jesus at the Jordan had received the spirit, exactly by this, his egocentricity, the devil, was called up. This egocentricity wanted to take advantage of the spiritual gifts of the “Anointed

One.” Likewise, the egocentricity, the devil, in the pupils feels provoked by the presence of the spirit and its gifts. That is not a temptation by the spirit. The spirit never tries to dissuade the pupils from the path to their inherent purpose. Rather, it strengthens them to stay on this path. Therefore, the text does not read, “And do not tempt us,” but, “And do not lead us into temptation.” The presence of the spirit in the pupils does not *want* their egocentricity to appear. But an *effect* of this presence may be that their egocentricity appears all the more. And so the pupils ask the “Father” that this effect does not come about if possible. They say, “Father, through your gifts that you give me for your glorification, you could lead me into the temptation to abuse them for my own glorification. Prevent that from happening.”

The seventh request, known from the Gospel of Matthew, “but rescue us from the evil one” (Matthew 6:13, NRSV), is missing in Luke probably because the deliverance from the entanglements in the material world, which arise through egocentric action, happens as a matter of course when the thinking, feeling, and willing of the personality are changed.

The whole prayer that Jesus gives to his disciples implies that the spiritual world, which is present in them in the image of God, is always to receive the honor, never the earthly ego. In the first two (or three in Matthew) requests, the true self connects with the order and the powers of the spiritual world so as to be directed by them and to grow in them. A new personality according to thoughts, feelings, aspirations, and actions that lives in harmony with the spiritual world, arises through these powers. The “transfiguration” of Jesus shows a personality that has been changed in terms of thinking, feeling, and willing. The last three (or four in Matthew) requests relate to the emergence of this new personality.

It is noteworthy that the prayer is not given in the I-form but in the we-form. When pupils become aware of their relationship to the spiritual world and their inherent spiritual purpose, it is clear to them that they are connected to all other people who, like themselves, reflect on the kingdom of God and its effects on humanity. This also contributes to the dissolving of self-centeredness.

Prerequisite for “Prayer”: Longing for the Spirit

11:5 *And he said to them, “Who of you will have a friend, and will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶ because a friend of mine has come to me on a journey, and I do not have anything to set before him.’ ⁷ And that one will answer from inside and say, ‘Do not cause me trouble! The door has already been shut and my children are with me in bed! I am not able to get up to give you anything.’ ⁸ I tell you, even if he does not give him anything after he gets up because he is his friend, at any rate because of his impudence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.” (LEB)*

Jesus describes a prerequisite for “praying” without which no conscious connection between the true self and the spiritual world can be established. It is the need for intense longing of the true self for the spirit. The parable of the “importunate neighbor” asking for help from his friend at the most inopportune time speaks of this necessity.

There are moments in the pupils’ life when they realize that they need the spiritual powers to respond to the spiritual needs of others – their “friends.” In spite of this, the source of these powers does not bubble up; the pupils feel cut off from the spiritual world. Then there is only the possibility that they let all the longing for connection that is rooted in the depths of the true self speak, that they mobilize it, as it were. Other people, seekers of truth, their “friends,” must be helped. They need the right answer, the right understanding, the right encouragement. When the pupils, knowing that something has to be done here, open themselves up to the spiritual source within, they can trust that a strengthening will come. This intensity of longing is shown in the parable as the “impudence” of the supplicant. What is meant is not an effort on the part of the ego, a storming of the “Father” as a divine person by an ego in need. That would be the earthly plane again. A connection between the “Son” as the image of God and the “Father” as the spirit can only come about on the level of the spiritual world. The parable also shows very clearly that the true self is not self-centered and longing for nourishment for itself but for soul nourishment for another.

The closer circumstances of the parable vividly describe the relationship between the true self and the spiritual world. The pupils encounter traveling “friends” on the path in search of truth

and life. The newcomers need spiritual food. The pupils know: This is the moment when we have to have the right answers to the questions of the seekers, understanding for them, and the power to give them hope. These are the three “breads” of the parable. But how should we help them when we have nothing? The pupils feel as if dead inwardly, without light at dark midnight, without soul nourishment. They can only turn to the spirit in their own being – “pray.” First, they feel that the spiritual world is there. But they do not succeed in taking the spiritual powers into their consciousness. The “door is closed”; it is obviously not an auspicious hour for the spiritual powers to become active; they seemingly refuse and are “busy” with other things. And nevertheless, the parable says to the pupils: Despite the apparent inauspiciousness of the hour and despite the seeming refusal of the spirit, do not stop seeking contact and continue to yearn. There will be a strengthening, and you will receive the gifts of the spirit, the three “breads,” for the others.

Certainty of the Answer

11:9 *“And I tell you, ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened for you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹But what father from among you, if his son will ask for a fish, instead of a fish will give him a snake? ¹²Or also, if he will ask for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³Therefore if you, although you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father from heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?” (LEB)*

So a strengthening will certainly come. “Ask, and it will be given you; knock, and the door will be opened for you.” The pupils can thus be so sure because this is a scientific law. A longing of the true self, a call of the true self for connection with the spirit, is like a magnetic attraction to which lawfully an answer from the kingdom of the spirit has to come. When it often does not seem like this, this is because the consciousness of the pupils is still so much clouded by egocentricity that they do not notice the answer from the world of the spirit.

When the true self calls for the connection with the spiritual world, an answer will come, whether noticed or not, that is conducive to the growth of true self and its effectiveness in the

world. This is a characteristic feature of “praying” in the sense of a reception of spiritual powers. “The heavenly Father,” the spirit itself, will give to people praying the power necessary for their development and effectiveness, depending on the given possibilities. The pupils will receive the Holy Spirit, namely knowledge and the energy to implement this knowledge, for there is an unbreakable relationship between the true self and the spiritual world, between the “Son” and the “Father,” between the cell and the organism. It is impossible for the true self to receive powers from the world of spirit that are not conducive to its development. It itself is spiritual and of the same structure as the spiritual world. Its needs are the same as those of the spiritual world. Therefore, powers from the world of the spirit invoked by it *must* also serve it.

This is indicated by Jesus allegorically by saying that in the earthly world, no one would give their child a snake instead of a fish and a scorpion instead of an egg. Even in the earthly world, a relationship of affinity, yes, identity of essence, exists between parent and child although both are “evil” in their egocentricity in comparison to the spiritual world. For this reason, if not perverted, every parent will love their child and give it what is beneficial to it. This law is valid all the more in the spiritual world where Father and Son do not face each other as self-assertive I-beings, but the Son merges with the Father, and the Father expresses himself in the Son. When it sometimes seems to the pupils on the spiritual path that they receive answers from the spiritual world in the form of experiences that throw them off track or totally contradict their expectations of spiritual development – as if they received a scorpion instead of an egg or a snake instead of a fish – such experiences, as they come from the spiritual world, can only be cathartic and clear the path for the development of the true self.

Spiritual or Demonic Powers

11:14 *And he was expelling a mute demon. Now it happened that when the demon came out, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowds were astonished. ¹⁵ But some of them said, “By Beelzebul the ruler of demons he expels demons!” ¹⁶ And others, in order to test him, were demanding from him a sign from heaven. ¹⁷ But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls.*

18 So if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I expel demons by Beelzebul. 19 But if I expel demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons expel them? For this reason they will be your judges! 20 But if I expel demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you! 21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his possessions are safe. 22 But when a stronger man attacks him and conquers him, he takes away his full armor in which he trusted and distributes his plunder. 23 The one who is not with me is against me, and the one who does not gather with me scatters.” (LEB)

Spiritual powers from the world of the spirit as well as demonic powers from the hereafter can have effects that go beyond the understanding of the rational mind. But the effects of demonic powers, although sensational, are certainly not conducive to the inherent spiritual purpose of human beings. How can one distinguish the two types of powers in others or in one’s own being?

The true self can consciously release powers from the spiritual world through which “demons” are cast out, for example, by “praying.” Individual or collective delusions are banished by the order of the spirit.

The earthly ego too can “pray” in concentrated self-assertion, conjuring and calling up powers of a demonic nature. In its delusion to be a chosen tool of “providence,” it can connect with demonic energies from the hereafter and apply them. It can use the collective delusions – the demons – of people in order to control others with irresistible “charisma.” Depending on circumstances, it can do “miracles” – be it “healing” people from disease, be it being empowered to peak performances. Thus, also in the name “Beelzebul,” the ruler of the demons, the principle and the concentration of earthly egocentricity, can a person develop powers through which disorder in individuals or in the collective are eliminated and replaced by apparent order: by the order of delusions.

Some witnesses of Jesus casting out a demon claim that Jesus is in league with Beelzebul and thereby enabled to drive out demons. That raises the question: How can we discern by which powers people eliminate demonic bondage? Are they eliminating it by spiritual or demonic powers? Some bystanders suggest a distinguishing criterion: a “sign from heaven.” They demand a

“sign from heaven” by Jesus that could prove that he really works with spiritual powers. They demand a “miracle” from him. Through a “sign from heaven,” God should legitimize Jesus as someone who drives out demons with the help of spiritual powers.

Of what nature should this “miracle” be to show the mind that Jesus really works with spiritual and not with demonic powers? Intellectual people want to judge whether an esoteric movement is from the spirit or from the demonic world, whether it is a truly spiritual institution or a “sect.” They want to have criteria that give them security about the character of an esoteric movement.

Let us assume Jesus would bring about such a “miracle,” such a “sign from heaven.” Let us assume that he would induce his “Father” to open the heavens and cause a supernatural appearance that would reveal Jesus as “God’s Son.” Or let us assume, the leader of an esoteric group would perform “wonders” in the form of materializations or supernatural phenomena. How would people react? Stubborn rationalists would still say that here provisionally unfathomable, “natural” means, hypnosis, or collective suggestions are at work or even that it is a case of fraud. Others would believe in the supernatural nature of the “phenomena.” But this belief would only be due to their mind having reached its limits. It would be accepting the phenomena as true because no rational explanation is possible.

How strong would such a belief be? What would be its effect? Submission under an authority, worship of an authority. If believers change under this condition and, for example, because an authority calls for giving up their egocentricity, then they do so for an external agency, not “for my will,” not for their true identity. So they will be unfree instead of gaining the freedom of their true self.

And in this faith, would they definitively know from which source the “phenomena” come? They could only know that these are “supernatural” phenomena. The crucial question whether they are caused from demonic or spiritual realms, however, would have to remain open. The mind is an instrument created for this side and cannot fathom whether “supernatural” powers come from the beyond or from the spiritual world. Faith that is based on the mind having reached its limits cannot do so either. Despite the “sign from heaven,” the faithful would always remain in uncertainty whether they have entrusted themselves to demonic or spiritual powers.

Certainty on this question can only be gained with the help of the

spiritual perception of the true self and of the mind illuminated by it and cleansed of delusions. People have to rely on their experiences here – experiences with the true self and the demonic egocentricity in their own being through which they gradually learn to distinguish the effects of the one from those of the other. They will also recognize by the fruits from which powers an esoteric movement works. But the assessment of what are good and what are bad fruits will also depend on the extent to which their true self and their reason have developed.

Jesus gives no “sign from heaven.” If he were to do so and produce “supernatural phenomena” to gain legitimacy, then he could still not produce certainty that he is allied with God, for “supernatural phenomena” can also be produced by a magician working with demonic powers. And through such behavior, Jesus would descend to the level of the earthly mind. He would respond to a provocation with “signs” as arguments. He would defend himself and make God a servant of his defense.

Therefore, Jesus lives and acts only from his true self and in harmony with it. He does not give in to the provocation of those demanding a sign. He only refers to his deeds and the results of his deeds. These are experiential realities for people who are open. Jesus has expelled a demon through spiritual powers. The result is that the “mute speaks” again. “Speech” has been given back to him, the “Word” through which people become truly human and can gain access to the kingdom of the spirit. The “Word,” reason, the ability to recognize and judge independently, has returned to him. He is freed from the demon of “muteness”: from delusions of an individual or collective nature that robbed him of independent thinking, his “speech.”

And that is the distinguishing criterion as to whether a person works with spiritual or demonic powers. It is the fruit that this person produces. In receptive people, the powers of the spirit reestablish freedom of thought and judgment, independent reason, the language of reason that was silenced by ideology and dogma. Demonic forces cannot possibly restore the language of reason. Reason in the sense of an openness to the language of the spirit and delusions exclude each other.

That is why Jesus argues, If demonic powers would restore reason, they would destroy their own realm. But Satan does not possibly want to destroy his own realm. Thus, since I restored the reason of the possessed, I did not work out of the forces of Satan.

It can sometimes appear as if “Beelzebul,” the concentration of egocentricity, drove out demons. Such powers can definitely bring about “healings” or extraordinary accomplishments. But they will never restore “reason” and independent speech. One ideology will just drive out another. An addiction can drive out another addiction, a delusion another delusion. Thus, the impression may arise as if Satan were divided against himself. But in reality, Satan is behind every ideology, even behind conflicting ones. Satan is ideology as such, delusion as such, no matter the content. Therefore, Satan’s realm is not destroyed even when numerous ideologies contend for supremacy in a people, for example. Thereby, the people always remain in the grip of forces from the world of the beyond, sheep-like, deprived of the language of reason, and unfree.

Also individual persons can ask themselves whether a newly forming order is arising in them from the true self or from the demonic forces of their egocentricity. It could be that they feel new powers in themselves and that these powers enable them to eliminate the previous disorder of their life, that is, to cast out a “demon” from their being. Again, only experience can give the verdict. If they notice someday that the new “order” has set only a new delusion in the place of a previous one, then they know that they continue to be in the grip of the demonic world. However, if they recognize that freedom and independent thinking, an independent “language” oriented to the world of the spirit, have entered them, then they know that spiritual powers out of their true self have worked in them. Then, as Jesus says, the “finger of God” has expelled the demons. The “kingdom of God” has come to the persons concerned and has shown its effects in the world of the ego.

Once again, Jesus emphasizes the fact that the decision on which powers cast out demons can only be based on experience. He now asks in turn by whom his opponents cast out demons, “By whom do your sons cast them out?” “Your sons” means people like you. Through whom do people like you cast out the demons? It will become apparent by whom they do it depending on the result. And the result will confirm their assertion or punish their lies. It will be “their judge” and judge whose spirit’s child they are and by which powers they cast out demons: in the name of Satan or in the name of God.

Now, with Jesus, the kingdom of God has actually come. The

order and powers of the spiritual world have manifested in the earthly world through him and his disciples and thus eliminated the demonic delusions of many people. Like a flash of lightning, Satan has fallen from the “heaven” of the individual and collective unconscious. Until then, the realm of Satan and his possessions were “at peace.” People were firmly in the grip of the ideologies and dogmas, and with all the weapons of cunning and force, the “strong man” had stood guard that nobody escaped this grip. But with Jesus and his disciples, one “stronger” has come who exposes these delusions in their cunning and force and takes away their prey. The people who up to then had been unfree victims of the “demons,” individually and collectively, will now be free citizens of the kingdom of God.

Jesus is the prototype of the true human identity. This true identity acts in humanity and in individuals as a desire for truth and inner freedom. When ideological systems collapse, this is not only the consequence of their long-term functional disability but also the increasing ability of people to see through the fraud and manipulation by demonic delusions. The true self in them no longer lets itself be cheated and manipulated. Thus, a new order corresponding to the true human identity can gradually arise in peoples and in individuals.

Those who do not collaborate with this true identity and do not promote its development continue to belong to the world of demonic egocentricity and work against the inherent purpose of humanity. Those who do not try to live in accordance with this true identity and do not make common cause with all others who are trying to do so do not gather under the sign of the inherent purpose of humanity. They do not come to the unity with the spirit in which all people as true self are one, but they “scatter.” They leave themselves and others in the grip of their collective or individual delusions, which in their diversity always separate people from each other, yes, set individuals and groups as enemies against each other. People then in turn react ideologically. They try to force individuals and peoples into line in order to eventually even out all differences and pacify the world.

But those who try to live in accordance with their true human identity will allow all other people to develop this identity freely, for the spirit is free. The result will be that all people will find themselves in this freedom and unity of the spirit despite countless individual differences.

Wakefulness Facing Demonic Powers

11:24 *“Whenever an unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it travels through waterless places searching for rest, and does not find it. It says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came out.’²⁵ And when it arrives it finds the house swept and put in order.²⁶ Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there. And the last state of that person becomes worse than the first!”* (LEB)

One must be extremely alert especially when the new order arising from the true self has eliminated the old disorder of delusions. The “demon,” the collective delusion, has left the person concerned but is still active in humanity as a concentration of mental and emotional energies, for many other people keep this delusion alive uninterruptedly. The demon seeks others that it can possess. But if it does not find such a “resting place” on its way through “waterless regions,” through areas where people do not open to it, then it again lays siege to the person it had left. If this person in the meantime has not fortified the order of the spirit in their own being and has failed to express it through deeds and arranged their whole life accordingly, the “house,” their being, stands empty and is again open to the original delusion. Yes, with their feeling of inner emptiness, they even attract it and “put their house in order” for the old guest. They are happy to welcome it. And the old guest can move in again.

Now, however, since the egoic mind of this individual had opened itself to the true purpose of life but lost it again, the mind is even more confused and weaker than before. And the demonic powers have an easy job of it. Additional, completely new delusions can gain a foothold in the person: “seven other spirits more evil” than the first. And with that, the individual is in an almost inescapable situation.

The person was, for example, a fanatical supporter of an ideal of justice thinking it could be realized through a new social order. That was a collective delusion, a demon that had taken possession of them. But their innermost being, their true self, had told them that they first had to realize justice in their own life in accordance with the laws of true self. Then justice would be realized in a part of the world, namely in the person, in a part they could really influence. Through this realization, the collective demon had been cast out.

But now this person failed to implement their realization in their own life, and so it became weaker and weaker and was finally lost to them again. Their being stood empty and was all the more receptive to the old fixed idea. It moved back into the person, who again drew hope to realize justice through social change alone. And now this hope became overpowering, and new, worse, seven demons moved in: megalomania, preparedness to be anarchistically violent, seeing things in extremes of black and white, paranoia of persecution, need for being absolutely secure in a leader, excuses of any crime in the service of the ideology, general loss of reality. A picture of a breakdown. Therefore, it is so important that people who gain insight into the true meaning of life also put this knowledge into action, allowing a new resident, the true self, to move into their “house,” their being. Then no demon will find a home in them anymore.

What is Blessedness?

11:27 Now it happened that as he said these things, a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!”²⁸ But he said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and follow it!” (LEB)

The true self, embodied by Jesus, lives from the order and power of the spiritual world. Therefore, it recognizes the order of the spiritual world and thus also the disorder and nature of the demonic world. It also has powers from the spiritual world that eliminate all demonic disorder. This all-illuminating clarity and all-surmounting spiritual power of the true self become the occasion for a beatitude that like a strong accent concludes Jesus’ explanations about “praying” and the nature of the demonic world.

A woman praises the mother of Jesus from whom such a person had emerged. She praises as blessed the earthly vessel from which Jesus, the pattern of the spiritual human being, has emerged. But Jesus corrects her and refers to the difference between earthly and spiritual. The earthly actually has a function for the spiritual, and there are many people who, like the mother of Jesus, contribute to the development of spiritual impulses in the earthly world. They worship spiritual leaders or movements; they help them; they believe in them; they sacrifice in service for them. But even though

they are the “body” carrying the spiritual impulse and the “breasts” on which its earthly form is nourished, they remain the old, earthly people. Such an orientation to the spiritual impulse does not make them blessed.

Blessed are rather those who allow the spiritual impulse to transform them. Decisive is whether people *change*. If they fail with that, they do not become blessed despite all sacrifice, service, and worship.

Their actual task is to hear and obey the word of God. Hearing the word of God means to open to the realization and power of the divine world whereby the image of God unfolds and people are freed from all egocentricity. Obeying the word of God means living out of this realization and power, causing the image of God to work and transforms the whole ego personality. The “clothes” of such people become bright as the “clothes” of Jesus at the “transfiguration” on the mountain. Then people have really become followers of Jesus, live as he does out of the order and power of the divine world, and act accordingly. That is blessedness.

Signal Function of the True Self

The following verses of the Gospel of Luke are under the motto of the “sign.” When the sign of the true self is established in humanity, it becomes clear what the false self is. From the realization of the divine world, which manifests itself in Jesus as a “sign” visible everywhere, follows the possibility to recognize the nature of the demonic world of the beyond and to break its power. There also follows the possibility to recognize the nature of the earthly world on this side and to break its power.

Reaction to the Sign of the True Self

11:29 *And as the crowds were increasing, he began to say, “This generation is an evil generation! It demands a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah! ³⁰For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. ³¹The queen of the south will rise up at the judgment with the people of this generation and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here!*

32 The people of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here! (LEB)

Some people had demanded from Jesus a “sign from heaven” in order to receive proof of the divine origin of his activity (Luke 11:16). They wanted a demonstration of supernatural abilities. But such demonstrations would rather be proof of not working from spiritual sources, for with such demonstrations, the “miracle worker” is on the level of the earthly mind and its demands for “proofs.” And the rational mind, appropriate for the world on this side, is unable to distinguish whether supernatural powers come from a spiritual or a demonic source. Jesus therefore withholds explicitly such a “sign from heaven” from this “evil generation.”

The “sign” of a real spiritual movement is nothing spectacular. It is the true self. It is the quality of the people of this movement, the quality of the leader and the pupils. It is the reality of life of these people, the changing activity of the order and power of the spirit in them, and the result of this activity: the expulsion of demons, the restoration of the freedom of judgment and feeling – just as the “mute” can “speak” again and gets back the language of reason, and the healing of diseases, that is, a new order in the inner and outer life. By this sign, it becomes clear from which power Jesus works. But it becomes even clearer. Jesus promises to the “evil generation” the sign of the Son of Man. It will be erected before the “evil generation” and will reveal itself. It will judge against the “evil generation,” exposing and condemning it. The nature of the “evil generation,” of the false self, will become visible and recognizable before the “sign” of the true self and its effects.

The ruling caste of priests and scholars ossified in power interests is the “evil generation” because it prevents the people ruled from unfolding the true life. The dogmatist in every individual personality is also evil because he prevents the unfolding of a spontaneous life from the true self. He is particularly evil when he relies on traditional symbols of the divine world and passes himself off as the only interpreter of these symbols in order to pursue his own power interests under this cover, for those knowledgeable in the law and the Pharisees of the Jews legitimized their position with the law given by God on Sinai, with a special relationship with God, and with the special value of their religion. Just this attitude, however, makes one particularly

self-righteous, haughty, and stiff-necked, which is why impulses from true self hardly have a chance to do something against this, be it in a people, be it in an individual.

The quality of a person on the spiritual path can be on three levels depending on the state of development. The prophet Jonah represents the quality of the earthly personality which, like John the Baptist, turns away from the earthly and towards the divine. Solomon represents the quality of the earthly personality filled with the wisdom of God. He embodies the egoic mind that has been transformed and permeated by the true self. And Jesus is the pattern of the true self, which, according to Simeon, “is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel” (Luke 3:34, NRSV). He is the realizer of the spiritual impulse; the prophet Jonah and Solomon are the preparation for it.

Jonah was a sign to the inhabitants of Nineveh, to the “Gentiles.” He was someone obedient to the law of God, the prophet who prepared for the spiritual path through the outer law. And the people of Nineveh responded positively to this sign. By this standard, they recognized their own state of attachment to earthly passions, repented, and turned to the law of God. Likewise, Jesus continues, Solomon was a sign to the people of his day. He was an earthly person filled with the wisdom of God, and people could decide with a view to this sign whether they for their part wanted to open themselves to wisdom or to remain in the folly of the mind that only thinks about earthly matters. The Queen of Sheba reacted positively to this sign. She “came from the ends of the earth” to hear the divine wisdom.

But now Jesus comes to the people of his time, also a sign. He is the person who lives freely out of the law of the spiritual world, the true self, which freely unfolds its inner law. This is more than the earthly person who follows the outer divine law, more than the earthly person who is filled with divine wisdom. And yet Jesus’ contemporaries refuse to respond positively to him. They are not “Gentiles” as are the inhabitants of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba but rather people bound by divine law. Now that the spiritual path opens up to them, one should expect that they, who have been preparing for it for so long, would step on it immediately. But it is precisely the long preparation that leads them to make preparation, the life according to the outer law, the main thing, to cling tenaciously to the law, and to not take the step into freedom. Yes, they do not even repent as did the people of

Nineveh and do not listen to divine wisdom as did the Queen of Sheba.

When the final judgment comes one day – and this judgment takes place every day – when the inside of all people will be revealed, the inhabitants of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba will be a living reproach for this “evil generation,” for they had reacted positively to the possibilities presented to them by Jonah and Solomon. The “evil generation,” on the other hand, had ignored the opportunity of the true human being offered to them, even fought against it, although they would have had better conditions for a positive reaction than the people of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba, and they had been confronted even more powerfully with the possibility of a spiritual life, the “sign” Jesus.

Signs of Light for Others

11:33 *“No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a bushel basket, but on a lampstand, so that those who come in can see the light. ³⁴Your eye is the lamp of the body. When your eye is sincere, your whole body is full of light also. But when it is evil, your body is dark also. ³⁵Therefore pay careful attention that the light in you is not darkness! ³⁶If therefore your whole body is full of light, not having any part dark, it will be completely full of light, as when the lamp with its light gives light to you.”* (LEB)

The sign “Jesus,” the prototype of the true human being, is a light that shines in humanity for all. All who are in search of truth and the fulfillment of their inherent purpose can orient themselves by this sign, for it shows them the truth and the inherent purpose of humanity. Not only Jesus but also all other people who approach this inherent purpose can become such a sign of light for others. The prerequisite is that, like Jesus, they actually live and work from the true self and do not hide. Otherwise, the other people, those entering and approaching the truth, would not see the light of the true self. And they have to be aware that their own light, their earthly intellect, the richness of their emotions, and their social engagement, are not important. If they were to predominately let their own light shine, they would prevent the true light from being effective. Only when they do not want to shine as egos can the true self shine, regardless of the ego’s intentions.

It is crucial that they are aware of this difference between the real light and the false, egocentric light, which is basically darkness, for the false light makes them dark while the real light illuminates their whole being whereby they in turn can become a sign of light for others.

Your eye is the light of the body. The eye directs light into the body. By means of light, it shows the body the properties of the world, and so the body, the acting human being, can orient and express itself in the environment.

Your eye is also your awareness, your ability to recognize. Your body is your ability to act. Already on the level of the earthly world is applicable that when your consciousness is pure, not clouded by interests, prejudices, and illusions, you will perceive clearer and see the world as it is. Your thoughts will be illuminated by this correct perception; your feelings will be clarified, and your will will be guided. Your whole ego personality will be bright due to its pure consciousness. Conversely, if you look into the world with an organ of perception blocked by projections and expectations, this organ will show you a false world and spoil and darken all your thoughts, feelings, and aspirations.

This law applies all the more on the spiritual level. When an eye of consciousness that wants to open to the light of the divine world and lead the light to the personality is purified, free from any self-centeredness, from any attachment to sensory impressions and dogmas, it will make the whole ego personality “full of light.” It will illuminate its thoughts through divine wisdom, make its feelings clear as crystal, and purify its will so that it only wants to carry out the order of the spiritual world. A spirit personality will emerge that shines through and through. It shines from within; there is nothing dark in it any more. But it is also illuminated “from outside,” as from the spiritual sun, “as when the lamp with its light gives light to you,” for the light of the knowledge of God is in it, and with this light it is embedded in the abundance of light of the spiritual world that surrounds it.

But when an eye of consciousness closes itself to the light of the divine world, it is an “evil eye.” It is only filled with self-centeredness and darkness. Such a consciousness makes the whole ego personality dark. The thoughts of such people will only consider the purposes of the ego; their feelings will be full of passion and desires, and their will will only serve the interests of the ego.

The difference between people with an evil eye and a body filled with darkness on the one hand and with a pure eye and a light-filled body on the other hand is that between the “evil generation” and the true self embodied by Jesus. This same difference is noticeable in every single person and every pupil on the spiritual path. Therefore, all people should make sure in ordinary life that they look out into the world with a clear, unclouded eye of consciousness and thereby bring their personality into an honest and open state. Therefore, all pupils on the spiritual path should make sure that their consciousness-eye directed to the spiritual world is free from any self-centeredness so that their whole personality is illuminated by the light of the spirit. They should be particularly careful not to be mistaken, for it is easily possible that they take illusions, enthusiasm, and activism to be light-filled thoughts, feelings, and aspirations while in reality they are only darkness that obscures the light of the spirit.

Purification of the Outer through the Inner

11:37 And as he was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to have a meal with him, and he went in and reclined at table. 38 And the Pharisee, when he saw it, was astonished that he did not first wash before the meal. 39 But the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but your inside is full of greediness and wickedness. 40 Fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? 41 But give as charitable giving the things that are within, and behold, everything is clean for you.” (LEB)

Jesus has determined the decisive role of consciousness, the “eye,” for all inner development and underlined the necessity that this consciousness as an organ of knowledge should be free from prejudices and self-centeredness. Another defect of externally oriented people, the “Pharisees,” is their tendency to cleanse the outer habitus and thereby to neglect the cleansing of the inside. The occasion for Jesus to address this defect is the strict ritual of washing before eating. Jesus draws criticism from a Pharisee for not washing himself before eating. Certainly Jesus does not advocate unsanitary behavior through his actions. Rather, he demonstrates as in a parable – and perhaps the whole scene is a parable anyway – that observing only the outer ritual without a

corresponding inner attitude has no value. All people want to develop. But all too often, they invest their energy for development in merely external behavior whereas the internal, the true self, should develop. Perhaps this outward behavior consists of them strictly adhering to conventions and rituals because they believe that this will make them decent, even pious people. Perhaps they try to really change their inner being but do so from the outside willingly and deliberately with the help of psychic techniques. Even then, they would not make the slightest progress inwardly. However it may be: It is not enough to “cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish.”

It is more important to clean the inside. And this only happens through people putting their innermost motives before the tribunal of the true self. Then they discover what “greed and wickedness” is inside of them. In the pain of discovery, these “evil” motives lose their power, and the possibilities of the true self emerge. Then, as the interior gradually becomes pure, the exterior behavior will correspond to it. The purification must therefore take place from the inside out, and the source of the purification must be the true self – otherwise people get stuck in superficialities, forget the purification of the inside, and are content with the illusion that as decent or “positive” people, they are already pure and good people.

Jesus castigates this folly. And he establishes the need to purify the inside. The purification of the outside, the body itself, and external behavior is important, for God created the outside, and it is people’s duty to care for and cleanse it. But God also created the interior, the soul. That is why it is all the more people’s duty to take care of and purify it until it corresponds to the image of God. So Jesus calls out to the Pharisees, Remember, give glory to God and care for and purify your hearts! Then the outside also becomes pure.

Caring for the heart amounts to giving “as charitable giving the things that are within.” So Jesus understands “alms” to mean “that which is inside” and primarily not external means, money, clothing, and the like. And giving alms is accordingly not a deliberate, benevolent behavior, which would again only be external, but a quality of the true self. The true self cannot help but give away everything that is in it, all its love and mercy. That is “charitable giving.” Outward benevolence will also freely emerge from such an inner state. And when people do this, their insides

are cleansed. Selfishness, greed, and malice no longer have a place in them when all energies are at the service of the spiritual development of humanity. This then also cleanses the exterior, for what behavior could be purer than that which, in harmony with the true self, only brings about the well-being of the true self of other people?

Unmasking of the Outer through the Inner

11:42 *“But woe to you, Pharisees, because you pay a tenth of mint and rue and every garden herb, and neglect justice and love for God! But it was necessary to do these things without neglecting those things also. ⁴³Woe to you, Pharisees, because you love the best seat in the synagogues and the greetings in the marketplaces! ⁴⁴Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, and the people who walk over them do not know it!*

⁴⁵And one of the legal experts answered and said to him, “Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us also!” ⁴⁶So he said, “Woe to you also, legal experts, because you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers! ⁴⁷Woe to you, because you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them! ⁴⁸As a result you are witnesses, and you approve of the deeds of your fathers, because they killed them and you build their tombs! ⁴⁹For this reason also the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,’ ⁵⁰so that the blood of all the prophets that has been shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, ⁵¹from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the temple building. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation! ⁵²Woe to you, legal experts, because you have taken away the key to knowledge! You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering!”

⁵³And when he departed from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be terribly hostile, and to question him closely about many things, ⁵⁴plotting to catch him with reference to something he might say. (LEB)

Jesus proclaims a threefold “woe” over the Pharisees and a threefold “woe” also over the lawyers, the representatives of the

ruling theocratic class. The “lawyers” are the ideologues of that time, the Pharisees the theocratic politicians. In relation to the individual, this means: The true self living out of the spirit characterizes and exposes the dogmatic and manipulative tendencies through its dynamic presence in the individual, as “signs.” Those who take note of this unmasking in the text of the Gospel of Luke will find it easier to clarify the relationships in their own outer and inner world.

Why “woe”? The ruling class will be punished for its nature and for its actions. By whom? And when? One could think of a revolution that would give it the receipt for its mistakes. And something like that has happened over and over again in history, only in most cases, another ruling class with similar characteristics has replaced the old one. In any case, the ruling class will have to experience the consequences of their concretion and their actions, for violence invokes violence; malice invokes malice; lies invoke lies.

But with the woes, Jesus points to another “judgment.” Everything that cuts itself off from the life of the spirit in self-centeredness and hardens itself must one day perish, for it has no life from itself. Therefore, if the consequences of the misdeeds do not yet come from outside, they certainly come from within. Tiredness, depression, disappointment, and despair will set in, as no new impulses from the world of the spirit can flow into the life of the ruling class.

The six woes characterize six typical, timeless, evil characteristics of the ideological or religious ruling class. The first is that those in power are pedantically bureaucratic on the small scale and legally regulate and manipulate everything down to the last detail. The Pharisees of that time, unlike those of other times, are very precise even about their own tax practices. They even pay taxes on the harvest of their house gardens and take credit for it believing that they are fulfilling their duties to God perfectly in this way – the Old Testament prescribes the tithing of this harvest. Not being corrupt in small matters is certainly not of small merit. But in great matters, the rulers ignore all justice and the love for God, which would show what justice is. In great matters, they are corrupt. They maintain a structure of society in which the rulers economically exploit the people they rule and give them no political voice. That is not right. The task of the rulers is to secure the rights of all members of society and to rule from the “love for

God”: namely, in such a way that they serve the spiritual development of all people in their realm. This means they would have to organize the state in such a way that the highest goal could be the pursuit of all people for a meaningful life and that all material and cultural institutions would be subordinate to this goal. If politicians oriented themselves according to these guidelines, they would, of course, also govern everyday life so that people would not be cut off from the breath of life. The rulers would “practice” these things: The rulers would organize society large-scale with respect to human dignity, which springs from the true self – “without neglecting the others”: They would also make provisions in the small-scale for the things of everyday life but in service of the primary goal.

The second bad characteristic of the politicians is their striving for recognition. Instead of regarding themselves as servants of the people and inconspicuously doing their work in a business-like manner, they push themselves everywhere into the foreground where they can be admired whether they can show respectable accomplishments or not. They are looking for the “best seat in the synagogues” and love to be greeted “in the marketplaces.”

The third characteristic is that they are inwardly hollow and dead like graves. They are lacking in “love for God” and the resulting uprightness. Is it only important to gain and maintain power and prestige and to become still richer? Decisive is what is done with the power, the prestige, and the wealth. But the rulers do not know the meaning of human life and do not have a connection to the spiritual world. From where would they acquire meaningful political content?

The formulation, “You are like unmarked graves, and the people who walk over them do not know it,” contains further criticism. Touching a grave, touching death, made one “unclean” in ancient Judaism. Death stained life and affected it. The rulers understand how to make their inner death “unrecognizable” through a nice appearance and beautiful words. All people who come into contact with them – and these are all within their domain – are infected by touching of their inner death. The hollowness of the rulers is transposed like a virus to those dependent on them until general hopelessness becomes widespread in society. It would be the task of the rulers to have meaningful life content and to convey it to others.

The fourth evil characteristic of the ruling class, whether it

consists of Pharisees or lawyers, of politicians or their scientific consultants, is its tendency to reap benefits at others' expense. They oppress others with the burdens of collective life without involving themselves in the least. Once the wealth of the ruling class has risen to a certain extent, they use it to exploit the poor even more and enrich themselves by the labor of the poorer classes. The rift between the rich and the poor increases more and more.

The fifth evil characteristic is that the rulers always considered the "prophets" as a threat to their power and pursued and killed them or silenced them in a more subtle manner. The prophets are those people who want to serve justice and love God, who respect human dignity and know what the inherent purpose of humanity is, who know the order of the spiritual world and strive to increase its influence. A particularly subtle manner of silencing is to build "tombs" for the prophets of the past. That is, after their death, when they can no longer castigate current circumstances and cause no more "damage," they are ostensibly rehabilitated. But in this way, they are "buried" and killed all the more, for through the marketing of their teachings and with the pathos they are talked about, the explosive power of their thoughts is suffocated.

That their ideas are by no means intended to be really honored and taken seriously is shown as soon as a new "prophet" appears whose words reveal the current abuses. Such a prophet is dangerous and must be eliminated just as the rulers of that time murdered the priest Zacharias. But the consequences of such actions fall back upon the perpetrators, says the "Wisdom of God" or expressed differently, this is an immovable law of life. The "blood of the prophets" will be "required of this generation." Murder is destructive not only for the ones murdered but also for the murderers. They kill something alive in their own being through the murder. Destructive behavior perpetrated by the ruling class for centuries leads to its own degeneration. It ossifies more and more and understands the prophets less and less. Since the creation of the world, this is the consequence of the killing of the prophets, which falls incessantly back on the ruling classes: degeneration of their abilities and their quality of life. The rulers' own blood is demanded of them as a compensation for the blood of the prophets

The sixth characteristic of the ruling ideological or religious class is the worst, which entails all the others.

The religious leaders have taken away the “key of knowledge.” The “key of knowledge” may mean the knowledge of how to get into the kingdom of God. But it can also mean that the “key” that “unlocks” the kingdom of God is the realization, the becoming conscious, of this kingdom. The lawyers have taken away both aspects of this “key.” They no longer know what religion is.

Firstly, they lost the knowledge of the way that leads to the entrance into the kingdom of God. Religion is the reconnection of the true self with the spiritual world. Religion is a spiritual path on which the image of God in people’s own being of which they are unconscious gradually becomes conscious and active through which also the spiritual world becomes conscious and active in them. Thus, the broken unity between human beings and God is restored.

Secondly, the religious leaders have lost the direct knowledge of the spiritual world. They have turned religion, which is not only a spiritual path to realization but also the realization itself, into dogmatic faith and ritual through which people only seem to find the re-connection to God. Thus, they have taken away the key to becoming conscious of God, the realization of God through the true self, which opens the door to the spiritual world, and also do not enter themselves, as they are only administrators of the dogma and ritual. But even worse: They monopolize the apparent knowledge of what religion is and do not concede it to anyone else. They make their definition of religion the only valid one. When people are looking for and suspect the way to realization, the lawyers block them by claiming to know alone how this path looks: It allegedly consists of the adoption of a dogmatic faith and the execution of the corresponding rituals. This way, they prevent all who could find the actual path from finding it and entering into the world of the spirit.

How should meaningful content be found in political and social life under such circumstances? The gate through which such content could flow from the spiritual world to humanity is closed! Is it a miracle that only power, prestige, and wealth count as political and social goals, that everywhere exploitation, conceit, and meaninglessness prevail, that the rich live off of the poor, and that everyone who directs attention to the possibilities of finding meaning is persecuted?

Is it a miracle that even individuals set power, prestige, and possessions as their highest life goals, that they are increasingly

filled with meaninglessness, that they continuously force themselves to maximum output and live beyond their means, that they abreact (build “tombs” for) the warning voices in their heart or the hunches of a more meaningful life – the “prophets” in them – or persecute and kill them? For this reason, the scribes and Pharisees now persecute Jesus, who embodies the meaning of life absolutely, trying to catch him making “incorrect” remarks that do not conform to the prevailing conventions in order to turn them against him.

Insights of the Pupils

12:1 During this time when a crowd of many thousands had gathered together, so that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, “Beware for yourselves of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. ²But nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, and secret that will not be made known. ³Therefore everything that you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.” (LEB)

Again, the sphere of influence of the teaching and preaching about the kingdom of God has increased. The text speaks of a “crowd of thousands,” countless people who are now reached by the power of the spirit. The verses up to 13:9 are another kind of Sermon on the Mount by Jesus, which is part of the inserted “journey to Jerusalem.” It contains numerous statements about the spiritual path and the laws of the spiritual world and is partly directed to the disciples of Jesus, partly to the people.

The Hidden Becomes Manifest

The speech links to the foregoing altercation with the lawyers and Pharisees and summarizes: You, disciples, beware of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, which permeates all life like fermenting yeast. Untruthfulness, hypocrisy, and corruption: When such evils permeate a society, no trust, no tranquility, and no security are possible anymore. People are excited, anxious, or cynical. There is only the possibility that individuals, such as the disciples of Jesus, deliberately seek the truth and honestly listen to their own innermost being and the spiritual world despite all disorder,

confusion, and turmoil. Then the day will come when despite all untruthfulness and lies, the truth that was previously veiled is unveiled and the previously hidden order and power of the spirit will become known everywhere, for every discrepancy and tension has the tendency in itself to dissolve itself.

This tendency works from two sides, from the earthly and from the divine side. On the earthly side, lies and hypocrisy, the intentional hiding of the real, bad conditions, are exhausting. Hiding impure motives is exhausting, and at some point, the hypocrites will have no more strength and desire for this effort. As far as the spiritual side is concerned, the stronger the spiritual impulse influences the true self of people, the more the order and power of the divine world will drive people to the light, that is, will want to enter people's consciousness. The truth of the true self will one day become apparent and known. This will also open the eyes of more and more people to the falsity of the rulers. Yes, apart from the fact that lying and distorting are exhausting, the pressure of the rulers' true self on their concealing strategies will increase so that they will eventually admit the truth – before themselves and others.

Then the time has come when the pupils can proclaim from the rooftops what they could only pass on secretly under the pressure of political and social conditions, for this pressure will be partly dissolved by the exhaustion of the oppressors, partly by the power of the true self striving for freedom. The truth of the kingdom of the spirit, which previously could only be proclaimed behind closed doors, will then be disseminated openly.

Trust, Loyalty, Accord with the Holy Spirit

12:4 *“And I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after these things do not have anything more to do. ⁵But I will show you whom you should fear: fear the one who has authority, after the killing, to throw you into hell! Yes, I tell you, fear this one! ⁶Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God. ⁷But even the hairs of your head are all numbered! Do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.*

⁸“And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before people, the Son of Man also will acknowledge him before the angels of God, ⁹but the one who denies me before people will be

denied before the angels of God. ¹⁰And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him, but to the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven. ¹¹But when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious how or what you should speak in your own defense or what you should say, ¹²for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that same hour what it is necessary to say.” (LEB)

Jesus explains to his disciples, his “friends,” some facts that need to be well considered on the spiritual path.

The pupils on the spiritual path are always between the two poles of the earthly world and the divine world. They must recognize the character of the one and the other in all situations and then make their choice. They have to live through three contrasts. The first is between fear and trust: fear of the dangers of the earthly world, trust in the dependability of the spiritual world.

They must first learn what is actually to be feared in the earthly world. Their desire is that their true self unfolds, becomes conscious, and expresses itself as a spiritual being in the spiritual world. This is the inherent purpose of humanity. If there is therefore something to fear in the earthly world, it is that it induces them to miss this inherent purpose.

Because they are in opposition to the value system of the earthly world, the pupils are afraid that they might be killed by the powerful of the earthly world. But thereby, only the body would be killed, and the true self would remain untouched. Physical death cannot damage the true self and the inherent purpose of humanity. To that extent therefore, the fear of physical death is unfounded.

But there is one who is more powerful than the earthly, worldly rulers: Satan, the otherworldly concentration of all the mental, emotional, and volitional self-centeredness of humanity. This selfishness is active in every person, even in the pupils. And it has the power to “kill” the true self, to bring about the death of the soul. When people allow themselves to be captured by this power and solely determine their life by the drive for power, prestige, and possessions, then approaches to a life of the spirit are strangled and suppressed. The true self becomes inactive and “dies.” Even before physical death, such people are in “hell.” They miss their inherent purpose. They are hounded by their instincts, have to constantly defend themselves, and live in constant fear of their opponents. After bodily death, they will be all the more in “hell,” in

the void of the afterlife, for everything from this side dissolves there, and something eternal, enduring, the awareness of a spiritual world, had not developed in these people in life. This is the “hell” of utter darkness and emptiness.

So the pupils would justifiably be afraid of the one who hinders the development of their true self: the one who has power to throw people into hell after having “killed” the true self.

On the other hand, no pupil needs to be afraid, for those who follow their inherent purpose will come into ever better harmony with the divine world and escape the grip of the mighty one who can throw people into hell. They are “not forgotten” by God. The world of the spirit surrounds them and promotes their true self. It penetrates them from all sides. Nothing remains unaffected and is disregarded by the divine powers: “The hairs of your head are all counted.” The pupils oriented to the spiritual world can trust that its order and strength surround them. All living things originate in the spiritual world and are promoted in their development by it, even the smallest and most insignificant creature, even the sparrow. Would human beings not be safeguarded and promoted by it, human beings in whom the spiritual world has for the first time built up organisms that are capable of recognizing the spirit and living out of it?

Fear of the destructive power of egocentricity, trust in the upbuilding power of the spirit: between these poles wends the spiritual path of the pupils. Trusting in the spirit, they will not surrender to any paralyzing fear of “Satan” (of the destructive force within and outside of them). They will only be on guard against the danger threatening them from that side. This is what Jesus means with his emphatic injunction, “Fear him!”

The position of the disciples between the earthly and the divine world is also the subject of the second contradistinction in this discourse of Jesus. It may be difficult for pupils to profess their path before others, for they may not only fear attacks on the body but also ridicule and withdrawal of recognition by others. But if they overcome this fear and bear witness to the true self, which wants to become active in them, then the true self as a principle acting in all of humanity will also “acknowledge” them. The perfect true self of humanity as order and power of the spirit will surround and strengthen the true self of the pupils and set in motion the help of the whole spiritual world – the “angels of God.”

Therefore, the pupils can experience limitless security in loyalty

to the true self, the security of being embedded in the immutable order of the spiritual world. In contrast, the recognition by people is a highly unreliable support. But those who because of this support and for fear of losing it deny and repress the true self, which wants to become active in them, will not be able to count on the help of this principle active in all of humanity and of the spiritual world. They will be cut off from the “angels of God” and their power.

Regarding the denial of the Son of Man, Luke brings a statement by Jesus about the effects of an attack on the Son of Man, a “word against the Son of Man,” in comparison to the effects of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

What difference does it make whether people blaspheme against the Son of Man, the personification of the true human self, or against the Holy Spirit? And who forgives them or does not forgive them? Can they assume that God does not count it against them if they revile Jesus while they will not be forgiven an insult of the Holy Spirit? Do people know the difference between Jesus and the Holy Spirit so that they could implement his words?

When “blasphemy” is understood as mere words and “forgiveness” as mere verbal forgiveness as is common among people, this statement by Jesus makes little sense. “Blasphemy” is an activity of the whole person, however, just as “speaking” is often an activity of the whole person in the Gospel. People express themselves not only in words but also in deeds, even by their whole being. Therefore, “blasphemy” against people or laws means to violate their will. Those who follow this will “honor” the people or laws; those who violate it “blaspheme” them. Likewise, the process of someone being forgiven has an effect on the whole person and is not just an acceptance of forgiving words. “Blasphemy,” a violation of the will of a person or a law, brings people into a state that is different than this will. They separate structurally from the person or law. Forgiveness means to come into a state that is consistent with the will of the person or law. They are united again with the person or law. The prerequisite for this is that they “honor” the person or law.

“Son of Man” and “Holy Spirit” relate to two different stages of the pupils on the spiritual path. “Son of Man” designates the stage in which the true self has awakened and is active, but they are not yet conscious of it. “Holy Spirit,” on the other hand, refers to the stage in which the pupils, like Jesus after the baptism at the

Jordan, have become conscious of the true self and the powers of the Holy Spirit act in them consciously. Now their personality can be changed and become a conscious instrument of spiritual powers.

Depending on the stage on the path, however, “blasphemy” has other effects and the relevant person can be “forgiven” or not. In the first stage, the ego personality is unconsciously influenced by the laws of true self. In the second, it recognizes these laws, allows them to consciously change it, and consciously works with them.

If it violates these laws in the first case, it blasphemes the Son of Man, the true self into which the Holy Spirit has not yet entered. It unknowingly violates the laws of the spirit. It can therefore easily be corrected by the true self and steered into the right direction in which there is again agreement between it and the personality. Forgiveness is granted. For example, if the personality is vain, it will feel the effect of the law of the true self. It will feel that vanity does not correspond to the true human identity and will be able to give up vanity without problems. Thus, unity between it and the true self is restored. Its guilt is forgiven by the true self.

On the other hand, if it violates the laws of true self in the second case, it blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, the spirit-filled true self. Through the effects of the Holy Spirit, it is in a different state than before. It has become conscious of the laws of true self, yes, they have already changed it. It violates them knowingly. This violation cannot be forgiven. How should the laws of true self correct the personality if it knows these laws but knowingly and willingly violates them? For example, it has recognized that vanity contradicts objectivity, a law of the true identity. Objectivity had already become active in it; a new reality had arisen in it; it had lived in this sense. If it still grants its vanity free rein, it knowingly and willingly violates the law of true self, the Holy Spirit, of which it had become conscious. It even makes the spiritual powers, which have already become active in it, serve its vanity. In the face of this, the law of true self is powerless.

Such behavior cannot be forgiven, for by the knowing abuse of the powers of the Holy Spirit, the relevant people cut themselves off from the possibility of being purified by these powers and thereby being led back to the unity with the order of the spirit. By knowingly abusing the powers of the spirit in egocentricity, they prevent them from dissolving this egocentricity. These people will not be forgiven. They can only forgive themselves by stopping to

abuse the powers of the Holy Spirit in the service of their egocentricity.

But those who behave positively towards the Holy Spirit and allow it to work in themselves can trust that the knowledge that allows them to react in the right way to every situation will be given to them. Reality will show itself as it is to those whose eye of consciousness is “pure” and illuminated by the Holy Spirit, and they will come up with the possibilities for action that serve the truth in their present situation. This applies in particular to pupils who are led in front of judges and authorities in times of persecution. If they were to deliberate with their earthly mind how they should defend themselves and take advantage of the weaknesses of their opponents or also how they should as convincingly as possible describe their experiences on the spiritual path, they would always make mistakes. They would be at the level of their opponents and open themselves to attack.

But when they speak out of the unity with the spiritual world, they speak on another level. They touch the true self in others, recognize problematic situations, and react in the right way. It is not a matter of turning off thinking and a blind confidence that the Holy Spirit will give them the right words. On the contrary: The thinking is very active. But it is now illuminated by the Holy Spirit, and they now consciously act and speak in the realization of far greater contexts than their mere intellect could capture.

Thus, the third contrast in this speech by Jesus is explained: The Holy Spirit will supply all the required powers and knowledge to those who live and speak positively out of the Holy Spirit. But those who “blaspheme” the Holy Spirit and use its powers for their own benefit are in a situation in which the spirit can no longer correct them.

The three contrasts describe dangers to which the pupils are particularly exposed from a certain stage of the spiritual path. The powers of the Holy Spirit consciously work in them. Now it is important to lead a life in harmony with these powers and to guard against dangers to this development. The first danger is that the old powers of egocentricity destroy the spiritual life inside and outside the pupils. Beware of these, Jesus, the true self, says to his disciples. The second danger is the fear of the opinions of others. Jesus advises his disciples, Remain faithful to your path despite the fear of the opinions of others. The third danger is that the pupils succumb to the temptation to use the powers of the Holy

Spirit for their own interests for possessions, honor, and power. Thereby, they prevent these powers in their function, namely, to lead the pupils repeatedly back to the unity with the order of the spirit and let them act out of this unity.

External Earthly Conflicts

12:13 *Now someone from the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me!”* ¹⁴ *But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or an arbitrator over you?”* ¹⁵ *And he said to them, “Watch out and guard yourselves from all greediness, because not even when someone has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.”* (LEB)

These words of Jesus are not only aimed at pupils on the spiritual path. They encompass all people. The standards of the order of the spirit are totally foreign to the standards of the earthly order of this world and the beyond. In the order of the spiritual world, all beings are one with each other by virtue of their true self. They are free and fulfill their respective tasks in the divine order. All complement each other harmoniously. And all promote each other in love. How could there be conflicts that would need an arbitrator? Striving for possessions, power, and prestige do not exist there, and the relationships of the beings with each other are regulated by their inner nature.

But earthly people want to push the messenger of the spiritual world into a function that is foreign to his nature. He is not appointed to be a “judge or arbitrator” in the earthly world. There are no arbitrators in the spiritual world. There, things and relationships regulate themselves according to the inner law inherent in their nature. They do not need to be regulated. Jesus belongs to the spiritual world. So how could he be an arbitrator? And were he to act as an arbitrator in the earthly world, then it would quickly turn out that his spiritual characteristics are not suitable as standards for regulating earthly concerns.

Likewise, the true self of the pupils on the spiritual path is already by virtue of its nature no arbitrator. They know that their relationships with other pupils will develop corresponding to the spiritual nature of all parties. They only have to leave room for this unfolding to occur. And they will realize that it would be completely inappropriate to intervene in earthly conflicts with

measures that belong to the spiritual world.

The only maxim that could be derived from the spiritual order for the regulation of earthly conditions is this: Regulate earthly conditions so that they interfere as little as possible with your inherent purpose, yes, give them only so much needed attention so they are not a hindrance to you. Then the order of the spirit has room to unfold in you, and your true self has room to unfold in the order of the spirit.

Division of inheritances, claims of ownership, and their regulation are immensely important when people expect their salvation from the earthly world. Conflicts over possessions become more and more grim and malevolent the more people expect all their security and their meaning of life to derive from possessions. Those who forget their real inherent purpose and absolutize the earthly world will cling to possessions. That is greed. It is an overestimation of the reliability of earthly conditions.

The Rich Farmer: False Reliance on Earthly Conditions

12:16 *And he told a parable to them, saying, “The land of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. ¹⁷And he reasoned to himself, saying, ‘What should I do? For I do not have anywhere I can gather in my crops.’ ¹⁸And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and I will gather in there all my grain and possessions. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many possessions stored up for many years. Relax, eat, drink, celebrate!”’ ²⁰But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your life is demanded from you, and the things which you have prepared—whose will they be?’ ²¹So is the one who stores up treasure for himself, and who is not rich toward God!”* (LEB)

This narrative is called a “parable,” but it is not a parable in the sense of previous ones in the Gospel of Luke, which used possible or impossible earthly circumstances as analogies for spiritual circumstances. The story of the rich grain farmer is not an analogy for spiritual conditions. It is simply exemplary for the behavior and fate of any people, be they rich landowners as in this story, be they owners of valuables, real estate, goods, securities, or savings accounts, who rely on their earthly possessions and do not care for their spiritual possessions. The story is a parable at most insofar as

God, epitome of the basic laws of life, occurs as an acting and talking person.

The rich rely on earthly possessions and consider themselves particularly wise. But in terms of the basic laws of life, “toward God,” they are fools. The basic laws of life say, Earthly life is transitory. The spiritual life is eternal. Therefore the spiritual life is decisive. Earthly possessions only create security for earthly life. They do not create security for the spiritual life, which is decisive. Other, spiritual possessions are necessary for the spiritual life. You, human, can only live spiritually if you gather spiritual possessions. Earthly life will end, and then at the latest, it will become apparent whether you can live spiritually.

If you have not collected any spiritual possessions, then what about the soul when it is separated from the body and can no longer enjoy all of the earthly riches to which it was so attached? Since it has not reflected about the world of the spirit, since it has not opened itself to it, the immortal true self, which could live in the brightness and power of the spirit, has not awakened and grown. It will wander about in darkness and impotence. And what happens after your death to the earthly goods that you have accumulated? They end up in the hands of other people; you do not benefit from them anymore. So, the conclusion is, Strive to open yourself to the world of the spirit and to pay only as much attention to the earthly world as is necessary, for then the true self will grow. Spiritual powers, insights, and awareness will flow to it, spiritual possessions that are immortal. You will experience the immortality and unshakable security of the spiritual laws and powers and “be rich toward God,” whether before or after death.

Spiritual Trust

12:22 *And he said to his disciples, “For this reason I tell you, do not be anxious for your life, what you will eat, or for your body, what you will wear. ²³For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴Consider the ravens, that they neither sow nor reap; to them there is neither storeroom nor barn, and God feeds them. How much more are you worth than the birds? ²⁵And which of you by being anxious is able to add an hour to his life span? ²⁶If then you are not even able to do a very little thing, why are you anxious about the rest? ²⁷Consider the lilies, how they grow: they do not toil or spin, but I say to you, not even*

Solomon in all his glory was dressed like one of these. ²⁸ But if God clothes the grass in the field in this way, although it is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he do so for you, you of little faith? ²⁹ And you, do not consider what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not be anxious. ³⁰ For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need these things. ³¹ But seek his kingdom and these things will be added to you.

³² “Do not be afraid, little flock, because your Father is well pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give charitable gifts. Make for yourselves money bags that do not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven where thief does not approach or moth destroy. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (LEB)

The words of Jesus about the being free of worry are directed to the pupils on the spiritual path, for they describe a state of the true self that should grow gradually in the pupils. It is the experience of the inexhaustible abundance of the spiritual powers that are incessantly flowing and giving. From this experience, the pupils will be able to arrange their earthly life free from fear and worry but responsibly.

The words of Jesus are at the same time a warning to the pupils not to lose this state of being free of worries. The pupils would lose it as soon as the desire to obtain or achieve something would again arise in them and thus also the worry to not receive or achieve what is desired. These desires and the worries necessarily tied to them is the normal state of earthly people, the “nations of the world” (verse 30).

The warning is pronounced because the state of being without worries corresponds to the inherent purpose of human beings and gives them the happiness of concordance with their true identity. Jesus asks his disciples, Do you want to risk losing this state again and again? In the Sermon on the Mount (Luke 6:29), it was about not risking again and again the state of spiritual peace and openness through anger and the desire for revenge. Therefore, pictorially spoken, the pupils should also hold up the other cheek if someone hits them on one cheek. Now it is the state of experiencing spiritual powers and their inexhaustible flow, which should not be repeatedly destroyed by earthly desires and the associated worries.

Jesus brings parables from nature for this state of the true self,

for originally, the spiritual world and humanity emerged from the fullness of the spirit and nature was in harmony with the spiritual world. The spiritual world and nature lived out of the abundance of the deity, the “Father” (verse 30). All life, all traits are still given to the creatures; they have created nothing themselves. And when they develop nature and process its products for their benefit, they should do it in order to use the gifts of nature in harmony with its laws not to always satisfy new desires. Because this giving stream of the “Father” runs through all of nature although it is also interspersed by the principle of egocentricity, Jesus can take examples from nature for his teachings.

He says, Do not worry about the food for your life. Is your life your doing? Did you develop it yourself? It has been given to you. Breathing, vitality, organ functions – everything has been given to you without your doing. Realize what a wonderful gift this life is! It could be that you were not alive, did not have experiences, could not learn, act, develop, live through pains and joys in order to finally become aware of your inherent purpose and to fulfill it. But the food for your life is less than life itself. So if you do not have to worry about the creation of your life, you do not need to worry about the food for your life. (Jesus plays here on the law of nature that living beings and the environment exist in a mutual relationship. If there were no environment to enable the existence of living beings, they could not have arisen. Although people have to process the products of their environment, must reap and sow, in principle, the possibilities for their nourishment are given from the outset and provided for them in the large context of life.)

The same applies to your body, so Jesus continues. Do not worry about it. What a treasure it is: organs of perception, of movement, of action, expression of feelings, thoughts, and aspirations, adapted to implement all your knowledge. All this has been given to you without you having had to worry about it. But the clothes for your body are less than the body itself. So if you do not have to worry about the emergence of your body, you have to worry even less about the clothes for your body. (Here again, Jesus plays on the law of nature that nature only develops a body for which in principle the means necessary for its maintenance are present in the environment. Only if such means are present does a body develop that requires them. Therefore, in principle, every body has a sufficient basis of existence. Although people have to process the products of nature, in principle, they are available to them.)

Jesus says further to his disciples, Look at the ravens. It is provided for them, as for every creature, that they get food out of their environment. They do not sow and reap as people do. But that nature provides for them is a law of life, a gift of nature, and thus ultimately of the “Father.” Humans work on their environment. They sow, reap, and store up supplies. This is their way of procuring food. But that nature provides food at all is a gift of nature, so of the “Father.” All the more does this law apply to people as they are higher developed organisms than ravens. Should the “Father” care less for the higher developed organisms than for the lower? Every higher development is even only possible because the means for it are provided in the environment.

As the most highly developed creature of the earth, explains Jesus, you can trust that such means are available to you, in principle, without your doing. They are given to you; you did not create them in principle.

Worries are meaningless because all life and all necessities of life are freely provided in principle. But they are meaningless also for the reason that you cannot change anything of the laws of nature in principle. You have to die one day. Do you change anything about that through worry? Can you add an hour to your life? Strokes of fate will come. Do you change anything about them through worry? Jesus does not mean that people should be careless with their life and health. He only means that we should be clear that we are not lords of our life and of our fate. Then we can face death and destiny without worry and can deal responsibly with our life and health.

Basically you cannot create the least thing, Jesus continues. Can you build even only a single atom? Can you produce the beauty of a lily, its velvet, pure white? Can you produce the glowing green of the grass in the meadow? Only nature can; you can at most imitate its laws and create variations. All of this glory in nature is a gift from the “Father” to you human beings, which has emerged from the abundance of his gifts, from light, earth, air, and water, with the help of all forms of the animal, plant, and mineral realms, built from countless bits of information that you did not invent. The lilies and the grasses on the field have received their glory for free. So you should also be pleased that your appearance has been given to you: the beauty of your skin, your eyes, your form!

Jesus compares people’s clothes with the exterior of plants. The lilies do not spin and weave and still receive such a wonderful

outer appearance. When you produce your clothes through spinning and weaving, then consider that you do not produce anything like God does for its creatures. What you produce through effort is not as beautiful as what the lilies receive for free. So the conclusion of Jesus is, Do not take your efforts and worries as being so important. You are, just as the lilies, embedded in the stream of the gifts of God. You of little faith only do not believe in this embedding.

Do not be restless. Accept things, the good as well as the bad. But when are you in unrest? When you yearn for earthly things as the peoples of the world do, when you desire them, for then you are in fear and concerned whether your desires are also attainable. Then you are robbed of the spiritual state of being embedded in the stream of God's gifts. "Your father knows that you need these things": Provision has been made that you can live. The laws of nature and of the spirit have arranged things in this way.

"Seek his kingdom": Live in the realization and in the experience of the laws of the true self; experience spiritual abundance. Then you will also be able to arrange earthly conditions without worry. All this – the earthly things – "will be added to you," without worries. This does not mean that all this will fall into people's laps. The ravens also have to fly and search to find their food. The lilies on the field must also process light and minerals to get clothes more beautiful than Solomon's. Thus, too, people have to work for their livelihood in the sweat of their brow with the abilities with which the spiritual world and nature have provided them. But they can do so trusting that the spiritual world and nature have provided sufficient means for their livelihood.

Being without worry is not being carefree. Not for nothing does Jesus explicitly turn to his disciples here. The prerequisite for the condition of being without worry is that egocentric desires and fears lose their strength. But the "nations of the world," earthly people, like to understand the words of Jesus as a call to being carefree. The ego says to itself then, without wanting to reduce its desires, Everything is in God's hands; God will lead me. God will fulfill my wishes. And if not, I am also satisfied. This is a nonchalant art of living but only the imitation of a spiritual state of being embedded and moving with the laws and powers of the spiritual world. The true self, on the other hand, is responsible for its earthly concerns without egocentricity and therefore without fear and worry.

The root of the worry is human egocentricity. The current order of the earthly world is mainly characterized by this egocentricity. The “nations of the world” strive “after all these things,” yes, exclusively after these things for securing and enhancing existence. They therefore necessarily live in restlessness. They always have to worry that their wishes and needs will not be satisfied and their apparent safety is undermined. Especially in this fear, they take excessive safety precautions that only unbalance circumstances even more causing further worry. The “nations of the world” will always be afraid for their lives and fear old age and illness. They have nothing than this earthly life and this earthly body and do not realize that this life and body, as they were given, will also be taken and were given to them for a particular purpose. However, pupils of the spirit, conscious that their life will be taken from them, agree to this as they have more than this life. And in the awareness that this life should serve to bring them closer to their inherent purpose, they will seek for the “kingdom of the Father.”

But is Jesus actually right? Are the ravens fed by God even though they have no storehouses? There only needs to be a hard winter, and they starve. Or people reduce their habitat to such an extent that their existence as a species is uncertain.

And are people worth more than the birds so that they can be sure that God will provide for them? The poor starve by the millions because the rich deprive them of land and job opportunities. Civil wars and other wars use up all means for maintaining life. Should people then not worry? Is it not a commandment of self-defense and wisdom to take the things into one’s own hands to create justice and security?

Jesus knows as everyone does that deficiencies and disasters occur everywhere in nature and that creatures eat other creatures. He knows that by their egocentricity and their desires, people make the situation still more chaotic. The original harmony between nature and the spiritual world is disturbed to the core by the principle of egocentricity in nature and humanity. This principle prevents nature and humanity from being pure expressions of the spiritual laws and to live without worries out of the abundance of the spiritual powers.

Nevertheless, even under these circumstances, the spiritual laws are still valid in principle and are apparent in the chaos. Every creature receives its life for free, without its doing, and is born into an environment that in principle grants its subsistence. Jesus

focuses on this aspect of reality to clarify to his disciples the fact of their being embedded in the streams of the spiritual powers and to strengthen the spiritual state of moving with these streams, for through this inner state and its consequences also for the earthly world, the principle of egocentricity is abolished. Thereby, states of deficiency and catastrophe in nature and the human world change in the long run. Jesus' words are far from being unrealistic and concealing of the chaotic conditions that give reasonable cause for concern. Rather, they encourage a harmonious spiritual state that abolishes the chaotic conditions in the long run.

This even applies to circumstances that are more chaotic than could be imagined in Jesus' times. Today, some people not only intervene in nature and society with the desires of their ego. Their objectives go much further. They want to recognize and manipulate the basic structures of life and the body. They no longer want to recognize that life and body were given to them without their doing. They do not want to be dependent on spiritual and natural laws and forces, especially not death and destiny. They can no longer accept gifts and want to create their own basis of life and correct seeming shortcomings.

That they create far more mischief with these demonic tendencies than with mere desires is becoming more and more apparent. They do not want to believe that the structures of nature created over billions of years owe their existence to spiritual impulses, highest intelligence, and love. Without an overview of the entirety of nature, they experiment and do not know what disturbances they create. The demonic tendency to want to be lord over life and death is then also overlaid by the desire to become rich and famous. "For all the nations of the world seek after these things." The worries about the future of the world and humanity must increase tremendously in view of these developments.

As always, also here the demons use spiritual powers for their own purposes, for it is actually the inherent purpose of the true self in the long run to recognize the foundations of nature and to work independently on their development. Still it always knows that it is nothing of itself but is anchored in the world of the spirit and only concurs with and co-develops what exists as potential in the spiritual world and is to be expressed in nature.

Even in this worrisome situation, the only way out is in the teaching of Jesus, the true human self: Only when you open to the true self and realize its laws will you be able to overcome the

demonic tendencies and their chaotic effects. When you become aware that everything, even you yourself, is embedded in spiritual laws and powers to which you owe your existence and you are in this spiritual state without worry will the worrisome demonic tendencies no longer get nourishment.

When individuals live directed to the “kingdom” in this way, they live with their true self without fear in a world of freedom and love and with their personality, which is becoming increasingly free and an instrument of the spiritual world, more and more without fear and worry in the earthly world. The more such people exist, the sooner such a way of life will spread and the less will be the collective disturbances. And be it just a “little flock”: “Your Father,” the spirit, “is well pleased to give you the kingdom,” says Jesus. The spirit has enabled you by working in you to open you for the powers from the kingdom until its order took root in you.

Living from the divine order, you can also deal with your possessions in a new way. “Sell your possessions and give charitable gifts.” This is Jesus’ invitation to all people to break away from their egoistic ties to property and to use their riches meaningfully. If more and more owners were to reflect on the inherent spiritual aim of humanity, they would experience how free it feels to live without the burden of worry and how productive it would be to voluntarily use wealth in such a way that it benefits everyone who generated it. So it would turn out that Jesus was the more realistic thinker after all. The more people free themselves from their greed and worry and let the powers of the spirit work in them and in life, the better the life of all those involved corresponds to the inherent purpose of humanity.

Only people who live in accordance with their inherent purpose are happy. New powers flow into them, powers of freedom, joy, and work for others. A state develops in them that is embedded in the spiritual world and is therefore imperishable, before and after death. They acquire an indestructible, “inexhaustible treasure in heaven.” What is decisive for your whole life is what goal you have and for what treasure you are striving, says Jesus. You can strive for earthly treasures: material wealth or immaterial goods such as a good education and high morals. But you can also strive for heavenly treasures: for a state free from any self-centeredness, open to the powers of the spiritual world, and for the inexhaustible exchange of these powers between the true self and the spiritual world. If you strive for earthly treasures, your heart will be with

these treasures. It will cling to them, and full of greed and worry, it will shut itself off from the spiritual world. But if you strive for treasures in heaven, your heart, which is with these treasures, will open to them. It will be filled with joy and be free of worry.

Wakefulness

12:35 *“You must be prepared for action and your lamps burning. ³⁶And you, be like people who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that when he comes back and knocks, they can open the door for him immediately. ³⁷Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he returns! Truly I say to you that he will dress himself for service and have them recline at the table and will come by and serve them. ³⁸Even if he should come back in the second or in the third watch of the night and find them like this, blessed are they! ³⁹But understand this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰You also must be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not think he will come.”* (LEB)

Wakefulness for the impulses of the spiritual world from the inside and the outside is a necessary virtue of the pupils. On the spiritual path, there is neither habituation nor habits. Always new spiritual requirements and effects can break into the life of the pupils from inside or outside and put into question their attitudes, views, and ways of reacting to situations. So they must always be ready to leave – “be prepared for action” – and must always be fully awake – have their “lamps burning” – to recognize what happens inside of them and around them.

This wakefulness towards new spiritual challenges has two aspects. Firstly, the pupils must spontaneously learn to recognize from what “diseases” they and the people around them are suffering and by which “demons” they and the people around them are governed, for only through this recognition can they help others. This aspect of wakefulness refers to possibilities of the activity of the true self in earthly life. Secondly, wakefulness is required because the true self will manifest itself directly in the consciousness of the pupils and others, for after many experiences, the pupils will be directly conscious of the order and powers of the

spiritual world.

Both the constant appearance of effects from the world of the spirit and the gradual becoming conscious of this world itself is the coming of the Son of Man, for thus the true self, the image of God, makes itself noticeable to individuals. Yes, the true human self is pushing to unfold in the consciousness of all of humanity. The pupils must be awake also to collective phenomena such as new spiritual movements to be able to cooperate accordingly. At the same time, they have to learn to clearly distinguish between the direct activity of the spirit and the betrayal and corruption of this activity in society. This too is an aspect of their wakefulness, which tells them in which movements they should not be involved.

So there are two ways that the Son of Man “knocks” at the pupils’ “door” and that they can “open the door for him.” When internal and external problems require new forms of thinking, feeling, willing, and doing, the pupils must not stay with the old ways but need to create appropriate forms and apply them. And when new spiritual movements emerge, they should not lock themselves in old forms of consciousness. When a storm of new forces is going through their own soul and through humanity, they should not cling to old structures nor distort these new impulses by their selfishness.

The “master,” the true self, finds such pupils awake when he comes. The pupils allow that they become conscious of the true self and its effects when the time comes. And the master will also serve such people at the table, for spiritual powers and insight – spiritual foods – flow to them abundantly in every moment since they are open to the impulses from the spiritual world at every moment.

This alertness of the pupils is required not only when they feel within them the connection with the world of the spirit and feel in concordance with it. The “master” can also come in the middle of the night or near dawn: at a time of individual and collective darkness, in the black night or the still blacker night in which the pupils believe they are cut off from all consolation and insight from the spiritual world. But just then resignation and sadness are not appropriate, for it is precisely in such times of darkness that the Son of Man, the still unconscious true self, tries to arise in human consciousness.

The pupils sometimes believe to be able to summon the coming of the Son of Man. But they have no direct influence on this. The

spirit blows where and when it wants. Therefore, the pupils cannot do anything other than always set up their life so that when the Son of Man comes, they are not just then in a state that prevents them from taking up the Son of Man, that is, letting the true self enter into their consciousness. Jesus depicts this situation in a parable that seems at first not very well chosen. Is the Son of Man to be compared to a thief? A thief is to be shut out whereas the Son of Man is to be admitted! But the parable only emphasizes how unexpectedly the master comes, unexpectedly like a thief. Just as a wakeful owner of a house will notice a thief and be able to take appropriate actions, so an alert pupil will notice the Son of Man and be able to properly respond to him.

What is Wakefulness?

12:41 *And Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us, or also for everyone?"* ⁴² *And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful wise manager whom the master will put in charge over his servants to give them their food allowance at the right time?"* ⁴³ *Blessed is that slave whom his master will find so doing when he comes back.* ⁴⁴ *Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.* ⁴⁵ *But if that slave should say to himself, 'My master is taking a long time to return,' and he begins to beat the male slaves and the female slaves and to eat and drink and get drunk,* ⁴⁶ *the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect and at an hour that he does not know, and will cut him in two and assign his place with the unbelievers.* ⁴⁷ *And that slave who knew the will of his master and did not prepare or do according to his will will be given a severe beating.* ⁴⁸ *But the one who did not know and did things deserving blows will be given a light beating. And from everyone to whom much has been given, much will be demanded, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will ask him for even more."* (LEB)

Peter asks Jesus whether his parable of the smart owner of the house relates to all people or to the disciples in particular. The answer is given indirectly in the following sentences of Jesus. A prudent manager is put in charge of the master's slaves "to give them their food allowance at the right time." So the parable refers to the disciples. The pupils on the spiritual path stand in a special relationship with the spirit to which they become consciously

receptive on their path. They are therefore sent to the “sick” and those possessed by “demons” to give them nourishment for their soul and spirit at the right time and in the right amount by teaching them about the “kingdom of God.” So the pupils are put in charge and carry the responsibility over the “slaves” by the master, the spirit itself.

Now it becomes clear again of what the pupils’ (the owner of the house in verse 39) constant preparedness in relation to the coming of the Son of Man consists. It consists in the faithfulness as pupils to their task for themselves and for others. When they live in the order of the spiritual world and align their thoughts, feelings, and actions for others to it, they will always be in the right state for the coming of the Son of Man. The master can come when he wants – new spiritual impulses from the true self can come when they want; they can try to penetrate the consciousness when they want: The Son of Man will always encounter a good orientation and state in the pupils. The spiritual powers will find a good instrument to serve them in the personality of the pupils and will be able to illuminate the pupils’ consciousness, which is free of distracting impressions. This will give the spirit the required scope in the pupils, and the pupils will be put in charge of the “all the possessions” of the spirit. Those who have learned to act in certain, still limited situations according to the order of the spirit will someday cooperate everywhere in the order of the spirit and be able to concur with it on a large scale.

It is different if the pupils, the slave or the owner of the house, are not prudent and not ready. Why are they possibly not ready? Because they lose patience. They are waiting for enlightenment, but it does not come even though they have hitherto fulfilled their duties as pupils. They forget that the spirit blows where and when it wills and does not consider the achievements of the pupils. The pupils should do their duty. Whether the spirit manifests in them or not is only up to the spirit.

The disappointed pupils who have become impatient neglect their tasks on the spiritual path, however. If the master does not come, why make such an effort? The pupils begin “to beat the male slaves and the female slaves.” They again treat people to whom they should give strength for recovery and for liberation from demons according to their egocentric interests, exploiting and manipulating them. They themselves again become intoxicated by illusions and succumb to the pleasures of the earthly world.

Nevertheless, previously on their path, they had opened the door for the spiritual impulses from the true self. And it may be that such impulses unexpectedly break forth from the true self. But they now encounter thoughts, feelings, and habits going in very different directions, unsuitable instruments for spiritual tasks. The consciousness of the people concerned is filled with all sorts of impressions that resist the spirit. They no longer understand. The stream of the spirit finds no streambed in which it could flow unhindered. Therefore, such people will get confused, make mistakes, and abreact the urges of the spirit in nonsensical ways. Their life and they themselves will lose any internal coherence and be “cut in two.” So they will be unable to continue on the spiritual path, close themselves to the spirit, which brings them such terrible experiences, and then belong again to the “unfaithful.” These are the people who neither can nor want to open for the spirit.

So the law applies: Those who keep their personality in a state corresponding to the spiritual order will react harmoniously when the spirit begins to work in them. If this state is not established, disharmony arises. It will be the greater, the more people have approached their inherent purpose. Pupils on the path, who know the spiritual order, “the will of the master,” and nevertheless do not build up a corresponding state of the personality “will be given a severe beating”: They will be in great inner turmoil. They know what they should do and how they should be but do not act accordingly. This leads to depression and self-aggression and externally to disharmony with the environment, for the environment will feel what possibilities exist in others and how they should behave and will expect appropriate behavior from them. In their disappointment, they will also “give beatings.” Those who do not know “the will of the master,” however, and therefore do not build up an appropriate personality constitution and do not behave accordingly will at least be in harmony with themselves and with the people around them that follow their earthly will although they may “be given a light beating” that all earthly people deserve on the basis of their behavior deviating from the spiritual order. (Incidentally, these processes are a good illustration for the difference between “blaspheming” against the Son of Man and against the Holy Spirit.)

And another law applies: Those who have many abilities, in particular pupils on the spiritual path who receive many spiritual

powers, also have the duty to apply these abilities and implement these powers responsibly. Much is demanded from them. They receive these powers in order to implement them for their own and others' benefit. If they do not agree to this responsibility, their development and the development of the people associated with them stagnate. This in turn creates a discrepancy between the impulses from the spiritual world promoting development and their reactions to them. The people concerned enter into a state of listlessness and weariness.

“Fire”: Influence of the True Self

Wakefulness, fidelity to the task, awareness of “the will of the master,” joyful acquisition of spiritual responsibility – these are all characteristics of the pupils with which they correspond to the “fire” of the spirit.

12:49 “I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish that it had been kindled already!” (LEB)

Jesus speaks of the need he came to fulfill. “I came to bring fire to the earth.” Is this fire the belief of people to be redeemed? Did Jesus come to earth to redeem people through death and resurrection and to awaken faith in him as redeemer? What would be fiery in this belief? And were it spread a billionfold over the earth: It would only arouse a feeling of security, a feeling of being freed from all guilt and sin. That would be calming, not fire, breakup, movement. So what is the fire that Jesus brings to the earth? It is the fire of awareness that an immense chasm exists between the present state of humanity and its actual inherent purpose. This is a fire that consumes and burns! The awareness in human beings is kindled of what their own true nature requires from them and how miserably far away they are from this demand. This fire is then also the longing arising from this recognition to change from the poor current state and to set the state of their true identity in the place of the false. And this fire is finally the will and determination to take steps to change, starting with themselves: to intervene in the old habits, prejudices, and illusions and to get out of the old ruts so that something new can arise.

Jesus brings this fire of knowledge, of longing, and of willing to the earth. If it would be kindled, humanity would go through a

general awakening from the sleep of habits, illusions, and certainties of belief, which has such devastating consequences. Without questioning what they do and what induces them to do so, people conduct wars, exploit each other, hunt after pleasures. They are enslaved to habits, desires, and prejudices and do not even notice it. Clinging to their possessions, the few hold the many in dependency and thus miss their inherent purpose. Dully satisfied with their lot, occasionally rebelling, the many obey the few and also miss their inherent purpose.

How much I wished, says the true self filled with the fire of the spirit, that this fire were already kindled on earth! If people would finally recognize how unfree they are, whether as rulers, whether as the ruled, and in what misfortune they spend their lives! They could be free in spirit and happy in the pursuit of their innermost aim. If they would long for this freedom and happiness! And if they would decisively take the steps for their own purification and transformation, which would lead them to freedom and happiness for themselves and among each other!

Are not the disciples of Jesus already ignited in this fire? Yes, but that is just a “little flock”; that is not yet a fire covering the whole earth, not a great revolt against untruth and against the belief that the life on this side is the only thing for which to strive or that the life in the beyond brings compensation for all suffering on this side. This is not yet a general discarding of the resignation that nothing can be changed and everything has to remain as it is.

Jesus is a person in whom the fire of knowledge, longing, and decisiveness is ignited. He is anointed with the fire of the spirit. And this fire wants to kindle the same fire, which glows as a spark in every human being, also in all other people. Jesus wants to redeem people *in this way* and not by a vicarious death through which the “wrath” of God is soothed nor by a resurrection in which people participate through their faith. That would be salvation from the outside, an illusion that is to be consumed by the fire of knowledge. Jesus wants to redeem others by igniting the fire in them so that this fire purifies them and redeems their true self until finally all of humanity is redeemed.

Consequences of Working with “Fire”

12:50 *“But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am distressed until it is accomplished! ⁵¹ Do you think that I have*

come to grant peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! ⁵²For from now on there will be five in one household, divided three against two and two against three. ⁵³They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” (LEB)

How paltry it is when people let themselves be redeemed by others who are strong and anointed with the divine spirit! Yes, these anointed people are strong. But do they not have to fight to the utmost and suffer? Jesus could have refused to receive and pass on the fire. He knew what would come to him: first, the temptations from inside, then the persecutions from outside, mockery and humiliation, even unto death. Overcoming such challenges does not come by itself; it is highest toil and self-sacrifice. And others should let this happen to themselves, gratefully nodding and idle themselves, because God is so full of love for humanity? In fact, Jesus has kindled the fire in himself and takes on the consequences of it. But only to kindle it in others who must also take the consequences according to their weaker possibilities. They will not be redeemed otherwise; humanity will not be redeemed otherwise.

The “baptism” of which Jesus speaks here is immersion in the mockery, in the humiliation, and in the violence of other people. It is the result of him bringing a fire to the earth that disturbs people’s habits and possessions. He is, as every human being is in principle, the Son of Man, and the fire of the spirit that touches and anoints him means for him an inner and external struggle with the characteristics of earthly people. As Son of God, as a person connected in a special way with the spirit, he is by no means privileged and protected. He is under stress until this baptism is completed. Thus, Jesus gives insight into the soul of every Son of Man who takes on the task resulting from the fire of the spirit. In the face of this baptism of Jesus, can people agree to be passively redeemed and continue their habits in the comfortable belief to be already redeemed? Will they not let the fire be kindled in them, throw all false certainties of belief overboard, and take the consequences of the fire, baptism in the violence of people, in order to be really redeemed and to contribute to the redemption of others?

The baptism in the violence of the people is always a result of the

fire because the fire of the spirit brings division. Of what nature is this division? Those people in whom the fire of the spirit is ignited are in opposition to those in whom it is not ignited and who remain in their old habits and attitudes. It is the unbridgeable contrast between the order of the spirit, the “kingdom of God,” on the one hand, and the earthly order revolting against it and persisting in its egocentricity, on the other hand. The people of the earthly order are looking for their advantage; the people who orient themselves to the spiritual order work with the powers of the spirit. The people of the earthly world burn in the fire of their desires and rebellion against the spirit or have already become dead slag. The people directed towards the spiritual world burn in the fire of knowledge, longing, and a new pursuit that consumes everything untrue in order to put the true self, the power of God, into its place. Through this fire, the earthly order is attacked, the earthly good is exposed as a mere reaction to evil, and evil is exposed in its core: as egocentricity and the drive to self-maintenance.

The earthly is by no means led directly by the spirit to peace: not to higher spirituality and ethics in the sign of an alliance of all religions; not to individual development through psychotraining or piety whereby the drive for prestige remains untouched; not to social justice with an unrestricted drive for possessions; not to freedom from conflict through an international balancing of interests whereby the drive for power is only held in check.

On the contrary, the powers of the spirit touch the foundations of earthly life, and conflicts and wars arise among representatives of different religious, cultural, social, and political interests. The result is division between different earthly interests.

But the fundamental division arises between those people who recognize that everything merely earthly does not correspond to the inherent purpose of humanity and those people who are looking for their purpose in the earthly world. This division will tear through all social groups. In each group, in each “house,” in the religious, political, and cultural institutions, subgroups will form – two against three, three against two – some representing the striving for the spirit, the others representing the adherence to the earthly. The division will be most striking in the earthly groups with the closest interpersonal relationships: the families. The question of the inherent purpose of humanity and of the actual meaning of life can burst every connection even the most intimate

familial ones. This division will even be noticeable within individuals. The pupil on the spiritual path is always torn between the call of the fire of the spiritual world and the fire of earthly desires.

Real peace will only be able to arise when humanity has come to rest in a state of unity with the spirit, when conflict-generating egocentricity has been dissolved on the basis of the true self, and when new interpersonal relationships have grown. Until then, division will rule on earth, and all people touched by the fire will be perturbed by the fire of purification and pursued by earthly conflicts.

Preparation for the “Fire”

12:54 *And he also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud coming up in the west, you say at once, ‘A rainstorm is coming,’ and so it happens. ⁵⁵And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be burning heat,’ and it happens. ⁵⁶Hypocrites! You know how to evaluate the appearance of the earth and the sky, but how is it you do not know how to evaluate this present time?” (LEB)*

Jesus turns back to the people, who symbolize the earthly forces of humanity, and wonders that they do not notice what “is in the air.” People are concerned about the outer, physical things and life circumstances, research them accurately, and make forecasts for the future. But they turn away from the inner dimension of the spirit. They do not want to know anything about it. The people do not want to notice that the fire of the spirit wants to burn on earth and in human beings, that the kingdom of God, the fire of the spirit, has come near.

That was true not just in the time of Jesus; this is true in all times. You scientists, says the true human self, have great skills. And you, “you hypocrites,” sanctimoniously act as if you applied these skills with all your strength and fullest engagement. But in reality, you do not apply them where they would be most needed: in the field of exploring the spiritual world and its current effects, to the questions of what is the inherent purpose of humanity, what is the meaning of life, what is the path that leads to the fulfillment of this purpose. With your eager exploration of the external world, you circumvent these questions. You allow the drives for

possessions, prestige, and power to prescribe the limits of your science, for the exploration of the inner world triggered by the thirst for knowledge of the spiritual fire would touch the earthly status quo and the apparent security of earthly conditions. Therefore, anyone who turns to the crucial problems and openly asks about the meaning of life will encounter a wall of persistent, embarrassed, or scornful silence.

Guilt and Judgment

The speech of Jesus, which began with three dichotomous statements about the behavior of the pupil on the spiritual path, then described the state of being spiritually free of worry, and addressed the attitude towards the “coming of the Son of Man,” now ends with three statements of Jesus that all relate to the problem of guilt and judgment.

One’s Own Judgment

12:57 “And why do you not also judge for yourselves what is right? 58 For as you are going with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to come to a settlement with him on the way, so that he will not drag you to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the bailiff, and the bailiff will throw you into prison. 59 I tell you, you will never get out of there until you have paid back even the last cent!” (LEB)

The first teaching of Jesus related to this problem is to judge yourself and not to subject yourself to the judgments of others, for when you submit to the judgments of others, you remain slaves and will have to endure all the consequences of this slavery. But when you judge yourself, you rise above your slavery, can decide according to your internal standards, and thereby become free. This rule can be applied to the foregoing part of the speech of Jesus. Then it says, Judge for yourself whether the kingdom of God has come near, and decide yourself how you have to react to the fire of the kingdom – “what is right.” Thus, you judge from your heart and follow your heart. Then you can also discuss freely with your ideological opponents; you can accept them and yourself. And so you can separate from them amicably and can keep following your path. But if you let yourself be judged by your opponents and give them the right to haul you in front of the judge

– that is, others’ standards of what is right and wrong – then you will be entangled in these standards and will have pay tribute to your opponents’ arguments – incessantly until everything has been discussed. And when would you ever come to an end in this way?

The rule can be applied to the relationship of an individual to destiny. You can submit to the verdict of the law of cause and effect – the judge – and dully accept all strokes of fate until destiny has been fulfilled – “until you have paid back even the last cent.” Therefore, rather submit freely to the order of the spirit, which exists in your true self. Thus, you gain leeway over strokes of fate – your accuser. You have to accept them, but you can rise above them and thereby lessen their force. You can “settle the case” with your accuser.

Death as the Consequence of the Separation from God

13:1 Now at the same time some had come to tell him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ²And he answered and said to them, “Do you think that these Galileans were sinners worse than all the Galileans, because they suffered these things? ³No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all perish as well! ⁴Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them—do you think that they were sinners worse than all the people who live in Jerusalem? ⁵No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all perish as well!” (LEB)

The second statement by Jesus about the problem of guilt and judgment builds on an actual event of his time. For reasons not mentioned in the gospel, Pilate, the Roman governor of the province of Judea, had massacred on the spot a crowd of Galilean pilgrims who were bringing their animal sacrifices to the temple in Jerusalem so that their blood mixed with that of their sacrificial animals. The opinion of some observers of this event was apparently that those killed were particularly guilty before God so that this horrible punishment was imposed on them. But, so Jesus corrects this opinion, compared to the standards of the divine world, all earthly people are subject to death since they live in egocentricity contrary to the divine order. Death is the result of people not living in conscious harmony with the eternal divine

order. And all earthly people live in the existential “sin,” the separation from God. There is no greater or lesser separation here: The dimension of the earthly world is not commensurable to the dimension of the divine world. Therefore, all people without exception are subject to death as the consequence of this separation. The differences between them are only in the manner and the time that the law of cause and effect comes into play. Some already meet the judgment now, others only later. Some suffer a cruel death, others a gentle death. But they all are subject to death unless they turn back to the world of the spirit and “repent” because “repent” means to dissolve the entanglements in the earthly world, causing the true eternal self to arise and consciously experience its unity with the divine world. The image of God in human beings belongs to the same dimension as the divine world and is imperishable as it is.

The same facts are illustrated by the event of eighteen people being slain in Jerusalem in the collapse of the city wall tower at the pool of Siloam. This example shows again that all earthly people alike live outside the order of the spirit and therefore have to count with death. The Jews of Jerusalem, who considered themselves particularly pious, are subject to this judgment just as are the Galileans – from the first example – who were considered not quite so pious. The differences in piety or guilt among the Jews of Jerusalem do not count. People are actually different: Some are moral sinners and some are pious. However, the degree of moral piety or guilt does not override the fact that all earthly people live from the earthly order of things and are existentially “sinners.”

So do not depend on your piety or moral integrity, Jesus says. You still have to die. Only if you “repent” and thereby revive the eternal true self can you overcome death.

The Fig Tree: What Is “Sin”?

13:6 *And he told this parable: “A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any. ⁷So he said to the gardener, ‘Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree and did not find any. Cut it down! Why should it even exhaust the soil?’ ⁸But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, leave it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹And if indeed it produces fruit in the coming year, so much the better, but if not,*

you can cut it down.’” (LEB)

The parable of the fig tree illustrates what existential “sin” is and on what judgment is passed. Who is the fig tree? Every human being as an image of God. As images of God, all people are planted in the world, the vineyard, to bear fruit. Bearing fruit does not mean that earthly people are successful or do something useful, also not that they are especially decent and pious. Bearing fruit means that the true self, the spiritual human being, unfolds and manifests the order and power of the spirit, which are present in it like a seed. Thereby, God is unfolded and made manifest, firstly, in the being of the person concerned, secondly, for other people to whom the love of God comes in this way to further them, thirdly, for the realms of nature entrusted to humanity and sustaining it: the animals, plants, and minerals. Bearing fruit means that the attributes of the image of God, which are also the attributes of God and are hidden to the consciousness of earthly people, come to light and become active. And as the image of God is eternal as God is, ever new attributes of God can come to light from ever greater depths in an infinite progression. So the image of God grows in a person and promotes the image of God in other people by supplying them with strength to develop. So the fig tree bears fruit.

Existential “sin” is to stagnate in this growth, to cut oneself off from and hinder the unfoldment of the image of God by self-centeredness in earthly good and evil. Such people, such fig trees, do not bear fruit. They do not participate in the general spiritual development of the world. They resist this development, which is driven forward by the spirit whether people are aware of it or not. They thereby make the world unusable; they “waste the soil.” It becomes less receptive to the spirit and to spiritual development through their behavior.

The spiritual world, which has planted the image of God in the world so that it bears fruit, however, looks for this fruit. It wants to unite with the unfolded image of God that has become conscious. It is looking for fruit “for three years.” People have three possibilities to respond to the impulses from the spiritual world, to recognize and to walk the spiritual path. The “gardeners” appointed by the owner of the vineyard to care for the fig trees are people especially connected with the world of the spirit, such as John the Baptist and Jesus, working with humanity. As long as there is still a chance that the fig trees will bear fruit, these people strive for humanity through their teaching and preaching. They

give them a fourth chance: They shake them awake by the power of their words and actions – the “gardener” digs the soil around them – and even gives them new spiritual nourishment – the “gardener” puts fertilizer around them. However, if all these measures have no effect, then the fig trees will be cut down. The “gardeners” stop their efforts whereby the concerned people are separated from the impulses from the spiritual world and the image of God has no more chance to develop in this incarnation. Such people have to wait for a new incarnation in which under new conditions, the world of the spirit and its messengers make new efforts to approach them. But until then, they have no part in the spiritual development of humanity as a whole and stagnate painfully in their development. They have themselves passed sentence and excluded themselves for the duration of their current incarnation from the order of the spirit because of their unresponsiveness to the “kingdom of God.”

Of course, the law of incarnation is not explicitly mentioned in this text as it is not in the whole gospel. Jesus is only referring to the current human life and charges his listeners to take advantage of their life with all their strength. It is irretrievable even though the true self may have more lives in order to still unfold.

All three statements of Jesus about guilt and judgment appeal to people to become aware of these relationships and to react accordingly. Free yourself from entanglements in earthly disputes and fate. Rely on your own judgment, the order of the spirit in you. Realize that as earthly people you are in principle cut off from the world of the spirit and are thus subject to death. Therefore, turn to the dimension of the spirit to escape the “punishment” of death. And perceive your chance to answer the repeated call of the spirit. If you do not answer it after a certain time, you will have squandered the opportunity to walk the spiritual path.

***The “Journey to Jerusalem”:* Second Day**

With the parable of the fig tree, the first section, the first “day,” of Jesus’ journey to “Jerusalem” is completed. This “journey,” this part of the spiritual path that Jesus takes and parallel to him his disciples take began with chapter 9, verse 51. The events on this first section of the journey to Jerusalem and the associated

speeches of Jesus mainly relate to the pupils' loosening from the earthly world and turning to the divine world. Now, after the parable of the fig tree, the second section begins, the second "day" of the journey to Jerusalem. And the events and speeches of Jesus on this "day" are especially about the kingdom of God and its characteristics as well as the way to enter it.

Healing of the Disabled Woman: the Religious "Super Ego"

13:10 Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. ¹¹And behold, a woman was there who had a spirit that had disabled her for eighteen years, and she was bent over and not able to straighten herself up completely. ¹²And when he saw her, Jesus summoned her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your disability!" ¹³And he placed his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and glorified God. ¹⁴But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, answered and said to the crowd, "There are six days on which it is necessary to work. Therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the day of the Sabbath!" ¹⁵But the Lord answered and said to him, "Hypocrites! Does not each one of you untie his ox or his donkey from the feeding trough on the Sabbath and lead it away to water it? ¹⁶And this woman, who is a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound eighteen long years—is it not necessary that she be released from this bond on the day of the Sabbath?" ¹⁷And when he said these things, all those who opposed him were humiliated, and the whole crowd was rejoicing at all the splendid things that were being done by him. (LEB)

This section of the journey to Jerusalem opens with a healing by Jesus. A woman in the synagogue is bent over and cannot stand up straight. She is in the grip of a demon, a soul complex. The "disability" is primarily a state of the soul that can also manifest physically whereby the physical condition becomes a picture for the state of the soul.

What kind of psychic complex, what kind of demon, is this that is at work here in the synagogue, the house of religious worship? It is the religious super ego, the burden of rigid religious and dogmatic laws under which the soul is bowed down so that it cannot stand up freely. It cannot meet the dogmatic demands, and

the associated guilt feelings and self-reproaches have taken on a life of their own in it and are sitting like a strange being, a demon, in the neck. But Jesus “placed his hands on her”: When the spiritual powers, which are independence and freedom, flow into a person, this demonic grip is broken, and this does not have to be through the personal connection with a spirit-filled person such as Jesus, it can also happen alone through the openness for the spiritual powers acting in the world and in people. The powers of spiritual independence and freedom stream through the consciousness. People recognize the meaning of their life and gain new courage to face life. They stand up; the backbone of their soul becomes straight. They can think, feel, and act freely again. They recognize the dogmatic, rigid laws for what they are: human rules, and they have the strength to dismiss them as not binding to them. Thereby, also their guilt disappears. And depending on circumstances, psychosomatic symptoms, such as curvature of the spine, can also lessen.

The leader of the synagogue is the representative of the rigid religious laws. In this case, they refer in particular to the sanctification of the holiday of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a sign for a life in harmony with God. It points to this life, which is the inherent purpose of all human beings. Earthly people should behave on this day in such a way that they can reflect on life in harmony with God and feel a foretaste of it. They should not work and should not devote themselves to earthly matters but to spiritual ones. But this behavior, which is meaningful in itself, has been so strictly regulated by the religious leaders over time and has become so much an end in itself that spiritual life has been stifled thereby and the meaning of the Sabbath has been turned into its opposite.

Jesus is the spiritual life itself. He heals the consequences of the rigid regulations that stifle the spiritual life. This healing activity happens to fall under the prohibitions by which the Sabbath should be sanctified, however, and the leader reminds Jesus of this prohibition. But Jesus takes the objection of the leader *ad absurdum*. As the personified spiritual life, he not only breaks up the rigidification through human laws. He also shows people that where they themselves accept common sense, they prefer life to senseless legalism. They untie their ox or donkey on public holidays in order to give the animal physical nourishment, namely, water. Likewise, Jesus loosens the demonic bondage of a soul on a

holiday in order to give it the spiritual nourishment of freedom.

The contrast between spiritual freedom and oppression becomes even clearer in this story because it occurs precisely on the day of spiritual freedom, on the Sabbath, the day consecrated to God, which should be a sign for the spiritual life and a step towards this life. Precisely on this day, which is consecrated to life, laws that are hostile to life have become most oppressive. But precisely here, life heals the consequences of hostility to life. "Is it not necessary that she be released from this bond on the day of the Sabbath?" However, through this healing, life contrasts all the more with hostility to life. In spite of this, it is victorious.

Even today there are religious groups in which people bow down to strict dogmatic regulations. And the pupils on the spiritual path can also put pressure on themselves by imposing rigid laws on themselves or by applying existing laws ascetically to themselves. So they build a demon in their own being. Only the true self, the inner Jesus, can release them from this pressure by enabling the consciousness to recognize the inhumanity of this demon and to open itself to the freedom of the spirit. This is how people find themselves; this is how the spiritual powers heal them, and this is how they can walk upright again.

This little story is a true work of art. The sick person suffers from a demon, the consequences of the rigid legality of the religious institution on the soul. In healing the sick person, Jesus comes into opposition to the religious institution as such just as the spiritual life always comes into opposition to the rigidity of dogma. This all happens on the Sabbath and thus takes place in a framework that depicts the same contrast between life and rigid law: the Sabbath as a sign of life, the human Sabbath laws as an expression of rigidity. This narrative stands very worthily at the beginning of the second section of the "journey to Jerusalem," which describes "standing up straight," the entry into the kingdom of heaven and the character of the kingdom of heaven: from earthly bondage to the freedom of the spirit.

The Nature of the Kingdom of God I

13:18 *Therefore he said, "What is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I compare it? ¹⁹It is like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his own garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the sky nested in its branches."* ²⁰And again

he said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? ²¹ It is like yeast that a woman took and hid in three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened." (LEB)

The descriptions of the kingdom of heaven begin with two parables. The kingdom of God is a condition in individuals and in humanity. It is first a seed, an undeveloped true self. Like a seed, it begins to germinate. A presentiment, a faint hope, a sigh of relief, an unrest becomes noticeable. A new life looms, a chance to escape the same entanglements, the incessant alternation of life, death, and life again. This glimmer of light, when nourished, becomes the experience of freedom and the realization of a new life that gradually permeates the whole human being. The seed grows into a tree that gives a dwelling place to all the powers of the kingdom of heaven – the birds of the air.

This development can take place in a single person but also in several people who come together in the common hope, in the common awakening, and in the common work of the realization of the new life possibility. New people join; there are more and more; the experiences grow in intensity; the group grows in quality and quantity until all people who are receptive to the impulses from the spiritual world have been reached and connected with it. The growth of the tiny seed to the mighty tree is a picture of this development also. The expanding group of Jesus' disciples is a good example of a process that is repeated again and again at all times and in all cultures up to the present.

The structure of the true human being, the structure of the spiritual world, which wants to develop with irresistible power, is contained in the seed, in the as yet undeveloped image of God, like a spiritual genome. People do not need to be genetically modified. The genome of their true self already exists, as a germ, in perfection. It is this disposition that pushes people towards their inherent purpose. It prompts them to search for truth and freedom, enables them to recognize all erroneous attempts as such, not to lose heart despite all disappointments, and finally to undertake the only and final attempt that leads to the goal: to lose the egocentric life for the sake of the image of God. The garden in which the little mustard seed is placed that grows into the great tree is people's earthly personality and earthly environment in which their true identity can mature.

While the first parable of the kingdom of heaven reflects the lawfulness and irresistibility with which the human true self can

unfold, the second characterizes the relationship between the “kingdom of God” and personality in this unfolding. The three measures of flour can be understood as an image for three main aspects of the human personality: for thinking, feeling, and willing. Normally people try to develop by giving themselves “culture.” They try to tame their urges, nurture their “good” qualities, and fight their “bad” ones. What is “good” and “bad” is defined by society and tradition.

But the kingdom of God is something different than such a highly cultivated state and comes about in a different way. Through their cultivation attempts, people only give their qualities a different form and order, but they do not change them substantially. The kingdom of God is made up of spiritual powers that are not available to people and yet are active in them, which break open, purify, and change all earthly qualities from within, just as leaven penetrates flour from within and changes it completely. Self-centered thinking dissolves in these powers, and a conscious knowledge of the structure of the spiritual world and its powers gradually takes its place. Self-centered feeling dissolves, and a new feeling that receives and applies the powers of the spirit takes its place. And the old will energies are given a new quality and direction so that they serve as new energies to express the spirit in life. From within, from the seed of the image of God that slumbers in people, this purification and change takes place, indeed the rebuilding of their entire personality. The leavening of flour with yeast is a good illustration of this.

Usually the personality seeks to improve itself and so realize the kingdom of God. However, the kingdom of God only comes about when the personality allows itself to be purified and changed by the spiritual powers from the true self, in order finally, having become new, to be an expression of the spirit.

Conditions to Entry into the Kingdom of God

13:22 *And he was going throughout towns and villages, teaching and making his journey toward Jerusalem. ²³And someone said to him, “Lord, are there only a few who are saved?” And he said to them, ²⁴“Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able to,*

²⁵when once the master of the house has gotten up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open the door for us!' And he will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from!'²⁶ Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets!'²⁷ And he will reply, saying to you, 'I do not know where you are from! Go away from me, all you evildoers!'²⁸ In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves thrown outside!²⁹ And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God.³⁰ And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last." (LEB)

The master and his disciples are on their way to "Jerusalem." Their goal is the spiritual world, the kingdom of God, for which Jerusalem is a symbol. They want to experience spiritual order and power. The first two parables of the kingdom of God described its unfolding in people and the way in which it unfolds in general. Now the question arises in the pupils through which behavior they enter the kingdom of God, through which behavior they will be "saved." How is the true self lifted from the maelstrom of life and death, the prison and darkness of the ephemeral world, and consciously raised and maintained in the freedom and light of the immortal spiritual world?

How is it saved? By people going through "the narrow door." What is this narrow door? When people succeed in abandoning all self-centeredness, all intentions of promoting good and fighting evil, a state of serenity and tranquility arises within them. It is a state of attentive listening to the call within, of intense receptivity to the effects of the true self. This state is the "narrow door" through which their consciousness can enter the spiritual world or actually vice versa: through which the spiritual world can penetrate into their consciousness. In comparison, the ordinary state of distracted receptivity to impressions from the mortal world is a "broad door" leading to the physical world. But few find, few open, and few pass through the "narrow door," the intense receptivity unequivocally directed toward the spiritual world. The distraction from the stimuli of the ephemeral world is too great.

Also, the possibility of finding, opening, and passing through this narrow door does not exist for an unlimited time in a human

life. If people do not learn to respond with complete serenity to the stirrings of their true self, if, despite the touch of the spirit, people continue to strive toward the things of the mortal world or seek their self-centered, willful path to serenity, the time comes when the spirit from the true self can no longer work in them because the self-erected blockages have become too dense. Then the owner of the house, the spirit, locks the door and the aspiring people will have to stand outside. They have missed the opportunity.

And they may then “knock” and seek the connection with the spirit and say, I have to be let in. After all, I have always dealt with esotericism and absorbed the teachings on spiritual development “with you,” “ate and drank” them, and listened to these teachings on the streets, in public lectures and in books. Or they may say, I have to be let in. I have always believed in religious dogmas and “ate and drank” the teachings and rituals of the religion “with you,” have been obedient to the commandments of the religion and have regularly listened to sermons and read the Bible. Then the law of the true self will apply and answer, Despite all your religious and esoteric zeal, you have not dissolved your self-centeredness and have only practiced “injustice.” You have tried to create a state of openness to the spirit in an egocentric way instead of giving up recipes and calculations. That is why you have not reached the state in which the kingdom could come to you and you could enter the kingdom, yes, your ego state has gradually become so solidified that in this life, the door is finally closed to you. The spirit says, “I do not know where you are from.” It cannot recognize, contact, and connect with those who seek it egocentrically because a consciousness directed to the spirit has not developed in them. “Go away from me,” you souls filled with selfishness and calculation!

Such rejected seekers after truth only know that the kingdom of God exists as a possibility within them and also realize that others from all ends of the earth have found the narrow door and passed through it. These others, including the patriarchs and the prophets, were people open to the spirit and whose state of soul was so free from all self-centeredness and so intensely focused on the call of the spirit that they could enter the kingdom of God through this narrow door and since then, filled by the spirit and enlightened, live in it. But for the rejected seekers, this possibility is closed in this life. They are “thrown outside,” sentenced to continue living in the mortal world with its sufferings and

entanglements. Then remorse and sadness will seize them – but who knows: Perhaps this will open the narrow door for them after all.

For the parable is not intended to frighten the seekers of truth. It just wants to make them aware of the applicable laws and encourage them to react correctly. Observe these laws and align yourself accordingly; that is the message. They also apply otherwise in earthly life. Those who miss a favorable opportunity and do not start a development for which they are still strong enough will not be able to make up for what they have missed when they have weakened. So be alert.

The saying about the last who will be first and the first who will be last means in this context: Those who are last according to earthly standards will be first in the kingdom of God, and those who are first according to earthly standards will be last in the kingdom of God. It is precisely those who are successful on earth, who perhaps also set the tone esoterically and religiously, who are least likely to find the door of serenity, devotion, and ego-free receptivity to the promptings of the true self. They will be the last to fulfill their inherent purpose. They will be the last to be permeated, renewed, and enlightened by the leaven of the spiritual powers. Conversely, the lowest by earthly standards, quiet people who do not make a fuss of themselves, who calmly turn to the influences of the spirit, and who seem to have little esoteric and religious charisma will be the first to enter through the narrow door into the realm of the spirit.

Situation of the Messenger from the Kingdom of God

“Jerusalem” is a symbol for the realm of the spirit, which people can enter through the “narrow door,” but also a symbol for an extreme degeneration in which the religious leaders, who should experience the realm of the spirit particularly consciously, instead represent the realm of the non-spirit and kill everyone who wants to show the way to the realm of the spirit. Therefore, the journey to Jerusalem also becomes an opportunity for Jesus – or Luke – to present the situation of the messenger from the realm of the spirit who invites others into this realm.

Completion in “Jerusalem”

13:31 *At that same hour some Pharisees came up and said to him, “Go out and depart from here, because Herod wants to kill you!”*
32 *And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I am expelling demons and performing healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will complete my work.’* **33** *Nevertheless, it is necessary for me to be on the way today and tomorrow and on the next day, because it is not possible for a prophet to perish outside Jerusalem.”* (LEB)

All “prophets,” all messengers from the realm of the spirit, go through a necessary, lawful inner development, which also corresponds to a necessary, lawful development of their destiny in the world. This development, whether internal or external, can always be divided into the phases of preparation, of work, and of completion. “Galilee” stands for the phase of work, of “wandering” on the spiritual path. It is the phase of the effects of the spiritual powers in earthly life. They heal illnesses of the soul and eliminate the psychic bondage of the earthly personality. Jesus and his disciples are currently in this phase of work. They must on the way “today and tomorrow and the next day.” But the third day brings the “completion” in “Jerusalem.” Completion means resurrection in the spiritual “Jerusalem.” It is preceded by being killed in the degenerate Jerusalem, the symbol of all forces hostile to the spirit.

Only in Jerusalem are the completion of the destiny and the task of a messenger from the realm of the spirit possible. “Jerusalem” is that completion. Only in Jerusalem will the being and powers of the messenger fully unfold, but the being and powers of the enemies of the spirit will also have fully formed. The real opponents are in Jerusalem. During the work phase, in “Galilee,” there were indeed already opponents. But they did not represent the quintessence of enmity against the spirit nor could they stem the tide of events lawfully heading toward their culmination.

Therefore, it is clear to Jesus that Herod cannot kill him: The time of completion has not yet come. Herod is an opponent in Galilee on the level of earthly power on this side albeit influenced by traditional religion. But only in Jerusalem do the opponents appear on the level of the earthly powers of the beyond, the religious leaders who are the tools of the powers of the beyond. Only they are the contingent of the earthly world in whom the essence of the earthly world becomes clearly visible and tangible.

The messenger of the spirit must first await this contingent before facing death.

A spiritual law is being described here: “It is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.” It is described with symbols that have different meanings in other contexts. In the passages of the Gospel of Luke that are based on Mark, the “prophet” is the messenger from the world of the spirit who specifically corresponds to the phase of preparation – which Mark symbolizes by “Galilee.” This is why the prophet John the Baptist, the forerunner, is killed by Herod, ruler of Galilee and Perea, at these points. Luke’s insertion of the journey to Jerusalem, on the other hand, does not know the prophet John the Baptist at all and therefore makes no distinction between forerunner and realizer. Otherwise it would be completely incomprehensible that Jesus speaks here of the killing of all the prophets in Jerusalem, although he knows – according to the Mark passages in Luke – that John was executed by Herod, ruler of Galilee and Perea. In any case, Jesus represents a spiritual law that applies to all messengers from the world of spirit. They can be killed only at the point of the completion of their path where their being and that of their opponents have fully developed – in “Jerusalem.”

Lament about “Jerusalem”

13:34 *“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How many times I wanted to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her own brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵ Behold, your house has been left to you! And I tell you, you will never see me until the time will come when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ” (LEB)*

Jesus’ lament is again one of the few passages in the Gospel that allow insight into his state of soul, the state of soul of every messenger from the world of the spirit. All messengers from the realm of the spirit want nothing else than to gather all the “children of Jerusalem,” all those who can be touched by and receptive to the spirit, and to lead them to salvation and the fulfillment of their inherent purpose under the protection of their powers. Their coming and working on earth have no other goal than this. The perfect true self of humanity wants to awaken and

assimilate the true self of every single human being, “like a hen gathers her brood under her wings.” This is an intrinsic necessity for every messenger of the spirit.

Yet Jesus can do no more than offer that opportunity. Whether or not those who are sensitive to the spirit will accept it and grow their true self in the pattern of the true self embodied in Jesus is not in his power. That is left to the free play of the soul-spiritual powers. He does not persuade; he does not force. He explains; he depicts; he provides power. Anyone who opens up to this power is included in the unfolding of the true self. Those who do not want to do so cannot be included and miss their inherent purpose. This is Jesus’ lament: “You were not willing!” It is the lament that those who are sensitive to the spirit reject their good fortune. It is the pain of one who knows both the state of separation from God and that of oneness with God. The state of separation means restlessness and unhappiness; the state of unity means cooperation with the powers of the spirit and blessedness, for it is the realization of the true identity of the human being. Someone who knows the monumental difference between these two states, one being “reclining at the table in the kingdom of God” (verse 29) and the other “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (verse 28), cannot help but reach out to everyone in “hell” in order to lead them into “heaven.” It pains the messenger when they reject that hand, even kill the one who embodies their true inherent purpose, just as they stoned and killed all the prophets.

At this point, it becomes particularly clear that the gospel does not intend to describe historical events as such. “How often” had Jesus been in Jerusalem and wanted to gather its inhabitants? The text says nothing about it. All attempts to determine the duration and events of Jesus’ biographical life from dates given in the gospel become irrelevant in the face of such passages. The evangelist uses historical and seemingly historical facts as images to represent spiritual processes. He uses Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem as an image for a phase of Jesus’ activity. As long as Jesus’ work is on the level of healing and casting out demons, he traverses “Galilee,” no matter how many times he may have been to the real Jerusalem beforehand. And when he finally crowns his work, he is in “Judea” and “Jerusalem,” that is, at the end of his path, where death and resurrection take place.

When the spirit’s enemies kill the spirit’s messenger and thereby also “kill” their own true self, then their “house,” their

consciousness and being, their whole individual and collective life, becomes desolate because no living, fertilizing impulse from the true self will penetrate into their life and free it from the rigid habits and constraints of tradition. The true self will only become active and noticeable again, which means that the children of Jerusalem will only see Jesus, the model of the true self, again when they turn to him and say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" Only when they recognize and gratefully acknowledge that the emerging true self represents the "name of the Lord," the essence of God, when they welcome the coming of that true self into their lives and thereby welcome the image of God, will life again enter into the desert of their existence.

Healing of the Man with Edema: the Religious "Super Ego"

14:1 And it happened that when he came to the house of a certain one of the leaders of the Pharisees on a Sabbath to eat a meal, they were watching him closely. ² And behold, a certain man was in front of him, suffering from edema. ³ And Jesus answered and said to the legal experts and Pharisees, saying, "Is it permitted to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" ⁴ But they remained silent. And he took hold of him and healed him, and sent him away. ⁵ And he said to them, "Who among you, if your son or your ox falls into a well on the day of the Sabbath, will not immediately pull him out?" ⁶ And they were not able to make a reply to these things. (LEB)

The little narrative of the healing of the man with edema, which prompts a discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees about whether or not to heal on the Sabbath, seems to be a doublet of the healing of the disabled woman (Luke 13:10-17). Here and there, the supremacy of human religious laws is illustrated; here and there, it is shown that spiritual life can break this supremacy and heal an individual or collective soul suffering from it. The supremacy of the laws and the healing through the spiritual life are shown both times precisely on the Sabbath, the day that is intended to be a sign for the spiritual life and to prepare for it but whose function is reversed due to the supremacy of the laws. Jesus, embodiment of the true self, restores the right order through his healing.

The difference from the earlier narrative is in the nature of the disease that is cured. When at that time, the supremacy of the laws manifested itself in the oppressive rigidity of dogma, which sat on the woman's neck like a demon and did not allow her to live freely and upright, now it acts like a swelling tide in which the soul loses all footing and threatens to drown. Laws can act like a rigid corset that no longer allows the soul to breathe. However, a soul can also have the feeling of no longer being able to come to itself due to a multitude of external laws. It loses its shape. This is indicated by the "edema." Earlier, it was a case of rigidification; now it is the opposite: dissolution. Luke wants to present sequentially both extreme possibilities of becoming ill through the supremacy of the laws and how both extremes can be healed by the true self. And in this story too, the process that Jesus used in his argument as a parable corresponds to the nature of the illness. Sane people will pull out their ox if it falls into the water on the Sabbath and is about to drown, regardless of the Sabbath laws. Likewise, when souls "fall" into the "waters" of the myriad temporal laws and threaten to drown in them, the true self will pull them out regardless of human convention.

The Nature of the Kingdom of God II

Again the concrete healing is followed by some parables describing the characteristics of the kingdom of God, the condition of the soul living in or entering the spiritual world.

The True Self Knows No Drive for Self-Importance

14:7 Now he told a parable to those who had been invited when he noticed how they were choosing for themselves the places of honor, saying to them, ⁸ "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not recline at the table in the place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you has been invited by him, ⁹ and the one who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give the place to this person,' and then with shame you will begin to take the last place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and recline at the table in the last place, so that when the one who invited you comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then it will be an honor to you in the presence of all those who are reclining at the table with you. ¹¹ For everyone who exalts himself will be

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humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”
(LEB)

Jesus observes a situation in ordinary life, and immediately it becomes a parable of a law in the spiritual life for him, the embodiment of the true self, whose imaginative powers are ever alive. In earthly life, he explains to his listeners, actual rank, not vanity, determines table seating. A host assigns guests their seats according to their actual rank. But vanity tempts people to sit at the highest place and imagine that they belong there. It is very embarrassing for them when they are then referred to a lower place by the host. Prudence, on the other hand, would make guests sit down a lower place because then, if their rank does not correspond to this place, they would be asked further up by the host and bring honor with it. Jesus noticed this interchange between above and below in the earthly world, and he saw an analogy to the spiritual path. Those who elevate themselves above others, think they are something special, and live out their drive to gain recognition increasingly lose contact with the spiritual world, hinder the flow of spiritual powers, and fall behind on their way. The spirit, the host in the parable, directs them to a lower place. These people are in a lower place in the kingdom of God than before. On the other hand, those who are free from the drive for recognition, respect others more than themselves, and serve the spirit within them, remain open to the powers of the spirit. These flow into them and lift them up. They grow in joy, knowledge, and love for the spiritual world. The host asks them to move further up.

The ambitious striving for spiritual powers hinders their effectiveness, for they are not available to the human will. On the other hand, the selfless implementation of the spiritual powers that have already been received means that more and more powers continue to flow unhindered. The more people become aware of the unavailability of spiritual powers and still act in accordance with these powers, the more are available to them.

It is easy to misunderstand this parable. The analogy between earthly and spiritual conditions does not extend to calculating one's advantage here or there. Jesus is not asking his hearers to apply to the spiritual life the prudent calculation that is advantageous in earthly life. He is not saying, Be as modest as possible, then you will get the furthest in the kingdom of God. And if you are ambitious, you remain the furthest behind. This would only strengthen the drive for self-recognition and promise the

highest place in the kingdom of God to those who excelled in humility (which is also a kind of ambition). He would actually be contradicting the law to which he wants to draw attention with the parable. He wants to explain to his listeners that in the spiritual life, the drive to gain recognition does not count at all. Only *being* counts there. Anyone who follows the drive to gain recognition, even if it is to be the first in the virtue of humility, will fall behind spiritually. Those who do not follow it will grow spiritually.

Those who exalt themselves – who follow the drive to gain recognition – will be humbled. Those who humble themselves – those who do not follow the drive for recognition – will be exalted.

The True Self Does Not Speculate about the Consequences of Its Deeds

14:12 *And he also said to the one who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or wealthy neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and repayment come to you. ¹³ But whenever you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed, because they are not able to repay you. For it will be paid back to you at the resurrection of the righteous.”*

These words of Jesus are also a parable. Or would Jesus have recommended that hosts stop inviting their friends and relatives and instead invite the crippled and the poor to learn and practice selfless behavior free from expectations of rewards? And would he have recommended this to them because it would have given them the prospect of a reward in the hereafter? So did he want to say to them, With all earthly behavior, do not speculate on the positive consequences in this world; refrain from this speculation so that you will experience positive consequences in the afterlife? Would that not mean speculating on the positive consequences in the afterlife? That would only be a shift in the target of speculation.

No, this scene is a parable, one that works through paradox. Jesus means, No host in the earthly world would invite the crippled and the lame instead of their friends and relatives. But, as Jesus says to his disciples – and these are addressed here as the host – behave on the spiritual path like a host who invites the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Whenever you invite people to

you and nourish them with teaching and preaching, be free from expectations of reciprocity, like a host in the earthly world who invites the crippled, the lame, and the blind. The result will be that you are “blessed.”

Earthly people usually arrange their behavior in such a way that they can expect positive consequences for themselves. This applies to speculation about this world as well as speculation about the hereafter. They say, If I conduct myself unselfishly and decently in the earthly world, I will receive my reward in the form of blessedness in the hereafter, at the “resurrection of the righteous.”

But people in whom the kingdom of God begins to have an effect do not speculate on positive consequences, neither in this world nor in the beyond nor in the spiritual world. They simply do what follows from the spiritual faculties that are developing in them. This non-speculative, expectation-free behavior keeps their heart free for influences from the world of spirit. And they experience this freedom, these influences, as bliss. Freedom from speculative expectations is joy and blessedness. The “resurrection of the righteous,” the “arising” of the true self, is already taking place now, in the moment of freedom from expectation and of real selflessness. The kingdom of God always begins when a person is freed from the burden of selfishness. So this parable, like the one of offering the other cheek and not withholding your shirt in the Sermon on the Mount, describes yet another paradox: Just when people expect no reward when doing something for others, they are rewarded with great joy and blessedness, the “resurrection of the righteous,” the “arising” of the true self.

Another misconception would be to assume that Jesus recommended inviting the crippled and the poor as a means of preventing the host’s speculation on rewards. Jesus would then presuppose that people could educate themselves to selflessness and lack of expectations through shrewd choice of the circumstances of their actions. It would be the pedagogical exploitation of the context: Where there is nothing, nothing can be expected. But that would again be calculation and speculation. It would only be an external remedy, which would certainly not guarantee that the host’s heart would become truly free of expectations. At the next opportunity, they would appear again.

Jesus is not recommending shrewd earthly conduct nor is he recommending that people do the unusual and feed the poor and crippled instead of their own kind. There would certainly be

nothing wrong with that; it would be a nice gesture. But Jesus, as the embodiment of the true self, describes a behavior that people on the spiritual path gradually develop. People living from the true self are free from expectations. They do not give and work for reward or to bring about positive consequences for themselves but because it is in the nature of the true self to give spiritual powers as love and joy.

With this, Jesus is telling his disciples with the parable, Let people everywhere and always participate in the spiritual powers that you have received. And do so without speculating on rewards. Such behavior, springing from the true self, is blessedness. It is the basis of the “resurrection of the righteous.”

Differing Readiness of Human Beings for Life in the Kingdom of God

14:15 Now when one of those reclining at the table with him heard these things, he said to him, “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!”¹⁶ But he said to him, “A certain man was giving a large banquet and invited many.¹⁷ And he sent his slave at the hour of the banquet to say to those who have been invited, ‘Come, because now it is ready!’¹⁸ And they all alike began to excuse themselves. The first said to him, ‘I have purchased a field, and I must go out to look at it. I ask you, consider me excused.’¹⁹ And another said, ‘I have purchased five yoke of oxen, and I am going to examine them. I ask you, consider me excused.’²⁰ And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and for this reason I am not able to come.’²¹ And the slave came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame!’²² And the slave said, ‘Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.’²³ And the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges and press them to come in, so that my house will be filled!’²⁴ For I say to you that none of those persons who were invited will taste my banquet!’” (LEB)

Also in this portion of text, it is clear that Jesus takes an earthly event as a picture and parable for a lawfulness in the realm of the spirit. This is evident from the fact that the parable begins with the

remark of a hearer of Jesus: “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” What is this meal in the kingdom of God? Through what food do the eaters become blessed, truly blessed? The food of the earthly world, which earthly people eat every day, is fear and unrest, inconsideration, deceit, exploitation, disappointment, and sorrow. Foods of loving, honest, considerate behavior are seldom eaten, and they also know that their effects do not last long. As nourishment from the divine world, however, the pupils take in indestructible calm, knowledge of the depths of the world and of God, love as the ability to patiently promote all people and things, and an immortal joy at the bottom of their being. This meal makes them blessed.

But it is so – and the parable describes this law – that people have different willingness to heed the call to this meal in the realm of the spirit. As the inherent purpose of humanity, the divine world demands a positive response. But the reactions of those called are different. Three types are described in the parable. The first invitees are the friends, relatives, and acquaintances of the host. Compared to the poor, crippled, blind, and lame, it is the rich and healthy – or people who think they are rich and healthy. It is the culturally, esoterically, and religiously “elevated” and established, satisfied people who, believing that they have already been redeemed, close off access to the kingdom of God for themselves and do not want to answer its call. They are not hungry for the meal in the kingdom of God. They would be the ones predisposed to the kingdom because of their closeness to the “master of the house,” since they are the best acquainted with the teachings of the kingdom’s messengers. But being too satisfied with these teachings, they pursue their interests in the earthly world and have no need to enter the kingdom through the narrow door.

Their interests are represented by their excuses. They reach through all areas of the earthly world, from the level of the mineral and plant realms – the piece of land – through the animal realm, the senses and psychic endeavors – the five yoke of oxen – to the human realm – interpersonal relationships. In all areas of the earthly world, there are possible bonds that prevent people from turning to the world of spirit.

The second type of people who respond to the invitation and now agree are the poor, crippled, lame, and blind of the “city.” (The function of these poor and crippled people for the parable is different from the one in the previous parable. There they

illustrated people about whom there are certainly no expectations. Here they are an image of a certain relationship between people and religious tradition and spirituality.) As residents of the “city,” they too belong to the usual cultural, religious, and esoteric institutions. But they are not completely at home in it and do not quite conform to the norm. They are poor in meaning, not sated by the traditional teachings. They lead an existence as the spiritually lame, blind, and crippled. It is precisely because of this that they have spiritual hunger, long for spiritual health, and are open to the call of invitation from the kingdom of God.

The third group of invitees is the misfits, the spiritually homeless and wanderers who live outside the “city” and are not surrounded by the “hedges” of dogma. They too have spiritual hunger and long for the food of the spirit.

The slave of the owner of the house is the messenger from the realm of the spirit, like Jesus and his disciples who bring the power and teaching from the spiritual realm. The owner of the house is the spirit itself. It searches the world with its messengers like a voice seeking an answer, a voice that reaches the ear of every human being. When this sound strikes a closed and refusing ear, it rebounds. The spirit is not angry like a disappointed person. It is “angry” like a stream that meets an obstacle and wells up.

Those close to the spirit are used to being “invited.” The non-established and outsiders, on the other hand, are not prepared for such an invitation, as they do not consider themselves worthy of it. It is precisely for this reason that it seems all the more urgent and disturbing to them, they even feel overwhelmed. The parable describes this working of the spirit on the unprepared by saying, “Press them to come in.”

The parable represents a law of life in relation to the kingdom of God. The call of the spirit first strikes those who are familiar with spiritual “goods.” But it is precisely these people from whom one would most likely expect a positive answer who refuse. They are too closed off by their self-importance and too busy with their earthly interests. The spirit’s call then turns to the poor in spiritual “goods” and outsiders. They can be admitted to the meal, as they free from hindering baggage and hungry for spiritual food.

Characteristics of the Pupils on the Spiritual Path

14:25 Now large crowds were going along with him, and he turned around and said to them, ²⁶ “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and furthermore, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not carry his own cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, wanting to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise after he has laid the foundation and is not able to finish it, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish!’ ³¹ Or what king, going out to engage another king in battle, does not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand. ³² But if not, while the other is still far away, he sends an ambassador and asks for terms of peace. ³³ In the same way, therefore, every one of you who does not renounce all his own possessions cannot be my disciple.

³⁴ “Now salt is good, but if salt becomes tasteless, with what will it be made salty? ³⁵ It is usable neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; they throw it out. The one who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (LEB)

These sayings of Jesus sum up what is necessary to be able to follow the invitation of the spirit. They describe indispensable qualities of the pupils on the spiritual path.

Unconditional Consequence

The first quality is an unconditional consequence of the pupils with regard to the fact that they withdraw their whole life from the order of earthly interests and subordinate it to the spiritual order. The people who do not “hate” their closest relatives and their own life cannot be pupils of the spirit. “Hate” – that sounds unsurpassably sharp, radical, and loveless. Is not love especially the characteristic of the spiritual path?

The pupils on the spiritual path do not hate their relatives and themselves as persons. That would be a misunderstanding. Rather, they hate their self-centered expectations of them and their

attachments to them. These bonds are only embodied by the people. The “hatred” meant by Jesus is also not a passion and aggressiveness of the ego. Jesus does not mean that the pupils on the spiritual path should see their neighbors as obstacles to their own development and should therefore hate them and turn away from them without love. He also does not mean that the pupils, as religiously oriented personalities, should regard their faith and the bond with Jesus as the highest goal to which all other bonds must be subordinated. “Hate” would then mean neglecting all other interests of the personality.

The “hatred” meant by Jesus is more about the realization, yes, the experience that self-centeredness and spirituality are incompatible and the consequences that follow from this. The true self recognizes and experiences in the powers of the spirit, which is freedom and love, that all relationships of earthly people to others and to themselves are self-centered and therefore stand in contradiction to the inherent purpose of humanity and to the spiritual person, who is freedom and love. Earthly people love others because they give support to them and their life and provide security. They love others because they are united with them by the warmth of shared interests, memories, blood, and ideals. They love others because they expect them to meet their needs for happiness, success, and recognition. They love others because they may embody for them everything that they think is valuable and for which it is worthy to strive. And they love others and themselves because their ego and they are essentially earthly, and like attracts like.

The true self that comes to life in them is of a different quality than the earthly, however. It makes the pupils realize and feel with horror that from the point of view of the immortal spiritual world, everything earthly has no right to exist for itself. If it considers it has a right to exist without reference to the spirit, it becomes an obstacle to the currents of the spirit. This knowledge and experience of the pupils, born of the contrast between the true self’s love, which is free of egocentricity, and the self-centered love of the earthly personality, is the “hate” that Jesus means. In this decisive experience, the pupils let all their expectations of others and of themselves, their longing for security in earthly relationships, which are transient, and their clinging to earthly nature, which is transient, be dissolved by the powers of the true self, while they learn to live in the love that is free of egocentricity.

This dissolving and severing of egocentric expectations and ties is what Jesus means by “hate.”

The dissolution of these expectations of the pupils in no way affects their duties to relatives, friends, acquaintances, or themselves, for the earthly ties to others and the love of people for themselves have their justification. Earthly people need these bonds. But the pupils on the spiritual path realize their relativity. The true self lives from spiritual powers and laws. It faces others and itself freely, not determined by expectations and longings. In this way, the pupils can replace the self-centered basis that previously determined their earthly interpersonal relationships with a new, spiritual basis.

The pupils on the spiritual path recognize their life being determined by earthly needs for security, support, and warmth as bonds for the true self. Indeed, it is such a bondage given humanity’s inherent purpose, the freedom of the true self. Anyone who loves these bonds and does not “hate” them, who does not recognize them and consistently cuts through them, cannot be a pupil of the spirit. This saying of Jesus logically follows on from the preceding parables. Only those who enter through the “narrow door” can enter the kingdom of God: those who recognize the level of earthly relationships in their relativity, let themselves be guided solely by the spiritual level, and from there also reshape the level of earthly relationships.

When in this new freedom, the pupils cut through their own expectations of those closest to them and, conversely, reject the others’ claims on them of loyalty to the others’ life goals, they may incur the others’ misunderstanding and hatred. This hatred really emanates from the ego personality of the people concerned who see their expectations thwarted. The persecution and hatred by other people is the “cross” that the pupils must bear on the spiritual path. If they do not want to carry it, want to remain in the old relationships, and do not want to replace them with new ones of freedom, independence, and love, they are not following the spiritual path and cannot be disciples of Jesus, the true self. Therefore, those who want to enter the spiritual path should check whether they have the prerequisites for it. The prerequisites are, on the one hand, maturity and, on the other hand, sufficient strength and determination.

Mature through Experiences

The parable of the building of the tower refers to the maturity of experience. Have the pupils who set out on the path gathered enough experiences to show them that the ordinary basis of earthly relationships is really unsustainable? Only when that is the case can they build the spiritual human being like a tower. The spiritual powers at work in them enable them to develop a new personality on a new, spiritual basis. So, Jesus says, the beginning pupils should check whether they can cope with the “costs” of the building, namely the requirement to dissolve old expectations and habits. Those who feel the call to follow the spiritual path should assess whether their love for the spirit is greater than their love for the world.

This assessment is not about people checking whether their moral powers and willpower are strong enough for the spiritual path. They certainly would not be strong enough. Also, when the call comes, it is impossible for them to anticipate what difficulties they will encounter along the way. However, on the basis of their life experiences and self-knowledge, they can assess whether they are considering such a path out of curiosity, enthusiasm, imitation of others, boredom, courtesy to others, a need for security, or ambition. If such motives are not decisive and they see no other way than to follow the call because they have come to the end of their earthly wisdom, then they can assume that the necessary maturity is there. Then they can gradually build the “tower” from the substances and powers flowing to them from the spiritual world: new thoughts, new feelings, new aspirations, and new actions will emerge from the true self and build a new personality that is attuned to the spirit.

Determination

In addition to maturity, the pupils must also have sufficient strength and determination to begin and persevere on the spiritual path. Again, it is not a question of moral qualities but of characteristics that result from the maturity of experience. If the pupils recognize again and again how much their expectations of others and their love for themselves conditioned by their interests are an obstacle to the realization of the truth and block the state of inner freedom, the strength and determination of their being will

grow to also dissolve these obstacles. They will have the powers to “renounce” all these expectations. Only in this way can they be pupils of the spirit, for only by dissolving all expectations of people and things does the true self have the space to unfold.

If the pupils have not yet realized that all earthly possibilities offer no stability and have no eternal value, new expectations will arise in them and consume them. The “king,” the principle of earthly selfishness, will make the things of the earthly world seem necessary and desirable to them. He will come with “20,000,” with all the myriad influences of the physical world, the world of duality separated from the spirit. And if the pupils do not yet sufficiently see through the worthlessness of these influences with the help of spiritual knowledge, they will succumb to them. So they will always have to test their powers anew on the spiritual path. Again and again, they will examine the value of the temptations from the earthly world that they encounter. They will clearly consider the obstacles but also make themselves clearly aware that a power for new life is working in them. If they notice in a situation that the love for the new life and the hatred for the old one are too weak, that they are only half as strong as the powers of the “king,” then there is no use in trying to overcome the obstacles by force with a moral act of will. Then it is only possible to wait until enough spiritual powers flow to them that will allow them to overcome the king. But even this waiting requires determination.

“Salt”: Spiritual Dynamics

On the one hand, “salt” is the power and dynamics created by the activity of the spirit in the pupils to dissolve the old chains, to overcome the “king,” and on the other hand, it is also the power and dynamics to build new structures, to build the “tower.” New thoughts arise in the pupils that question everything familiar, new feelings that find intolerable and “hate” the usual goals in life and earthly interests, and new aspirations that radically dissolve these old bonds so that the new possibilities from the true self can unfold. Salt is the sharp power that separates the outdated old from the urgent new and drives the development of the new forward. But if the pupils no longer react to the spirit, their knowledge becomes dull, their feelings dull, their will powerless, and they sink back into the daily monotony. Their dynamism, their salt, acts neither as “fertilizer,” namely, promoting the growth of

the new, the true self, nor does it loosen the soil, dissolving old earthly habits.

“Salt” symbolizes not only the spirit’s dynamism in the pupils but also the people who work in the world in terms of that dynamism. They are infectious with their dynamism, tear open the rigid crust of conventions and habits, and promote the growth of the true self. Such people create spiritual communities in which pupils follow a spiritual path. Jesus and his disciples are an example of this.

In addition to such effects on the true self of others, such “salt” people also have effects on the ego personality of others. They affect earthly life. They give new life perspectives and thereby heal illnesses of the soul; they impart new vitality and thereby drive out “demons,” delusions that prevent people from thinking independently. New philosophies are formed in this way, new world views and paradigms, new conceptions of government, new religions, cultures, artistic styles – all elements that also change the face of the earthly world and adapt it to a certain extent to spiritual developments.

But if this “salt” loses its taste, what effects would that have on the world? That is why Jesus tells his disciples to stay alert and retain their saltiness. Always be open to impulses from the spiritual world; always “hate” your earthly chains in the power of these impulses from eternity; resolutely give up outdated conventions and binding habits so that the dynamism of your own development and that of the earthly world is preserved.

With the description of the effects that emanate from a consequential behavior of the pupils on the spiritual path, another section of Jesus’ speech about the conditions in the kingdom of God comes to an end. He had begun with parables of the way in which the kingdom of God unfolds, had then pointed to the need to enter the kingdom through the narrow door of parting from all earthly interests, had described the aimlessness and unexpectancy of the true self, illustrated some typical responses to the call of the spiritual world, clarified that a serious examination of prerequisites must be made before one embarks on the path, and finally urged listeners to remain spiritually alive. Those who have the beginnings of an awareness that arises from the true self – “who have ears to hear” – will be able to understand these explanations about the kingdom of God. They are also ready to understand them. “The one who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Reaction of the Spiritual World to the Conversion of the “Sinner”

15:1 Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were drawing near to hear him. ²And both the Pharisees and the scribes were complaining, saying, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them!”

³So he told them this parable, saying, (LEB)

A new section of Jesus’ parables begins. This time, he tells three parables dealing with the behavior of the spiritual world in relation to “sinners.” The starting point of the stories is that Jesus, the messenger of the spiritual world, deals particularly intensively with “sinners” and keeps fellowship with them. In doing so, he challenges the criticism of the Pharisees and scribes, who hold that the place of the messenger of the spiritual world is, in contrast, with the “righteous,” for really “righteous” people are directed to the order of the spirit, and only with them does the spirit find a worthy reception.

What is a “sinner”? According to the Pharisees and scribes, it is a person who violates the commandments of religion and morals, such as a “tax collector” who makes common cause with the occupiers. This is the moral “sinner.” “Righteous” people are then those who faithfully fulfill the statutes and commandments of their religion. When the Pharisees and scribes rebuke Jesus, the premise is that they consider themselves “righteous.” But they are just only insofar as they keep the statutes of religion and morals. They are morally righteous. But what they do not know is that there is sin and righteousness in the existential sense and that, despite their moral righteousness, they are sinners in the existential sense. This ignorance prevents them from achieving existential justice.

What are “sinners” in the existential sense? They are earthly people in general who, although they should express the image of God, live according to the laws of the transitory earthly world. They are separated from the experience of the spiritual world, therefore mortal and subject to all the evils of the earthly world. All earthly human beings, even the morally best, are sinners in this sense: those who have separated themselves from the kingdom of God. Those who recognize this state can turn away from earthly entanglements and turn back to God: They can “repent.” But there

are many who consider themselves righteous because they meet religious, esoteric, or moral standards. They are comparable to the Pharisees and scribes, who are basically sinners just as everyone else, only they do not know it – and are therefore further removed from the kingdom of God than those who are aware of their separation.

Jesus' parables refer to existentially "righteous" people who actually live in accordance with their dignity as God's image and existential "sinners" who do not.

Parables of the Lost Sheep and of the Lost Coin

15:4 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the grassland and go after the one that was lost until he finds it? 5And when he has found it, he places it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6And when he returns to his home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost!' 7I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.

8Or what woman who has ten drachmas, if she loses one drachma, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found the drachma that I had lost!' 10In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (LEB)

The Pharisees and scribes hold that the place of the messenger from the kingdom of the spirit is with the righteous. These alone could receive him worthily. In contrast, Jesus emphasizes that the sinners in particular need the messenger far more than the righteous. The sinners have strayed far from the realm of the spirit. They cannot find their way back alone. Therefore, the messenger must go after them and bring them back. That is his real task in the world. That is why Jesus spends time with sinners and eats with them.

Jesus describes this necessity in the two parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin. At the same time, he shows why the messenger's joy over a returning sinner is greater than over many

righteous people.

The spiritual world and its messengers “care for” all people indiscriminately. Humanity is in development. It is destined to achieve conscious unity with the spiritual world. All religions are institutions that have emerged from the spiritual world and want to help people in their development. People are like sheep led by the inhabitants and messengers of the spiritual world as their shepherds. The righteous adhere to the teachings of the messengers and are already on their way back to the world of spirit. They offer no cause for special attention. Sinners, on the other hand, who have distanced themselves from the spiritual world and continue to do so, are like lost sheep exposed to all imaginable dangers. Wild animals – their own and others’ passions – can “tear them apart.” They can also die of hunger, for compared to the soul nourishment from the spiritual world, earthly nourishment for the soul is insufficient and inevitably poisoned by hate and intentions to manipulate.

But the spiritual world uninterruptedly follows the sinners as the shepherd follows the lost sheep. It is close to them and lovingly waits for them to turn to it again. It “seeks” them. Its messengers reach out to them with their teachings and spiritual impulses. They feel pain when the sinners keep turning away and are in danger of getting lost in earthly entanglements.

The joy is all the greater when such a person turns back to the spiritual world and “repents.” All “angels of God,” all inhabitants of heaven, then rejoice with the messengers of heaven.

They rejoice more than over 99 righteous people. There is joy over them too. But they have not caused any special effort on the part of the spiritual world; they have caused no pain precisely because they live in harmony with the spiritual world. That is why they do not evoke a special reaction of joy. This does not mean that they are less dear to the spiritual world than the sinners. The parable is merely stating the law that in reaction to special effort and special pain, special joy follows when the effort and pain cease.

The parable of the woman and the lost coin refers to the same subject. All people are of equal value to the spiritual world and its messengers, whether they are righteous people or sinners. But the sinners, the people who have separated themselves from the spiritual world and are in danger of being lost, draw its special attention and that of its messengers. As the woman in the parable

did, the messengers kindle a light: They bring a spiritual teaching into the world, cleanse people of the dust of earthly interests through purifying powers, and search for what was lost. The spirit always remains close to the true self that has become separated from it and become unconscious, and it waits for a positive reaction of longing and new attention. And when this takes place and what has been separated reopens to the spiritual powers and unites with them, it is found. The joy of its return is great. The greater the distance of the sinners from the spirit, the greater the tension of the bond between the spirit and the people going their own way, the greater the intensity with which what is separated is received when found again. This intensity is the spirit's "joy" at the find.

With these parables, Jesus explains to the Pharisees and scribes, who consider themselves righteous, his concern for sinners as they define them. In doing so, he has refuted their criticism and at the same time described a law that refers primarily to existential sin and justice, not so much to moral sin, for Jesus is the embodiment of existential justice not moral justice.

From this point of view, it is ironic that he seems to adopt the Pharisees' and scribes' self-evaluation as righteous. In reality, they are the existential sinners without knowing it. The messenger of the spirit also follows them as the shepherd follows the lost sheep in the parable because their entanglement in self-righteousness, their existential sin, pains him. But he could only bring them back if they would recognize themselves as sinners and repent. They, on the other hand, will persecute and kill him in their ignorance because he exposes their supposed justice.

Parable of the Lost Son

15:11 *And he said, "A certain man had two sons. ¹²And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that is coming to me.' So he divided his assets between them. ¹³And after not many days, the younger son gathered everything and went on a journey to a distant country, and there he squandered his wealth by living wastefully. ¹⁴And after he had spent everything, there was a severe famine throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵And he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to tend pigs. ¹⁶And he was longing*

to fill his stomach with the carob pods that the pigs were eating, and no one was giving anything to him.

¹⁷“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired workers have an abundance of food, and I am dying here from hunger!’ ¹⁸I will set out and go to my father and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight!’ ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son! Make me like one of your hired workers.’ ²⁰And he set out and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way away, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹And his son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight! I am no longer worthy to be called your son!’ ²²But his father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet!’ ²³And bring the fattened calf—kill it and let us eat and celebrate, ²⁴because this son of mine was dead, and is alive again! He was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

²⁵“Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶And he summoned one of the slaves and asked what these things meant. ²⁷And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has gotten him back healthy.’ ²⁸But he became angry and did not want to go in. So his father came out and began to implore him. ²⁹But he answered and said to his father, ‘Behold, so many years I have served you, and have never disobeyed your command! And you never gave me a young goat so that I could celebrate with my friends!’ ³⁰But when this son of yours returned—who has consumed your assets with prostitutes—you killed the fattened calf for him!’ ³¹But he said to him, ‘Child, you are always with me, and everything I have belongs to you. ³²But it was necessary to celebrate and to rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead, and is alive, and was lost, and is found!’ ” (LEB)

The parable of the lost son also underscores the law that the greater the pain over a sinner, the greater the joy when they return. It brings an additional aspect into play, namely the reaction of the “righteous” person to the treatment given to the returned sinner.

The parable is a picture of human development in general. It is based on the traditions of the Old Testament and esoteric

Judaism. According to these traditions, human beings arose from God in the image of God – an infinite number of sparks of the divine fire. These images of God, initially still unconsciously at rest in unity with the cosmic spirit, had the task of expressing their qualities in the form of their actions in the world of appearances and to look at them in the same way as artists express and look at the qualities in their work. This made it possible for the sparks to become aware of their qualities and their nature as images of God, yes, this awareness, this self-awareness, was and is the inherent purpose of humanity.

A part of this original humanity, symbolized by the elder son in the parable, followed and continues to follow this purpose without ever losing unity with the Father, the spiritual world. These people were and are immortal inhabitants of heaven and continually develop a consciousness of their true self, a self-awareness, in the measure that they express their attributes in the form of their actions. These inhabitants of the spiritual world also include the messengers of the spirit such as John the Baptist and Jesus who incarnate voluntarily to tell earthly people about the existence of this spiritual world. They are connected to the spirit in a special way “even before birth” (Luke 1:15, NRSV).

Another part of the original humanity, represented in the parable by the younger son, “fell” out of heaven. These people lost themselves in the actions, the works, that they had expressed and thereby lost the conscious connection with the spiritual world. Their true self became latent. Instead, an ego consciousness developed that corresponds to their attachment to the world of appearances. The world of these people, the earthly world of our humanity, is the “distant country” of which the parable speaks. The human beings now living in the earthly world have “squandered” all their spiritual faculties through their excessive turning to the earthly world. They suffer from hunger because the earthly forces and phenomena are not sufficient to still their longing for the lost world of the spirit. They must be content with the food of the “pigs,” animalistic passions, desires, and feelings, instead of being able to eat the bread of the spirit. Yes, they keep dying of hunger because their means of expression in the earthly world, their ego personality, is mortal as a result of their separation from the powers of the spiritual world. Therefore, in a chain of reincarnations, they have to develop a new ego personality over and over again.

On the basis of these experiences, however, existential sinners, like the lost son in the parable, can come to an understanding of their fatal situation, recognize the reason for it, and make the decision to end the separation from the Father, from the spirit, in order to return to unity. Such people decide to embark on a spiritual path in which I-consciousness is replaced by a consciousness of the true self: The image of God becomes conscious again, and through this, unity with the spiritual world arises. In this way, they still fulfill their inherent purpose through the detour of separation from God. What the elder son developed in uninterrupted communion with the spiritual world, an individual awareness of his true self, the younger son develops only after he has lived through the catastrophe of separation from God, a separate ego consciousness, and mortality in the physical world.

But as soon as people turn back to the Father, the spirit, and open up to him, the Father comes towards them, for the spiritual world always strives to reunite with what is like it, the true self. And in this embrace by the spirit that flows through them, the returning people recognize all the more clearly that they had separated themselves from the spirit and from the spiritual world, sinned against the “Father” and “heaven” and are fundamentally unworthy in their present earthly life state of uniting with the spirit. But in communion with the spirit, everything mortal is dissolved, and the children of the Father are restored with qualities that correspond to their true self and that make them worthy of the spiritual world. A new spirit personality, emerging from the structure of the spiritual world, which is also the structure of their true self, is bestowed upon them – a new robe that is no longer mortal. Their true self is now consciously connected to the spiritual world – this is symbolized by the ring on the hand – and lives from a new state – the shoes on the feet – the law of the spirit inscribed in them. In the very first encounter with the spiritual world after their separation, the streams of spiritual powers flow all the more strongly and in such greater abundance into the people who have returned as these powers had to wait so long, as if they had been dammed up, for the people to receive them. They receive spiritual food in abundance, indicated by the fatted calf. The true self had been “dead” – unconscious and inactive – and is now alive again – conscious and active. It had slipped out of the spirit’s sphere of influence – it was lost – but has

now reopened to it – it has been found again.

Such a return of the “lost son” always occurs when individuals open themselves to the spiritual world, dissolve their self-centeredness and entanglement in the earthly world, and thereby celebrate the conscious reunion of the individual spirit within with the cosmic spirit. It also occurs when all earthly humanity will complete this process of *re-ligio*, the reconnection with God.

But all these processes are also perceived by that part of humanity – the older brother – who, in constant harmony with the world of the spirit and without ever losing contact with it, carried out and continues to carry out its development towards its individual self-consciousness. Invisible to terrestrial humanity, these beings, by visualizing their qualities through action, slowly build an immortal spirit personality that is an accurate expression of the unfolding true self. But even they are not yet perfect although their development always remains embedded in the order of the spiritual world. They too have to learn; that is of what their development towards self-awareness consists.

In the story, the elder son gets angry when he hears about the younger son’s return and at first does not want to accept it: He does not want to go inside. He complains to his father that a great celebration is held for the returned son while he, the elder son, was never given such a celebration. He thinks that is unfair.

Should we assume that a being who, although still imperfect, is nevertheless in conscious connection with the spiritual world becomes angry and envious like a terrestrial human being? The narrative is a parable; anger and complaints about injustice in it must be regarded as parable. The older brother, the image of those original human beings who develop towards self-consciousness without ever losing harmony with the spiritual world, lives evenly in the enlivening streams of the powers of the spiritual world. When these beings are confronted with the possibility of deviation, even with rebellion against these currents, as embodied in the younger son, they will find this strange, not conforming to regular development, and will be correspondingly agitated. They will not want to accept this possibility of irregularity. This is the “anger” of the older brother. Likewise, it will not be clear to them that the elimination of such a deviation should result in an increased intensity of the spiritual currents. They see that as unfair. They ask the Father why they themselves have never experienced a similarly increased intensity, such a “celebration.”

But the “Father,” the spirit, explains to them, You have always shared equally in all the powers and properties of the spiritual world – “everything I have belongs to you” – while people who deviate from the originally intended development had to go through the greatest perils and starve without spiritual sustenance. And instead of being surprised at an increased intensity of the spiritual currents and complaining that they never came to you, you should participate in this increased intensity. You should rejoice at the return of the younger son.

The laws of the kingdom of God are indeed paradoxical. The elder son must learn that in the kingdom of God not only the regular is valid but also the irregular. Deviation and rebellion against the spiritual laws are not in the spirit of these laws, which underlie the development of the original human being, the image of God. Like the elder son, people should and could always develop towards self-consciousness and freedom in accordance with these laws. But when deviation and rebellion do occur, then the spiritual world has possibilities to integrate deviation and rebellion into the overall development and also to turn a catastrophe into a detour that leads to the goal. The prerequisite is that people recognize deviation and rebellion as such and set out on the way back.

It is not people’s guilt that matters but rather the return to the spirit. If they return to the spirit, then the guilt of the deviation is expunged. People then live again in harmony with the order of the spirit. And the “joy” of the spiritual world about the return, as a compensation for the “pain” about the loss, is actually greater than if the development had taken a steady course. This is what the elder son has to learn at a certain stage in his development.

Parable of the Shrewd Manager: Conscious Annulment of Debt

16:1 And he also said to the disciples, “A certain man was rich, who had a manager. And charges were brought to him that this person was squandering his possessions. ² And he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give the account of your management, because you can no longer manage.’ ³ And the manager said to himself, ‘What should I do, because my master is taking away the management from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. ⁴ I know what I should do, so that when I am removed from the management

they will welcome me into their homes!’ 5 And he summoned each one of his own master’s debtors and said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ 6 And he said, ‘A hundred measures of olive oil.’ So he said to him, ‘Take your promissory note and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ 7 Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ And he said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your promissory note and write eighty.’ 8 And the master praised the dishonest manager, because he had acted shrewdly. For the sons of this age are shrewder than the sons of light with regard to their own generation. 9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it runs out they will welcome you into the eternal dwellings.” (LEB)

The debt of people who have deviated from the order of the spirit and thus got into earthly entanglements is erased and no longer exists as soon as they return to the order of the spirit as spirit beings. People living in the earthly world can restore unity with the spiritual world by consciously resolving their entanglements of debt. This is the message of the parable of the debt-forgiving manager. This parable uses an actually impossible situation in the earthly world to point out regularities in the relationship of people to the spiritual world, to the kingdom of God. That this is such an indication is clear from Jesus’ remarks at the end of the parable, where he speaks of the “sons of light” in comparison with the “sons of this age” and of “eternal dwellings,” which are analogous to the “homes” of verse 4.

Who do the “rich man,” the manager, and the debtors in this parable represent? The manager appears in two relationships: to the rich man, his lord, and as the lord’s representative to the lord’s debtors.

Who is the manager? It is human beings, any human beings. From the “rich man,” from God, who is abundance, they have received gifts, rich possessions, to manage: spiritual abilities, soul powers and qualities, physical assets. It would be their task to use these gifts according to the order of the spiritual world and to promote fellow human beings. They should encourage people’s understanding of their inherent purpose and help them confront the obstacles that stand in the way of that purpose. Such management of the possessions lent to people by God would benefit both the manager and the “rich man,” for the possessions would continually increase by being used wisely, to the glory of the

giver of the gifts.

Instead, the manager squanders the property. People misuse their gifts to oppress and exploit others or for mere enjoyment. Maybe they leave them lie fallow, causing them to deteriorate. Ultimately, this squandering and abuse leads to death, for if people through their gifts were to develop the image of God that slumbers within them, a consciousness of the true self surviving the death of the physical body and a corresponding spirit personality would emerge. But since they use the gifts of God – and their whole life is a gift of God – for self-centered goals, they die without having developed an immortal spiritual foundation. Their ego-consciousness, bound to the phenomenal world, ceases with the body constructed from the phenomenal world, and their true self remains unconscious.

In this sense, God announces to people their “removal.” One day people realize with horror: I must die because I am not living in harmony with the divine order. My actions cry out to heaven and accuse me. My task as manager of the divine gifts is withdrawn from me. What will be after death? Can I still improve my lot after death?

The parable advises people how they should behave in life in order to make the situation after death, after their “removal,” favorable. As representatives of the Lord, they must deal “shrewdly” with the debtors of the Lord. What people do to another human being, an image of God, they do to God. Every human being, made in the image of God, could expect love, acceptance, and understanding from other people. But people owe to the image of God, and thus to God, love, recognition, and understanding. So they become debtors to God. All people are intermediaries between God and human beings since they personally experience the omissions of other people towards God – and since they can also forgive these debts if they want.

If they cancel the debts of their debtors, they release them and thereby become free themselves. If they renounce their expectations of others and no longer insist on their rights towards others, a new relationship develops between them. In the parable, on the earth plane, the debtors are grateful to the manager, and the manager can hope that they will take him in when he is dismissed. It is the same on the spiritual level, in the kingdom of God. When “sons of light,” made in the image of God, forgive the debts of others and renounce their expectations of the others’

understanding, love, and approval, the others become free and they themselves become free. A relationship of trust and gratitude develops between them, a relationship between true self and true self, which was not possible before because the true self was overshadowed by egoistic expectations and the resulting entanglement of debt. Such a relationship between true self and true self is eternal. The forgiver can be confident of being taken into the “eternal dwellings” of their previous debtors: of finding a place in their spirit-filled hearts that is eternal. Yes, this place, this new spiritual relationship between people is created at the very moment of debt relief. The release from the debt relationship immediately brings joy and freedom for both parties. It means entry into the “kingdom of God,” into the “eternal dwellings,” into an unearthly state. The new spiritual relationship will continue all the more after death, after the “removal.”

Even the statements in the parable that the deposed manager cannot “dig” and is ashamed to “beg” have a spiritual equivalent. Once people are “removed” and dead, they can no longer consciously work on their development. They cannot “dig” because they lack the tool for conscious soul work, a conscious personality. If no spiritual consciousness has been built up, the after-death phase is a purely reactive phase in which the experiences of life fade away as the experiences of the day fade away in dreams during the night. And all self-responsible people are ashamed to “beg” in the afterlife. Even without having built up a spiritual, imperishable consciousness, they could delay the dissolution of their ego-consciousness in the hereafter by continuing to maintain their relationships with those living here who worship them or want to “help” them. In this way, they could obtain psychological “food” from those living here in order to counteract the lawful process of dissolving their ego-consciousness in the hereafter. But its end, which is only being delayed, would come irrevocably. A conscious, immortal life after death is only possible for the true self and the spirit personality, that is, only if the person has already built up a spiritual relationship with their fellow human beings in earthly life, for example, through debt cancellation. After death, it relieves them of both a merely unconscious reaction to the experiences of earthly life and an irresponsible “begging existence,” both of which must come to an end anyway. Only the spiritual relationship, the acceptance into the “eternal dwellings” of the kingdom of God, is imperishable.

The parable is saying: You, human being, fail as God's manager and squander your spiritual possessions in the earthly world. That is why you have to die. What should you do with that certainty? Forgive your debtors, who are primarily God's debtors, of their debts. Cancel what you expect of them, rightly or wrongly. In doing so, you release them and become free yourself on a new spiritual basis where there are no entanglements of debt. So you will live in the kingdom of God, in the "eternal dwellings" before and especially after death.

And Jesus expressly emphasizes the usefulness of the parable: The children of this age are shrewd. You, children of the light, pupils on the spiritual path, do the same! As the children of this age forgive material debts in order to gain advantages, so you, children of the light, forgive immaterial debts in order to dwell with your kind in the "eternal dwellings," to live in the kingdom of God in a new unity with your kind.

A misunderstanding is possible here: that Jesus is asking the pupils on the spiritual path to behave just as calculated as earthly people and to say, If I forgive my fellow human beings their debts, I will enter the kingdom of God. That is why I forgive them their debts. Jesus is not asking for calculation but describes a lawfulness that the true self carries out. People on the spiritual path will dissolve their selfishness. The dissolution of the expectations of the debtor is nothing other than the dissolution of the self-centeredness that consists of these expectations among other things. If they dissolve their self-centeredness, they enter the "eternal dwellings" at the same moment. It was the same back in the parable of the lame and crippled: Learn to be free of expectations so that, free from selfishness, you may have treasure in heaven. The message here is, Learn to be free of expectations so that you can live freely from the true self, devoid of selfishness. Perhaps in this context even the numbers have their meaning: instead of 100 jugs of oil, 50, and instead of 100 containers of wheat, 80. It is a matter of soul processes, of abandoning soul expectations. 50 is a number of the soul, and when a *fifth* of the wheat debt (20 containers) is forgiven, this also alludes to "soul debt."

That the lord would praise the unjust manager for having acted shrewdly is an impossibility or at least an improbability on the earthly plane. No earthly lord would expressly commend his manager for such conduct, unless he secretly admires their

shrewdness. But precisely because of this improbability, the parable draws attention to the fact that other laws apply on the spiritual level. The heavenly Lord will certainly commend the managers of his gifts when they forgive the debts of their debtors in order thereby to enter the kingdom of God.

The “unrighteous wealth” not only refers to material means of exchange but is an image for earthly means of exchange in general including immaterial “means of exchange” such as claims to and expectations of the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others. “Make friends by means of unrighteous wealth” therefore simply means and sums up the message of the parable again: Forgive others the debts that they owe to you in the form of understanding, recognition, and love. In doing so, you create a place for yourself in their true selves, in their hearts. This is the description of a law, not an invitation to speculate on the consequences of shrewd behavior. When you forgive debts, material or immaterial, and forgive “unrighteous wealth,” you create freedom from earthly entanglements and allow the true self latitude for free relationships with its own kind already now and when all earthly relationships cease in death: when the “unrighteous wealth is gone.”

Relationship of Inner and Outer

16:10 *“The one who is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and the one who is dishonest in very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹ If then you have not been faithful with unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you your own? ¹³ No domestic slave is able to serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and will despise the other. You are not able to serve God and money.”* (LEB)

The parable of the debt-forgiving manager is followed by depictions of the laws of life that relate to the relationship or contrast between the earthly – keyword “unrighteous wealth” – and the divine.

The Earthly as Prerequisite for the Spiritual

Although the true self lives on the basis of other laws and powers than the earthly ego personality, on the spiritual path, this personality increasingly loses its self-centeredness and becomes a good instrument for the true self. It will always create and seek out the situations in which the true self finds expression. Conversely, the quality of the personality has an effect on the true self. It gains firmness when the personality actively expresses its powers and laws. Therefore, without a personality well guided by and faithfully serving the true self, the pupil could not walk and endure the path.

However, all qualities of the personality that it develops in dealing with earthly tasks – with “unrighteous wealth” – also benefit its service in spiritual tasks that it carries out as an instrument of the true self. This applies to individuals, to their fellow human beings, and to the communities to which they belong.

If they fulfill their duties towards themselves in earthly life without placing themselves unduly in the foreground, they will also fulfill their duties as pupils towards their true self and give it the opportunities to develop and work in outer life that it needs. If they are careful, persistent, independent, honest, and purposeful in earthly life out of love for their task, they will also deal carefully with spiritual concepts, symbols, and teachings in the service of the true self, show perseverance on the path once taken, take on tasks independently, have no illusions about potential spiritual “progress,” and not be constantly distracted.

If in earthly life, they fulfill their duties to others and put the needs of customers, clients, or dependents above their pursuit of profit and prestige, they will also fulfill their duties as pupils to other seekers after truth by nurturing them spiritually. If they are sincere, just, and considerate towards earthly people, they will also be sincere, just, and considerate towards fellow pupils and seekers of truth in spiritual matters.

If in earthly life, they perform their duties to a corporation or agency to which they belong, they will do the same with a spiritual community to which they belong. If they respect the interests of their earthly community and, because of this respect, take care of its resources, clearly articulate its objectives, and observe its house rules in a manner that serves the purpose of the community, they will also respect the interests of their spiritual community, maintain its facilities in an acceptable condition, articulate their

teachings clearly, and conform to their house rules. The earthly qualities of a personality are always of benefit to the true self, which is the bearer of this personality, and to the entire spiritual development of humanity, which it serves as a member of a spiritual community. That is why these earthly qualities, the “unrighteous wealth,” have their value. They do not have this value as an end in itself perhaps because they made the earthly personality into a particularly good person. Nor do they have value for the purpose of serving unjust earthly authorities and objectives as well as possible. They have value because they benefit humanity’s inherent spiritual purpose.

Jesus points this out three times by contrasting the earthly with the divine in three respects. The earthly is first of all very little compared to much, the divine. So whoever is faithful in very little, in the earthly, is also faithful in much, in the divine. And whoever is dishonest in the earthly will also be dishonest in the divine. Secondly, the earthly is a false possession compared to the true wealth, the divine. And thirdly, it is another’s possession compared to one’s own possession, for earthly life and all earthly possessions are transitory and therefore untrue compared to the immortal spiritual life and spiritual possessions, which “last” imperishably. And earthly conditions and goods are inappropriate, foreign, to the image of God, the true self. On the other hand, spiritual conditions and powers belong to it. As the world of the spirit, they are its home. Nevertheless, the “very little,” the “unrighteous wealth,” and the “what belongs to another” are suitable as an experiential school and field of probation in which the personality acquires characteristics that it then can also apply to the “much,” the “true riches,” and humanity’s “own.”

The earthly personality will not only be incapable of serving spiritual powers and goods if it has not learned to deal properly with earthly powers and goods. A true self endowed with such a personality will not even receive spiritual powers and goods. Who will entrust it with the true spiritual goods that belong to it, if it does not have an instrument that has developed the qualities of fidelity and diligence? Through unfaithfulness and superficiality of the personality, it is brought into a state of unrest and lack of firmness, which excludes the inflow of spiritual powers and gifts.

Apparently in contrast to this rule of life is the following law of life that people cannot serve two masters. Does not faithfulness in the earthly mean that people really serve the earthly? And when

they walk the spiritual path, can they, yes, do they not have to faithfully fulfill their duties on earth at the same time? It is very necessary that the statement about the impossibility of serving two masters comes right after the statement about faithfulness in the earthly as a prerequisite for faithfulness in the spiritual, for faithfulness in the earthly does not mean letting yourself be ruled by the earthly. It does not mean merging into the earthly and believing that by properly fulfilling earthly duties one fulfills one's spiritual purpose. Then the earthly would really be Lord. And this would exclude faithfulness in the spiritual, the service to God as Lord.

Either people serve money or they serve God. If they serve money, then they serve the laws of the earthly world and exclude the service to God, for the laws of the true self are different from those of the earthly world. If they serve God, then they can face money freely, master it, and make it subservient to God. The purpose of the earthly is to be an expression of the spiritual. If it absolutizes itself, it excludes the spiritual and corrupts itself. Faithfulness in the earthly therefore means seeing it as a prerequisite and a possibility of expression for the spiritual and dealing with it under this sign. Therefore, "You cannot serve God and money."

Hypocrisy

16:14 *Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. ¹⁵And he said to them, "You are the ones who justify themselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts! For what is considered exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."* (LEB)

The Pharisees are the embodiment of turning to the earthly. They are labeled as "lovers of money." But thereby, the love of the earthly is only characterized in its crudest form. Money is the instrument of self-centeredness; all earthly things can be procured with money, even the finest, immaterial pleasures. Those who serve the earthly, wealth, will ridicule those who follow their inherent purpose to unfold the image of God. They have to ridicule them since self-centered service to the earthly is at the same time rebellion against the divine.

But the Pharisees not only embody the devotion to the earthly.

They also embody hypocrisy. They follow their earthly devotion under the pretense of serving God and being righteous in accordance with the order of the spirit. They are also the embodiment of this tendency in every human being, even in the pupils on the spiritual path, who sometimes give the impression to others or themselves of serving God but in reality cling to earthly things and follow their path only for the satisfaction of their ambition or to look good to themselves and others. But God knows the truth in people's hearts. As true self, people themselves know their heart. They know that wealth is "exalted" by the earthly personality but that for God, wealth accumulated and used in selfishness is an "abomination." They also know that people may not see through the appearance of outward justice and law-abiding when in fact injustice reigns in the heart, but it is recognized by God and the true self – and recognized as an abomination.

Replacing inner development with outer appearances is one of the worst things that people can do. They serve wealth but seem to serve God. Through this outward appearance, they persuade and lie to themselves that they are on the path to their inherent purpose. This lie is all the more seductive as it enables them to avoid the difficulties of inner development. And while serving appearances, they receive the approval of others. This continuously supports the lie of their life. This dishonesty and cowardice are an abomination before God also because in this entanglement, the clarity and truth of the image of God is distorted beyond recognition. It takes courage and honesty to rend this abomination.

Law and Freedom

16:16 *"The law and the prophets were until John; from that time on the kingdom of God has been proclaimed, and everyone is urgently pressed into it. ¹⁷ But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the law to become invalid."* (LEB)

These words of Jesus also refer to the relationship between inside and outside. It is about the relationship between outer law and inner freedom in the development of the human being and of humanity, shown here in the development of the people of Israel.

There came a time in the eons of human evolution when a

portion of the human images of God created by God lost their conscious attachment to the spiritual world and attached themselves to a mortal body. It is that portion of original humanity represented by the younger son in the parable of the lost son. The true self thus became latent and could not develop to self-awareness. On the other hand, an ego-consciousness gradually developed in the human beings who became earthly with a mortal, earthly body.

Before the emergence of this ego-consciousness, at the beginning of their biological development on earth, the terrestrial human beings were embedded in the surrounding nature and bound to instincts as were the animals. They lived from the “id,” the drives, passions, and instincts, without responsibility and deliberate action, without conscious individuality and insight.

But the true self strove for self-awareness. It wanted to attain the freedom it had lost through separation from God and attachment to the transitory world. The first step in this direction was the development of an ego with ego-consciousness: an entity consciously operating at least in the transitory, earthly world and capable of taking responsibility. This presupposed that the human bondage to instincts was dissolved and replaced by free action. And with that came a significant risk because the dissolution of the bondage to instincts released the powers of the previously bound id – the drives and passions. The new ego to be built up, which was to think, feel, desire, and act independently, had to learn to curb these drives and passions, organize them, and bring them into balance with the demands of the environment. What the instincts had done before, the ego gradually had to do. It is true that this ego was just as permeated by self-centeredness and the drive for self-maintenance as the id. But it was a self-aware individuality. And as such, it was a step towards a conscious true self, for the freedom of the true self presupposes individuality and awareness.

How was this responsible ego built? Through the “law” transmitted to humanity by messengers from the spiritual world. The “law” that was active in the Old Testament phase of the people of Israel had the function of containing and organizing the rampant drives of the id and balancing them with the environment. The ten commandments that Moses received on Sinai are an expression of this function. The first three commandments refer to the necessity of the individualizing and becoming conscious of the human personality, of aligning and

centering its powers, of building up an ego that corresponded to the I Am, the cosmic principle of independence and consciousness. The other seven commandments aim to subdue the drives and passions, for example, the drives for aggression and sex (“You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery.” Exodus 20:13-14, NRSV), under the rule of the conscious ego. This ego developed a consciousness of “good” and “evil.” What conformed to the outer law was good; what did not conform was evil.

The law affected people from the outside and shaped their behavior in society and in nature. It gradually became the superego, an internalized set of rules dominating people from the outside.

But building up the ego through the outer law was not an end in itself. It was only meant to give the true self the possibility for conscious expression in due course. That is why the prophets of the Old Testament always pointed to one who was to come: to the true self, which would one day replace the ego and superego in their dominion over people. If people had become conscious individuals in the form of their ego, the conditions for the free, conscious development of the true self would be given. The formation of the responsible ego through the outer law was the necessary preparation for the actual inherent human purpose to consciously and individually express the true self. The law and the prophets were valid until John the Baptist. From then on, however, the gospel of the kingdom of God is proclaimed, the conscious unfolding of the true self, which originates from God, belongs to the kingdom of God, to the world of the spirit, and of which Jesus is the perfect embodiment.

When the true self can express itself individually and consciously, people will be truly free. Until then they lived under the outer law, and what is good and bad was given to them from outside so that they could learn to conform to it. There was a certain freedom of moral choice in that. But the true self is truly free. As the image of God, it contains the structure of the spiritual world. And this structure is nothing other than its inner law according to which it started. It is love instead of aggression, unity instead of libido, freedom instead of submission to outer rules. A being is free when it is able to unfold its inner structure, its inner law. The true self unfolds the structure laid out in it in accordance with the structure of the spiritual world from which it emerged and lives. It is unlimited and all-conscious as is the spiritual world. But

it expresses its individuality through the ability to think consciously and decide obtained from the ego. This is the freedom of the Gospel as opposed to the outer law of the Old Testament. The prerequisite for this is that the ego gives up its self-centeredness and makes the ability for individual awareness and responsibility available to the true self. The ego must become the instrument through which the true self can express itself. It has to merge into the true self.

However, this prerequisite is often not met by people. At every stage of their development in the earthly world, they have a tendency to regard that stage as the ultimate goal and to insist on it instead making room for the development to the next stage. In the same way, the human ego, which is subject to the law of its own preservation, tends to posit itself as absolute and as the end point of development. It is precisely this tendency of the ego's persistence, of egocentricity, with which the true self has to come to terms. The ego has the task of stepping back as such in order to make its achievements, individual awareness and responsibility, available to the true self. Instead, it prevents the true self from developing by its tendencies to inertia.

This is exactly how the Pharisees and scribes behave in their self-righteousness and selfishness. They prevent the living true self, embodied in Jesus, from developing. They remain at the level of the Old Testament, which was necessary as a preparatory level but which must give way to the new when the time of fulfillment has come. When the caterpillar has reached the pupation stage, it has to give way to the butterfly that has matured inside it. The butterfly, the true self, sighs for freedom. It tries by force to break the chains imposed on it by the ego that has set itself up as absolute. It breaks through the cover of hardened ego structures like a germinating plant breaks through the earth that covers it. The true self forcefully pushes to become aware of itself – through the achievements of the ego: conscious individuality and responsibility – and thereby to become aware of the spiritual world. It pushes its way into the kingdom of God with force.

With Jesus, this time of the true self becoming conscious has come in the development of humanity, and that is why he says that everyone tries to enter the kingdom of God by force. The true self violently bursts the autonomy of the ego but uses the possibilities of individual awareness and individual expression provided by the ego to become aware of itself and the spiritual world.

This violent breaking up of the old, which does not want to give way voluntarily and make itself available to the new, this violent urge of the true self to develop itself and to become conscious in the spiritual world, is a revolution in people. What has hitherto been dominant, the limited ego directed to the earthly world, is dethroned, and in its place steps the unlimited self directed to the spiritual world but utilizing the expressions made available by the retreating ego.

The point in time for this revolution, for this transition from the Old to the New Testament, is different for every person. For some it has already begun. But many still live in the time of preparation, in their Old Testament phase of an outer guidance by an outer law, regardless of which religion represents this law for them. But for everyone there comes a point in its eons of development when the true self breaks through the crust of the outer law whereby the ego more or less willingly steps back to serve as the instrument of the true self. This point will also come for all of humanity one day. Until then, until the time has come for the ego to be replaced by the waiting true self, the Old Testament law applies, and not “one stroke of a letter of the law” will be dropped. And it continues to apply unshakably in changed form, for the outer law – as far as it is not made by humans – is only the rough formulation of the inner law of the true self, the structure of the true self. This structure is eternal and lasts even if the earthly heaven, the hereafter, and the earthly earth, this world, should pass away.

The outer law will endure especially if people do not properly make the transition from the state of the dominion of the outer law to the operation of the inner law, for they easily confuse the urging of the true self with the urging of the passions of the “id,” which also rebels against the dominance of the ego and superego. Rigid self-centeredness has to be dissolved if the true self is to unfold. With this dissolution, however, the drives and passions that the ego had provisionally subdued up to now also come to the fore again. What matters is that the powers of the true self permeate these id-forces, purifying them, and, with the cooperation of the conscious, responsible ego, directing them in a new direction conducive to the unfolding of the true self. But if the people give them free play, sooner or later they will feel the outer law again. It will rein them in by means of the internal and external consequences that people cause by deviating from it: not one stroke of a letter in the law will be dropped.

Another form of the failed transition from the dominion of the outer law to the operation of the inner law is that the persistent ego tries to dominate the impulses of the true self instead of being the vessel for them. It projects them onto the earthly world and seeks to realize them there. Ideologies of all kinds are the result. People try to realize the kingdom of God, which can only be experienced and realized in the development of the true self, in the limited earthly world: by trying to make their earthly self a perfect being or by violently building societies that should correspond to the inner laws of the spiritual world. All of these attempts will fail due to the limitations of the earthly possibilities and will also provoke the outer law, which will take corrective measures to ensure that the earthly trees do not grow into the sky. Here, too, not one stroke of a letter in the law will be dropped.

Marriage

16:18 *“Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and the one who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.”* (LEB)

A concrete application of these statements about the activity of the outer and inner law is the statement by Jesus about marriage. At the time of the Old Testament – or in a state of development of humanity and society that corresponds to the Old Testament – strict external marriage norms applied and apply. Jesus points to these norms, for example, in the Gospel of Matthew (19:4, NRSV): “At the beginning” the Creator created humanity as male and female and joined them together. A marriage is therefore indivisible. When Moses, the legislator of the Old Testament, Jesus continues in this passage from Matthew, provided for the possibility of divorce, it was only “because you were so hard-hearted,” that is, with regard to the drives that irresistibly rebel against these norms (Matthew 19:8, NRSV). But Jesus himself expressly emphasizes the validity of these norms. “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and the one who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.” So, according to Jesus, divorce is not possible except in the case of “unchastity” (as is added in Matthew). Perhaps, as long as the outer law applies, individuals do not choose their spouses freely either, but rather they are chosen for them by external

authorities, priests, or parents.

Why this regulation of lifelong marriage and the extremely strict restrictions in the event of a violation?

The outer law serves to build up a uniform, independent ego in relation to drives and passions, an ego that can learn what is beneficial – “good” – and what is hindering – “bad” – for human development and acts accordingly. The commandment of a person’s loyalty to a single partner throughout life serves the purpose that they learn loyalty to an unbreakable goal: to the I-Am, to the construction of the ego. Turning to several partners, simultaneously or one after the other, corresponds in the Old Testament to turning to “idols,” embodiments of human passions and drives. But people should build up an independent point in themselves that organizes all qualities centrally, an ego that is master of the passions. They are therefore held to revere and are faithful to the I-Am, the central organizing principle in the physical world. Thus, devotion to a single partner corresponds to devotion to the I-Am. Therefore, the prophets frequently compare people’s – or “Israel’s” – fidelity to one God with a woman’s fidelity to her only husband (which conversely also applies to a man’s fidelity to a single woman). Through loyalty to a single partner, people build their own ego personality, learn loyalty to the I-Am, to this ego principle, and strengthen it. This earthly ego stands above all qualities and passions, tames and integrates them, yes, people only become aware of their ego through loyalty to it.

In the phase of ego development, the external law applies. The marriage law has the function of enabling the development of an ego. But the time is coming when individuals, society, and humanity must learn to move from the bondage under the outer law to the freedom out of the inner law. The ego was constructed solely for the purpose that the true self could avail itself of the ego attainments of conscious individuality and responsible action.

Thus, in the New Testament phase of development, people will gradually recognize that what hitherto confronted them as the outer law lies within them as a structure of being and wants to develop as their inner law. This gives a new dimension to Jesus’ statement, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and the one who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.” What was previously an outer norm is now a free way of life covered by experience and based on insight, for people will experience that lifelong

faithfulness of the earthly personality to a single partner gives the true self the best opportunities to become aware of itself and to become active in a responsible manner.

In the New Testament phase, lifelong relationships no longer serve to develop a responsible ego but to overcome self-centeredness, to overcome all expectations of the partner, all idealization of the partner, and thus finally to perceive the true self in the other, for those who, free from self-centeredness, leave their partner completely free will discover the true self in them – and thus also in themselves. Ideally, lifelong relationships lead to the freedom of the true self, to free behavior towards the partner and other people, and to free cooperation between true self and true self.

The prerequisite for the success of such a life practice based on insight and experience is that the people learn to recognize better and better what type their own ego personality is and what other ego personality suits them. Without this recognition, a harmonious unity between the partners could not come about.

In general, they will make many mistakes also in the area of partner selection and marriage in the process of learning and experiencing during the transition from bondage in the outer law to freedom in the inner law before the inner law shows itself to them and they can consciously live from it. For example, they will first see the external law as a yoke that has to be cast off in order to freely choose different partners, simultaneously or one after the other. The passions and impulses will perhaps regain dominion over them. But then it will be shown that in fact not one stroke of a letter in the law will be dropped. Such human behavior will have destructive effects for them and their partners; the integrity of their personality and that of their partners will be endangered.

From these experiences, they can gradually learn how to live from the inner law. Even if they do not let their passions run wild, in the new freedom, they will still have to seek what kind of partnership best suits their inner law. However, if they are able to recognize their personality and to recognize which personality suits them, they will find that a lifelong marriage is the best prerequisite for the development of their true self and that the inner law will take corrective action when they jeopardize an established relationship in the hope for greater earthly happiness or better development of their earthly personality. These learning processes will certainly continue in humanity for centuries before

sufficient experience and insight into the inner law have been gained.

Rich Man and Poor Lazarus: What You Sow, You Will Reap

16:19 *“Now a certain man was rich, and dressed in purple cloth and fine linen, feasting sumptuously every day. ²⁰And a certain poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, lay at his gate, ²¹and was longing to be filled with what fell from the table of the rich man. But even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²²Now it happened that the poor man died, and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s side. And the rich man also died and was buried. ²³And in Hades he lifted up his eyes as he was in torment and saw Abraham from a distance, and Lazarus at his side. ²⁴And he called out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he could dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am suffering pain in this flame.’ ²⁵But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you received your good things during your life, and Lazarus likewise bad things. But now he is comforted here, but you are suffering pain. ²⁶And in addition to all these things, a great chasm has been established between us and you, so that those who want to cross over from here to you are not able to do so, nor can they cross over from there to us.’ ²⁷So he said, ‘Then I ask you, father, that you send him to my father’s house, ²⁸for I have five brothers, so that he could warn them, in order that they also should not come to this place of torment!’ ²⁹But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they must listen to them.’ ³⁰And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent!’ ³¹But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone rises from the dead.’”* (LEB)

The section of Jesus’ discourse on the law concludes with a parable that depicts the lawful connection between people’s behavior in this world and their experiences in the hereafter or in the spiritual realm. The law is, “You reap whatever you sow” (Galatians 6:7, NRSV). Not a single stroke of a letter of this law will fall away. Every human action is a cause that has an exactly corresponding effect. This law can indeed be felt by people to be a

punishment, but it serves to make them aware of their current condition. They learn from this: If I deviate from the order of the spiritual world, there will be painful consequences. Through these corrections, they gradually recognize the law of the spiritual world, which is also the law laid down within them, and can submit to it freely.

The parable ties in with Jesus' earlier statement, "What is considered exalted by men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15, LEB). On earth, Lazarus is internally in accordance with the law of the spirit; externally, he is miserable. He is lowly to those who see the outside but righteous to God who knows the heart. On earth, the rich man, on the other hand, is hardhearted on the inside, therefore not in accordance with the divine order and an "abomination in the sight of God," but on the outside, he lives gloriously and in joy and is considered highly by people. After death, after the visible, external dimension of life falls away, the inner reality shows itself; its effects become apparent. In accordance with the eating habits of the time, Lazarus is directly at the side of Abraham during the meal in the spiritual world. He lives consciously in the kingdom of God since he had already lived in harmony with the kingdom of God in his earthly life. But the rich man is in the hellish realms of the afterlife that correspond to his inner reality. He suffers pain because his hardheartedness is in contradiction to the powers of the spiritual world and is attacked by them just as fire consumes what stands in its way. In reality, Lazarus is already at Abraham's side before death despite his external misery because he is penetrated and nourished by the powers of the spiritual world. He just does not notice it because of the overwhelming external circumstances. Likewise, even before death, the rich man is in the flames of agony even if he may be unaware of them, dazed as he is by the external circumstances, for his hardheartedness is attacked again and again by the impulses from his true self, and he experiences these calls to turn back, at least unconsciously, as torment because he does not follow them.

This law is and must be inexorable so that the connection between cause and effect is actually experienced by people. Abraham therefore rejects the rich man's request for relief from his pain and once again points out to him the reversal of values in life before and after death. Lazarus received evil on the outside but was good on the inside. Therefore, in the afterlife, he receives the good. The rich man, on the other hand, received good on the

outside and was evil on the inside. It follows that in the afterlife, he receives evil.

In addition, the parable shows that after death, after the material body has fallen away, all people reside in the area that corresponds to their inner constitution and that no transitions between them are possible. In earthly life, the inwardly evil can live side by side with the inwardly good. This is possible because they both belong to the dimension of matter due to their material body. Their bodies are of the same vibration. After earthly life, however, when this exterior falls away, everyone is in the vibrational range that corresponds to their inner state. There is no bridge from the vibrational realm of the kingdom of God to that of the realm of the dead with its heavenly and hellish realms. There is a “great chasm” between them.

And the parable deals with a third connection between life before and after death. Insight into the law of cause and effect, the decision to react to this insight, and the reaction itself are always possible for people living in this world, for they experience this law of life every hour and moment. They live uninterruptedly in the sphere of influence of this world, of the hereafter, and of the kingdom of God because this world, the hereafter, and the kingdom of God are not spatially separate spheres – they are just different states of vibration. But their consciousness is usually completely absorbed by this world. And in addition, this law is shown to them by all religions, by “Moses and the prophets.” These experiences and teachings should be enough to prompt them to orientate themselves towards the spiritual world, to “repent.” But the rich man doubts this and would like to persuade Abraham, the spiritual world, to have an even more intensive effect on people and their soul, for the rich man knows the human soul – his five brothers (five is the number of the soul). It tends to give little thought to the meaning of life and death, especially when it is living in abundance. But maybe a shock can shake it up? Would the return of a person from the realm of the dead, who talks about the conditions there, be such a shock? The parable says, If there is no willingness in people to turn to the realm of the spirit, all shock therapies are in vain. But if the willingness is there, then the existing opportunities to gain insight through life itself and through the teachings of the religious tradition are sufficient.

Attitudes of the Pupil on the Spiritual Path

The following words of Jesus are again addressed to pupils on the spiritual path and describe special insights and attitudes of these pupils.

Relationship of the Developed to the Less Developed

17:1 And he said to his disciples, "It is impossible for causes for stumbling not to come, but woe to him through whom they come! ²It would be better for him if a millstone is placed around his neck and he is thrown into the sea than that he causes one of these little ones to sin.

³"Be concerned about yourselves!" (LEB)

The first insight relates to the relationship between people who are spiritually, religiously, esoterically, or intellectually more developed and those who are less developed. These less developed people are the "little ones." It is the people who have received an intuitive flash of the inherent purpose of humanity, in whom a certain receptivity, a "faith," in the possibilities of life from the spirit has appeared, but who do not yet know how they should integrate and further develop these experiences. They are still small in faith and spiritual experience and, like children, need direction and guidance from others. Because of this, they are easily deceived.

The intellectually advanced and knowledgeable materialists will tell them, Your so-called notions of a perfect existence are only compensations. You compensate for your and the world's imperfections, which you cannot bear, with such fantasies. There is no spiritual dimension of perfection. Establish yourself in the imperfect earthly world. Or they say, Enjoy the pleasures of this world. Because a path such as you want to take would be inhumanly ascetic. Also, remember that if you take this path, you will lose the respect of the world around you, and you will be cast out. In this way, the seducers appeal to the doubts and fears of the "little ones." And this suppresses the quiet call from the true self.

There are also seducers rooted in dogmatic religious traditions who say to those who suspect a greater reality, Your hunches are

inspirations of satanic arrogance. You think you know better than an institution tested by centuries of experience what the inherent purpose of humanity is? If you do not follow the institution's guidelines, you are doomed for eternity. And the "little ones" repress the call from within due to fear and a lack of self-confidence.

Other seducers tie in with the longing of the "little ones" for the world of the spirit but use it for their own ends. Or they offer, intentionally or unknowingly, methods for the development of the true self that flatter one's ego and fall far short of what they promise. In this way, too, the urging impulse in the "little ones" to fulfill the inherent purpose of human beings is smothered.

And finally, there are "leaders" who cause the "little ones" to implement the impulses from the true self as a self-aggrandizing ego and thus really seduce them to satanic arrogance. They promise the "little ones" to make them magicians or masters rather than showing them the way of the ego abandoning its egocentricity and becoming the servant of the true self. They tempt the "little ones" with the temptations that Jesus endured in the wilderness.

The deceivers and temptations for the "little ones" are countless at the time of Jesus and even more so in the times after him. Such seductions *must* come, for although the true self strives to unfold everywhere in humanity, people everywhere still have too little consciousness and discernment to recognize for which goal the true self is actually striving and on which path alone this goal can be reached. Not only the "little ones" lack this discernment but also the leaders to a large extent. Only further experiences through the inevitable corrections of wrong goals and wrong paths will produce this discernment.

But any leaders lacking discernment will experience painful corrections to their behavior. This follows from the fact that the false leaders will fail in the trials of their own path. They will learn that the goal for which they are aiming does not correspond to the inherent purpose of the true self and that the methods they are using are producing very different results from those expected. And the corrections will be even more difficult if the leaders have dragged others, weaker ones, the "little ones," into their fall with them. They will remain connected to the deceived and sink with them into the doubts and states they themselves have sown and created. They will also have to share the pain of the "little ones"

that a promising opportunity has been cut off. This burden of bondage to the seduced lies around their necks like a millstone, and they sink with it into the sea of earthly doubts, deceptions, and pain. It would be better if they remained free in their soul but physically sank into the sea with a millstone around their neck. Because what does physical death mean if only the soul remains free and the true self can follow its inherent purpose? Jesus did not choose the image of the millstone by chance. The burden of being tied to the seduced actually binds those concerned around their necks like a millstone and pulls them down into the sea of earthly transience. In comparison, a physical millstone and physical drowning would be a better lot.

The connection to the seduced remains whether the seducers have acted in good faith and ignorantly or have succumbed to their greed and their drives for power and prestige even though they suspected or knew that their teachings and methods were wrong. In the latter case, because they have sinned against the Holy Spirit, they will have to endure additional pain. However, all of these experiences of the deceivers bring with them discernment as to what the actual inherent purpose of humanity is and how it must be realized. But through what suffering does this path of experience lead, suffering both of the deceived and of the deceivers! Would it not be better if “teachers” and “leaders” who are well-intentioned and believe in their ability to lead others would examine themselves more thoroughly before beginning their work? How much damage to themselves and to the “little ones” would be avoided! And would it not be prudent for “teachers” or “leaders” who subordinate their teachings and methods to greed or to the drive for recognition or power to look for other fields of activity in which the drives for possessions, power, and prestige can cause less damage? So be on your guard, Jesus admonishes his disciples, the predestined teachers and leaders of the “little ones.”

Relations of the Pupils among Each Other

17:3 ... *“If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times he returns to you saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”* (LEB)

The second insight that Jesus imparted to his disciples relates to their dealings with one another. You are a group of people, he says, unfolding your true selves together on a spiritual basis and working for others. You can help or hinder each other. When you stand on the common spiritual foundation, true self is connected to true self and spiritual currents flow between you.

Other pupils can sin. They can leave the unity with the spiritual world and thereby leave the common spiritual basis. In doing so, they interrupt the flow between themselves and the community. They place themselves existentially outside and live in existential sin. This existential separation can also be caused by moral failing.

But you can now make the separated pupils aware of how things are with them. This is the “rebuke”: making them aware of their existential separation. This can include making them aware of possible moral misconduct.

If the other pupils “repent,” it means that they are reversing their separation from the spiritual world and their spiritual community. They are restoring the connection from their side and enabling the flow of spiritual powers again. Since the connection has been restored, you can let the spiritual currents flow again and thereby accept them back into the community. This is how you “forgive” them. You eliminate the separation and restore unity. Forgiveness is nothing else. It is not a strenuous act of self-conquest. The stream is waiting in you. It wants to flow. As soon as the others reconnect, the current can flow from you to them; unity is restored.

It is essential, Jesus continues, that you who remain standing on the common spiritual basis always remain in a state of readiness and openness. The true self is always ready to let the spiritual currents flow that want to emanate from it. As soon as pupils who have broken contact with the flow through their separation from the common ground reconnect, this readiness of the true self is actualized, and the currents flow again: The pupils are taken in again; they are forgiven. This uninterrupted readiness of the true self is indicated by Jesus by the “seven times a day.” What would be the point of pupils self-destructing their openness to one another through reproaches? They would harm and poison themselves. No, this openness to the true self in another must be given continuously, “seven times a day,” no matter how often, “seven times a day,” the other pupil turns away from the common spiritual basis. And if this openness is there, the community will

always be restored immediately as soon as the other pupil “repents” and turns to it again.

Faith

17:5 And the apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” 6 So the Lord said, “If you have faith like a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.” (LEB)

The third attitude of a pupil on the spiritual path emphasized by Jesus here is openness to the world of spirit: “faith.” Jesus does not understand faith to be the belief in dogmas or the conviction of earthly people that they are redeemed and saved for eternity on the basis of this belief. Such a conviction can convey a sense of comfort and security. But since it is not based on one’s own experience and is inherited from others through tradition or education, it must always be defended against secret doubts. At this stage of the pupils’ development, faith is also less of a quality of the earthly human being, for example, a conscious devotion to the goal of the spiritual path. Faith in the sense meant by Jesus here is primarily a quality of the true self. It is the motor power of the true self, its urge to unfold, its longing to become aware of itself and its homeland, the spiritual world, and to work in it. This faith can be so strong that the true self uproots the hindrances of earthly self-centeredness and forces its way into the kingdom of God. The self-aggrandizing ego rooted in the earth is torn out like a mulberry tree and planted in the sea of the divine fullness. The true self, one with the divine fullness, absorbs this “mulberry tree.” The limited ego identity of the human being is released from the earthly world by the motor power of the true self, faith, and planted, renewed, in the true human identity as an instrument.

The mulberry tree and its displacement are images for soul-spiritual processes inside the human being. The pupils of the spirit are accustomed to thinking in pictures and readily understand Jesus’ parable as such even though Jesus does not expressly state that it is a parable. They do not understand the power of faith to be a magical power acting on external objects such as trees. Where has a person, pupil, or master of the spirit who would have accomplished such a magical feat ever been seen? Faith is a power of the true self and thus of the spiritual world in human beings,

which is not out for magic tricks but strives to realize their inherent purpose.

The spiritual power is stronger than any demonic power and any earthly power. Everything demonic and earthly is uprooted in the power of faith. Just as the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than the greatest in the earthly world, so the least power from the divine world is stronger than the greatest in the earthly world and can uproot it. That is why Jesus speaks of faith as small as a mustard seed, as “the smallest of all the seeds” (Matthew 13:32), for this seed of faith contains within itself the power of the spirit, and though little, it is yet superior to all other powers. It will work in the true self until the uprooting and displacement of the “mulberry tree” has become a fact.

Through this image, Jesus increases the faith of his disciples. He puts a law before their eyes and thereby stimulates this law in them. They have the mustard seed of faith in them and can trust that faith, no matter how small, as a spiritual power is stronger than all earthly obstacles.

Not Overestimating Oneself

17:7 “And which of you who has a slave plowing or shepherding sheep who comes in from the field will say to him, ‘Come here at once and recline at the table?’ ⁸Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something that I may eat, and dress yourself to serve me while I eat and drink, and after these things you will eat and drink.’ ⁹He will not be grateful to the slave because he did what was ordered, will he? ¹⁰Thus you also, when you have done all the things you were ordered to do, say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done what we were obligated to do.’” (LEB)

The power of pupils on the spiritual path is indeed very great. But they must be aware that it is the power of the spirit working in them not the power of their ego. That is why Jesus’ statement about the power of faith is immediately followed by a warning against overestimating oneself. Through the true self, the pupils are carried to the heights of the spirit but only if their ego remains in the depths of service to the true self. The consciousness of the earthly personality and all its faculties are there to serve as a good instrument for the order and powers of the spirit. The earthly personality will learn not to want anything for itself but to

recognize and carry out as a good servant what is transmitted to it from the spiritual world. It will not ask to sit at the table with the “lord” because the sphere of the “lord,” the true self, is not its place. Nor will it boast of its services because this striving for recognition would again darken the light of the spirit. Nor will it expect thanks for its work because such an expectation would also impede the flow of spiritual powers. It just sits there quietly, aware of every beckon from the “lord,” the true self, doing what is necessary for that true self and that of other people. It maintains this attitude and makes no claims: “I am an unworthy slave. I have done only what I was obligated to do.”

Here again, Luke couples an ability of the true self, something high, with a condition of the earthly ego, something low, and shows how the high is dependent on the low. The pupils whose real self is in the heights see to it that their ego remains in its place.

Gratitude

17:11 And it happened that while traveling toward Jerusalem, he was passing through the region between Samaria and Galilee. 12 And as he was entering into a certain village, ten men met him—lepers, who stood at a distance. 13 And they raised their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” 14 And when he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And it happened that as they were going, they were cleansed. 15 But one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. 16 And he fell on his face at his feet, giving thanks to him. And he was a Samaritan. 17 So Jesus answered and said, “Were not ten cleansed? And where are the nine? 18 Was no one found to turn back and give praise to God except this foreigner?” 19 And he said to him, “Get up and go your way. Your faith has saved you.” (LEB)

The pupils fulfill their duties unobtrusively on their path and expect no thanks. Is not the decisive factor on the spiritual path the power and order of the spirit, which help the true self to develop? And is not all the help that the ego personality can give for this development also made possible by the power and order of the spirit? But the pupils themselves will feel gratitude. The strength bestowed on them on their way is an undeserved gift to which they have no claim and over which they have no power.

Therefore, they will “give glory to God” for everything that happens to them. Not all people, not all pupils, indeed very few, have the capacity for such gratitude. Most are unaware of the grace they are receiving. Their delusion that they are already doing everything right blinds them. But the “Samaritan” is the stranger, those people and pupils who do not have this conceit of self-righteousness, the conviction that they have the right religion, that they have taken the right path, and the feeling that because of their good behavior, they are actually only receiving what is due to them. They are therefore able to recognize that they do not deserve the experiences on the spiritual path that are given to them. That is why they are grateful.

Every pupil on the path will be healed of leprosy. Leprosy causes exclusion from human society. Healing from leprosy means reincorporation into human society. Figuratively speaking, all people on earth are lepers – stricken with the leprosy of selfishness that excludes them from the spiritual community of all people. But through the operation of the spiritual order and powers personified by Jesus, they lose this self-centeredness and experience fellowship with all human beings on the basis of their oneness with the spiritual world. This deliverance from “leprosy” and the experience of the “kingdom of God,” a state of unity with the spirit and thereby with all people as images of the spirit, is truly reason enough to give thanks. And the realization that earthly forces can only contribute a little to this healing is truly a reason to give God the glory. But only one in ten is capable of this realization and behavior: the one who is not blinded by self-righteousness – the “Samaritan.”

How Does the Kingdom of God Come?

Towards the end of Jesus’ speeches on the “journey to Jerusalem,” the question of what the kingdom of God actually is and how and when it will come is addressed in several statements and pictures.

The Kingdom of God Cannot be Grasped through Images

17:20 Now when he was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them and said, “The

kingdom of God does not come with things that can be observed, ²¹ nor will they say, 'Behold, here it is!' or 'There!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."

Earthly human beings, here the questioning Pharisees, form ideas about the kingdom of God. Their thinking is a thinking in ideas, a linking of images and concepts caused by external sensory perceptions. They imagine that after death, they will experience the kingdom of God as a "theocratic state" in the beyond with Jesus as king, the saints as his counselors and representatives, and the blessed and redeemed as citizens in immortal bodies honoring and cheering Jesus and his Father with palm branches. Or they envision it as a "theocratic state" in this world: a theocracy with Jesus – or a representative – as earthly king establishing a kingdom of peace, liberty, and justice in which his apostles are his counselors and helpers and the believers are the citizens of this kingdom. Others, non-believers, plan realms of peace and justice on earth and seek to realize them as a unity of all members of a race or of all members of a class. But, Jesus expressly says, the kingdom of God will not come in this way. It is not a new social order in the sense of earthly ideas, not an external community of believers in this world or the next, "here" or "there." It has nothing to do with the ideas of earthly people; it "is not coming with things that can be observed."

It follows that you cannot "make" it. Earthly people cannot "make" it by commandments or by revolution, for the kingdom of God is a condition that surpasses and overrides all external ideas. It is the true self become conscious and active, a consciousness and a being inaccessible to all conceptions, which when experienced is experienced as a quality incomparable with qualities of this world or the beyond. Romans 14:17 describes it as living in the Holy Spirit. So the earlier translation of verse 21, "For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (KJV), which is closer to the original Greek text, was very apt. The kingdom of God is the true self that has become conscious and active, the image of God in the human being, filled with the Holy Spirit, something inward compared to the conceptions of thought dependent on outward sense perceptions. It is not mysticism as the highest flowering of earthly feelings, not scholasticism as the highest flowering of earthly thinking, not magic and humanitarianism as the highest flowering of human striving. It is not the morally perfect or integrated personality. It is something unearthly, neither of this

world nor of the beyond. It is people's conscious entry into the fullness of the spirit.

Thus, the kingdom of God is also a new community of people in whom the image of God is conscious and active in the Holy Spirit. Such people are united according to their true identity. They are one in one identity, identical with perfect true self of the human being, and yet, on that basis, distinct individuals with distinct spiritual functions. That is why the translation that is customary today, "The kingdom of God is among you," is apt. The kingdom of God is the spiritual power that connects all images of God; it is the structure of the spiritual world, which as the structure of every true self brings about unity between all images of God. This community is not based on a commonality of ideas, goals, and interests of this world and the beyond, not on a common dogmatic faith, common mystical emotion, and humanitarian activity. Therefore, such a community cannot be "made." It is not the result of earthly planning but an expression of the activity of the order and power of the Holy Spirit. But it can be represented externally in the form of symbols and signs. It can also produce a new social organization in the visible world. But it is not that social organization.

The translations, "The kingdom of God is among you" or "The kingdom of God is in your midst," are preferred in many of today's editions of the Bible because it allows the interpretation that the kingdom of God existed visibly in the person of Jesus in the midst of the people and continues to exist. But with this view, one would move back into the dimension of spatiotemporal ideas. The kingdom of God is neither "here" nor "there" and therefore not visible in our "midst."

But if one takes Jesus as the perfect true self of the human being according to which the true self of all human beings is formed, then the "among" or "midst" regains the pictorial sense that the structure of the spiritual world, perfectly present in Jesus, is the spiritual center for the true self of all of Jesus' disciples and of all people. Then the "midst" is no longer a temporal-spatial concept but describes the spiritual fact that all images of God lie concentrically within each other and manifest the kingdom of God.

Verse 20, "The kingdom of God does not come with things that can be observed," also makes clear that the inner experience is crucial. The kingdom of God is an inner state not an outer state – although it can express itself in the outer – where the inner is not

the mortal earthly soul in this world or the beyond but the true self, the immortal soul that is one with the invisible Father, the spiritual world.

“Short Discourse on the End Times”: Events Connected to the Coming of the Kingdom of God

17:22 And he said to the disciples, “Days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. ²³ And they will say to you, ‘Behold, there!’ ‘Behold, here!’ Do not go out or run after them! ²⁴ For just as the lightning shines forth, flashing from one place under heaven to another place under heaven, so the Son of Man will be in his day. ²⁵ But first it is necessary for him to suffer many things, and to be rejected by this generation. ²⁶ And just as it was in the days of Noah, so also it will be in the days of the Son of Man—²⁷ they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸ Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building. ²⁹ But on the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and sulphur from heaven and destroyed them all. ³⁰ It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹ On that day, whoever is on the housetop and his goods are in the house must not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. ³² Remember Lot’s wife! ³³ Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses it will keep it. ³⁴ I tell you that in that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. ³⁵ There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left.”

³⁷ And they answered and said to him, “Where, Lord?” So he said to them, “Where the dead body is, there also the vultures will be gathered.” (LEB)

The section about the “journey to Jerusalem,” found only in the Gospel of Luke, is nearing its end. At this place, it contains a short “discourse on the end times,” which corresponds in its function – and also partly in its contents – to the great discourse on the end times in chapter 21. It describes in anticipation the seventh phase

of Jesus' spiritual path, his activity after the resurrection and "ascension." Verse 25 alludes to the crucifixion and resurrection, the fifth phase of his path. In this seventh phase of his path, the perfect true self of the human being embodied by Jesus works from the world of the spirit into the earthly world without being clothed in an earthly body. What does this mean?

In the seventh phase of the spiritual path, Jesus' true self has become free of the imprisonment in the entanglements of egocentricity and the drive for self-importance. He lives consciously and independently out of the structure encribed in him, which is at the same time the structure of the world of the spirit. He has resurrected, consciously entered into the kingdom of God, and acts by means of a spirit personality and a spirit body in this kingdom of God. He no longer works tied to a visible body as was the case during Jesus' life. He now works in all of humanity, in the organism of this humanity. He represents the information of the true self in the organism of humanity and as such influences the being and consciousness of all people – whether they are aware of it or not. He strengthens the true self of everyone and disquiets the egocentric personality of everyone. He is like a tension in humanity, a tension between "below" and "above." "Above" is the perfect true self of the human being embodied by Jesus who has entered the dimension of the spirit. "Below" are the egocentric human personalities and the individual true selves locked in them. "Below," individual true selves long for consciousness and freedom and answer to the urgent influences of the true self of humanity while the egocentric personalities of some individuals are closed to these influences. The perfect true self powerfully urges from "above" for unification with the true self of individuals and tries to break up the resistance of the egocentric personality.

If a conscious connection between the perfect true self of the human being and the true self of individuals or of many or all people is brought about, then this is "the day that the Son of Man is revealed." Then the tension between "above" and "below" makes way for the unification of both poles: The perfect true self of the human being, the structure of the spirit human, the image of God, connects with the structure of the true self of individuals, and thereby they become conscious of it. The "Son of Man" is revealed to them. This day of revelation can occur in individuals, in whole groups, or in humanity.

As long as tension between “above” and “below” persists, however, special circumstances prevail on earth depending on the reactions of living people. The short “discourse on the end times” describes these circumstances.

They refer on the one hand to Jesus’ disciples, on the other, to all people. After Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, his disciples are in a difficult situation. They had gone the spiritual path up to the fourth phase under the direction and with the help of the master. As will still be shown, however, they could not pass the tests of the fifth phase: the final overcoming of egocentricity and the drive for self-maintenance as prerequisites for the conscious entry into the realm of the spirit. Their true self has unfolded to a certain degree, but the master has left them as far as working in a visible body. They are now alone and helpless and no longer know how things are to go on.

They long for the powers of the perfect true human self embodied in Jesus, which had led and strengthened them up to now. They long to see even just *one* of the days of the Son of Man, to experience even just one aspect of the perfect true self of the human being in their consciousness – as they had taken part in this experience so amply up to now. The spiritual world seems to leave them alone, however. It is hindered in its effectiveness by the forces of the ego-consciousness. But still the true self of the pupils urges for the connection with the spiritual world. It wants to enter the kingdom of God by force, with the force of unbearable longing.

Exactly in this longing for spiritual experience and fulfillment, exactly in this critical fifth phase of pupilship, the danger is especially great that the pupils are looking for substitute solutions and succumbing to them. They will be offered countless feigned values and told, “Behold, there; behold, here!” Look “there” – the fulfillment will come in the beyond: Develop your ego-consciousness so far that you can receive the “divine energies” of the beyond. Become as earthly human beings so good that you will enter into the “kingdom of God,” into the beyond, after death. Or look “here” – the fulfillment will come in this world: The kingdom of God will visibly manifest through political, economic, and social structures. Then do not go there; do not follow, Jesus says to his disciples as long he is still active in a visible body. Be aware: The kingdom of God, the true self, the Son of Man, comes to you as light, as cognition, as new consciousness into your own being and in such a way that it fills your whole being as “the lightning flashes

and lights up the sky from one side to the other.”

When the Son of Man, the image of God, breaks through the darkness of the ego-consciousness on “his day” – in a critical phase of pupilship – he will be conscious of the infinite and omnipresent spiritual world, a realization bright as lightening that encompasses the infinite horizon of the whole spiritual world or “heaven.” This realization is the true spiritual essence of the human being that becomes conscious of itself and the spiritual world in which it lives. It is the innermost and ownmost of human beings, their true identity. It does not need to look outside to find itself, neither into the beyond nor into this world. All projections of the kingdom of God into the beyond and into this world are only imaginations of the old ego-consciousness and foreign to the true self. They hinder the human being’s experience of the true self.

At the same time, however, a “judgment” is triggered by the activities of the spiritual world. It manifests collectively or individually and is not limited to a specific time. It can manifest again and again. In the Gospel of Luke it is described under a collective sign, initially using two situations of human development described in the Old Testament. The collective ego-consciousness of people in Noah’s days was fully occupied with earthly pleasures and earthly habits. Only Noah was oriented towards the true self and broke away from earthly habits. He built an “ark,” a consciousness detached from the earthly world and related to the spiritual world. Then, the “flood” came over humanity surprising everyone. People’s collective possessive and sentimental expressions of thoughts, feelings, and drives accumulated over the centuries had concentrated in the “heaven” of the beyond, in the collective unconscious. When the activity of the spiritual powers reaches a certain level, they expel everything in the beyond just as Jesus had already seen Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning (Luke 10:18). The concentrated expressions of thoughts, feelings, and drives rain down from heaven like floods of water and destroy all independence and reason of the ego personality. In the whirlpools of collective insanity and impulsiveness, people lose their ego identity. They drown in them.

On the other hand, Noah’s ark, the consciousness detached from the earthly world and related to the spiritual world, floated on the waves of these floods and could not be destroyed by them. His new consciousness, his spiritual identity, was unassailable. The

manifestation of the spiritual world always means judgment and downfall for the ego-consciousness, whether viewed collectively or individually. Judgment, triggered by the increased activity of the spiritual world, is the result of people's self-centeredness, the long-term effects of which wash over them like floodwaters. But for the true self, the same manifestation of the spiritual world means affirmation. Therefore, the people who, like Noah, build an "ark" in good time are wise.

So it was in the days of Lot. The inhabitants of Sodom, the collective ego-consciousness, devoted themselves to their earthly interests and business with great devotion and zeal. But Lot, inspired by the true self, left Sodom. He alone was spared the judgment. The inhabitants of Sodom were destroyed by the fire from heaven. The angry, vengeful passions and aggressive expressions of will that people have developed over many centuries do not die the instant they appear. They live on and concentrate like clouds in the heavens beyond, in the collective unconscious. In due course, they are expelled from it by the powers of the spiritual world and act like a consuming fire that destroys the ego identity of many people and leaves them with nothing.

It will be like this again and again when the Son of Man comes, whether in an individual, in a community, or in the whole of humanity. Again and again, the time comes in humanity when the longing of many people for the spiritual world is so great, when their true self has matured so much, and when the dissolving of their ties to the earthly world has progressed so far that the spiritual world, the "Son of Man" as the perfect true self of the human being, responds to this longing. Then, like lightning lighting up the sky from one side to the other, the Son of Man reveals himself in the consciousness of people. Then it will become clear which people expect their salvation solely from the earthly world and which have focused on the spiritual world. A "judgment" will take place for the former: All earthly goals will prove to be trivial. Emptiness and disappointment remain; the arrogance of the ego is destroyed by the psychological consequences of this very arrogance. But those who have opened themselves to the spiritual world and rejected all temptations to substitute kingdoms of God can react positively to the Son of Man. As true self, they can become one with the manifesting perfect true self of the human being.

But then such people really turn to the spiritual world with all their strength and calmly leave behind all the achievements and habits of the earthly world. They are already on their way to the spiritual world, already “on the housetop” (An exit from the houses of the Orient went over the roof; the picture says: They are already about to leave their earthly being, their “house.”), and should no longer concern themselves with their “belongings,” earthly needs and achievements. And those who are already on the “field” and have left the house of earthly consciousness should by no means return to earthly consciousness. If they still cling to earthly ideas and habits, they will freeze into a “pillar of salt” as Lot’s wife did when she turned back to Sodom. The earthly personality of Lot still attached to earthly matter, symbolized by his “wife,” consciously experienced the violent destruction of all ego values. As if in shock, she was unable to gain a foothold in either the earthly or the spiritual world. She could no longer live the earthly life and not yet the spiritual life – and so she had to remain motionless, rigid as a pillar of salt in the desert.

Those called by the spiritual world who try to maintain their egocentric life will lose it. In the revaluation of all values, the basis of life will be taken away from them. But those who consciously lose their egocentric life in the spiritual currents will gain the spiritual life of the true self, the true identity. In the true identity of God’s image, the semblance of the old self-aggrandizing ego dissolves. In this way, human beings gain their true identity – and in addition a new spiritual ego personality that gives expression to this identity.

People will react very differently to the manifestation of the spiritual world. All egocentric earthly commonalities will lose their power and validity. It may be a relationship in the stillness of the night, perhaps a love affair between partners or spouses: One has developed their individual true self and is accepted by the Son of Man. The other, always directed towards earthly life, did not develop it and is left behind in the great development of humanity. The latter does not come along not having built anything with which to react to the spiritual stream of development. Or it is about a relationship in the movement of the day, a partnership linked by business interests, for example: One immortal soul is included in the spiritual development of humanity because it fulfills the appropriate requirements; the other immortal soul has to stay behind because it has remained latent.

Finally, the disciples ask, Where will these things occur? Here too, the answer is that the encounter between the Son of Man and the true self of the individual or the judgment of the self-aggrandizing human ego does not take place in visible places. They do not occur “there” or “here.” All that matters is the connection between willingness and longing on the one hand and the impulse of the spiritual world on the other. This is not a spatiotemporal fact. Where there is a true self ready for the experience of the spiritual world, there the Son of Man will meet it. Where there is receptivity to the spiritual world, there will also be fulfillment in the form of insight lighting up the consciousness like “lightning flashing and lighting up the sky from one side to the other.” This connection is captured in the image of the corpse and the vultures. Where there is something that attracts the spiritual world, a longing, living true self, there the powers of the spiritual world also appear – the vultures – which are always looking for something to take to themselves. God seeks the image of God that longs for God.

When will these end times occur? We have been in the end times since the perfect true human self in the organism of humanity has acted as a power from “above” on the true self and the ego-consciousness of individuals “below.” We have been in the end times since the true self of individuals has yearned for conscious union with the Son of Man but the ego-consciousness has resisted it. The “day of the Son of Man” can come in each individual’s life after the “judgment” of the opposing tendencies. They can also come after the “judgment” for whole groups of people or, in due course, for all of humanity. When that happens for an individual or for a collective depends on the experience of the people concerned, their preparation, and their longing. It is not tied to dates. It has turned out that the circumstances described in Luke have been relevant throughout the centuries and are also relevant in the present.

The Persistent Widow: Longing for the Kingdom of God

18:1 And he told them a parable to show that they must always pray and not be discouraged, ² saying, “There was a certain judge in a certain town who did not fear God and did not respect people. ³ And there was a widow in that town, and she kept coming to him, saying, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary!’

4And he was not willing for a time, but after these things he said to himself, 'Even if I do not fear God or respect people, 5yet because this widow is causing trouble for me, I will grant her justice, so that she does not wear me down in the end by her coming back!'” *6And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unrighteous judge is saying! 7And will not God surely see to it that justice is done to his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night, and will he delay toward them? 8I tell you that he will see to it that justice is done for them soon! Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, then will he find faith on earth?"* (LEB)

God finds God's image only when it longs for God. The longing and openness of the true self, be it of the individual or of humanity, is the prerequisite for the spiritual powers, the "vultures" from heaven, to be able to connect and unite with it. That is why Jesus emphasizes so emphatically to his disciples that their longing should never flag, for this is what "pray and do not lose heart" means. "Prayer" is the alignment and attunement of the true self to the divine world so that its powers can fill the human being. Yes, this longing is said to be so strong that it breaks through the crust of self-centeredness "by force" and penetrates into the kingdom of God (Luke 16:16). If the longing is strong and persistent enough, God will respond. This is the message of the parable of the persistent widow and the unjust judge. The stronger and more lasting the longing, the more certain the fulfillment.

This law applies not only in the spiritual world but also in the earthly world. In earthly life, the longing for earthly justice, which stems from the earthly ego, often meets with disinterest. And yet it can overcome this disinterest if it is strong enough. The longing for divine justice, which originates from the true self, leads all the more surely to the goal since God, the spiritual world, has the highest interest in the fulfillment of this spiritual longing. God will "grant justice" to God's "chosen ones," the people in whom the image of God is striving to develop, if they call out day and night. God will take them into the spiritual order, which corresponds to the true self. And God will free them from their opponents: God will give them strength to overcome self-centeredness and the consequent bondage to the earthly world – to break through the crust that prevents the true self from entering the spiritual world.

But the great problem is whether the Son of Man will ever find such a longing among people that will enable him to connect with them. This is the great "concern" of the messengers from the

spiritual world. The spiritual world searches for the spiritual longing of people in order to be able to connect with their true self, to draw it to the spiritual world, and to be able to free it from its opponents. But what if people have no spiritual longing? Then it is not possible to connect with them. Then they remain trapped in their entanglements in the earthly world, in suffering, wars, pain, and death. That is why the Son of Man yearns to find longing souls, why he is so “sorrowful” when “Jerusalem” is “not willing” (Luke 13:34, LEB). And that is why it is so important that persons in whom this spiritual longing flares up are careful to feed this flame and “not lose heart” – for their own sake and for the sake of humanity because if the connection of the spiritual world can be established with even a single soul, it will benefit all of humanity.

Conditions for Entry into the Kingdom

A person’s longing to enter the kingdom of God is a prerequisite for the spirit to connect with the true self: for the “vultures” to find their “prey.” However, the entry itself is only possible when in this longing and with the help of the powers of the spirit, the person has removed the obstacles of self-centeredness and the characteristics of the true self have become life-determining. Three of these qualities are presented below: freedom from self-righteousness, freedom from conditioning, and freedom from attachments to earthly things.

In all three cases, it is shown that egocentricity always also seeks moral perfection. While the desire for moral perfection can be an expression of the aspiration for the spiritual world, it relates to the physical world: The earthly ego is to be perfected. Connection to the divine world requires more than striving for moral perfection. It is only possible when people leave the dimension of the earthly world and plunge into the dimension of the divine world where the true self, the image of God, can unite with God.

Freedom from Self-Righteousness

18:9 *And he also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and looked down on everyone else: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed these things with reference to himself: ‘God, I give thanks*

to you that I am not like other people—swindlers, unrighteous people, adulterers, or even like this tax collector! ¹²I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all that I get.’ ¹³But the tax collector, standing far away, did not want even to raise his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than that one! For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” (LEB)

The Pharisee in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector actually leads a morally and ethically impeccable life. He keeps the ten commandments – does not commit adultery, does not steal, does not murder, does not practice injustice, and knows no other gods besides the God of Israel, for he does not serve the pagan occupying power as does the tax collector. He is also active in strengthening his faith and expanding his church, for he “fasts twice a week” thereby reining in his earthly needs and pays his church tax – not just 8% of his tax revenue but 10% of his total income. It seems he would be predestined for entry into the kingdom of God as compared to the tax collector who violates one of the chief commandments of the law, to serve only the God of Israel and no foreign lord.

What still prevents the Pharisee from entering the kingdom of God is his self-righteousness. It grows out of his high ethical standards. He is proud of his moral achievements. His drive for recognition is expressed in them. Therefore, as the story puts it, he prayed “with reference to himself.” His pride sets him apart from others. The flip side of pride, however, is contempt for those who do not achieve all this. Indeed, pride and contempt even characterize the Pharisee’s relationship to and conception of God. He thanks God for his morally impeccable life and thus makes him an accomplice to his pride, the servant of his ego, which makes his pride possible. Through this self-righteousness, he cuts himself off from God, from unity with the divine world, despite all his moral achievements. Realizing that one has succumbed to this pride and that despite all of one’s moral achievements as an earthly human being, one is separated from God and therefore existentially a “sinner” would be a prerequisite for connecting with God.

The tax collector, on the other hand, really is a moral sinner. He also knows that. This knowledge protects him from the pride and contempt of others and makes him aware of his fundamental separation from God, his existential sin. Only through the

experience of separation can the longing for union become effective and has the spiritual world the opportunity to connect with the true self. The awareness of being separated from God is a prerequisite for the longing, which the tax collector expresses in the form of a request for mercy.

The Pharisee lacks this longing because he is convinced that he is not separated from God at all. His self-righteousness is the barrier that prevents such a longing from flaring up in the first place and therefore also prevents any connection with the kingdom of God, let alone entry into the kingdom of God.

This story is a parable because every human being is like the Pharisee but can also be like the tax collector. All people are “Pharisees” self-righteously insisting on their moral achievements and their right “faith.” Nevertheless, as earthly human beings, they are existentially sinners separated from God even if they are the most just people according to moral standards. On the other hand, people can become “tax collectors” by becoming aware of their fundamental separation from God. With this, they stand in their “humbleness” before God, and through this, the longing of the true self to enter the kingdom of God will awaken in them. As Pharisees, people are even inclined to take the saying, that those who humble themselves will be exalted as a call to humility, as a call to moral achievement of which they can be proud. But “humbling oneself” does not mean practicing humility but recognizing that earthly people in their self-centeredness and self-righteousness are unsuitable to enter the kingdom of God. When this realization takes effect, the spiritual human being can enter the kingdom of God: “be exalted.” However, if earthly people filled with the drive to gain recognition “exalt” themselves because of their moral achievements, the spiritual human being remains latent and “humbled.”

Freedom from Conditioning

18:15 *Now they were bringing even their babies to him so that he could touch them. But when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. ¹⁶But Jesus called them to himself, saying, “Allow the children to come to me, and do not forbid them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. ¹⁷Truly I say to you, whoever does not welcome the kingdom of God like a young child will never enter into it.” (LEB)*

Freedom from conditioning is a second quality that a person needs in order to enter the kingdom of God. The comparison with a child raises awareness of this quality.

Here, too, this quality becomes clear in contrast with moral performance, for why do Jesus' disciples scold those who bring their children to him? They scold them because they believe Jesus is a teacher of the law and that his task is to deal with responsible, law-abiding adults striving to be faithful to the law and who can consciously strive for justice. Children are not yet capable of this adult responsibility and therefore, according to Jesus' disciples, they are not serious associates for Jesus.

But Jesus loves children precisely because they are not yet law-conditioned adults. They are parables for a quality of the true self that longs for its home in the realm of spirit beyond all laws and law abidance. A child looks at the world impartially because it has not yet formed any standards that would distort spontaneous evaluation and perception. It perceives the world as it is. It is like an eye without its own color that sees the world of colors unfiltered and like a tongue without its own taste that perceives taste impressions unadulterated. Unconditioned people are comparable to children. They have no concepts about God and the kingdom of God. They are not bound by reference persons and traditions to a belief as to what God, the kingdom of God, and the way thereto might look like. The true self has to liberate itself from this conditioning if it wants to perceive the world and people without prejudice and open itself to the kingdom of God in an unbiased way.

Also, the child does not yet have intentions shaped by acquired values or its own experiences. It is not yet manipulating the world in terms of certain expectations. It does not want the world to be free from suffering and disappointments according to its own needs. It will soon find out that the world does not meet its needs at all and then take countermeasures as all adults do. But before that, it will unintentionally let the world come close to it. In the same way, the true self will not manipulate and will not carve out a kingdom of God according to its own ideas. The self-centered drive for power in people tries to do this all the time, but the true self will free itself from this drive for power, for it prevents the kingdom of God from revealing itself.

Freedom from the Drive for Possessions

18:18 *And a certain ruler asked him, saying, “Good Teacher, by doing what will I inherit eternal life?”* ¹⁹*And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. ²⁰You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’”* ²¹*And he said, “All these I have observed from my youth.”* ²²*And when he heard this, Jesus said to him, “You still lack one thing: Sell all that you have, and distribute the proceeds to the poor—and you will have treasure in heaven—and come, follow me.”* ²³*But when he heard these things he became very sad, because he was extremely wealthy.*

²⁴*And Jesus took notice of him and said, “How difficult it is for those who possess wealth to enter into the kingdom of God! ²⁵For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter into the kingdom of God. ²⁶So those who heard this said, “And who can be saved?” ²⁷But he said, “What is impossible with men is possible with God.”* (LEB)

Freedom from the drive for possessions is the third condition for someone’s entry into the kingdom of God. The corresponding narrative begins with a discussion of who is “good.” Again it shows that no earthly human being is “good” in their self-centeredness: Only God is “good” and, one can add, the image of God, the true self. Even Jesus in his capacity as a teacher of the law is an earthly man and therefore not “good.” A “certain ruler,” a particularly good person according to earthly concepts, sees Jesus as a teacher of the law. In this dimension of earthly laws, there is no truly good person, Jesus explains to the ruler, for all earthly people, including the ruler who kept the law “since his youth” and even Jesus as “teacher” of the law, are separated from God. Their ego is permeated by the drives for prestige, power, and possessions, and moral perfection is also permeated and motivated by these drives. How could such a “perfect” human being be truly good?

Jesus explains to the questioner, It is important to leave this level of earthly drives together with the moral perfectionism they motivate and to enter another dimension, that of the kingdom of God, for God is there, and God is good. The image of God is also there, and it is good. How does one enter this spiritual dimension? “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” While the ruler keeps all the commandments, he is not free from the drive for possessions.

Freedom from the drive for possessions is a crucial condition for entry into the kingdom of God.

In Jesus' answer, the ruler is asked to sell all his possessions and give to the poor. This is an image of freeing oneself from the drive for possessions. Freeing oneself consists in becoming free inwardly of all attachments to one's possessions. One can sell one's possessions and give the proceeds to the poor and still cling to one's possessions with a bleeding heart. One can imagine that inwardly one has renounced all possessions, only to have to realize when one actually loses one's possessions that one is still bound to them with a thousand cords. Whatever the case, what matters is that the people seeking the kingdom of God be freed from clinging to possessions. This also enables them to use their wealth properly – in such a way that the kingdom of God, the longing for the kingdom of God, is promoted in others. That would be love for others; that would mean not keeping all one's riches, whether material or immaterial, for oneself but using them in love for others – distributing them to the "poor." Such behavior changes people, frees them from self-centeredness, and allows love to grow within them: giving instead of taking. This is the "treasure in heaven" they acquire through such behavior: a love-filled being corresponding to the love of the spiritual world and embedded in it.

Such behavior also means following Jesus. Again, this is not necessarily to be understood as a concrete journey with Jesus as experienced by his disciples but rather a focus on the true self embodied in Jesus: a focus on the true self rather than on the riches of the earthly world. This focus on the true self means letting it work, and letting it work means letting material and immaterial riches benefit others. This is again losing one's "own" life for the sake of one's true self, to take up one's cross instead of living a comfortable life of prosperity.

But the rich ruler cannot do this yet – to use all his wealth for others in order to follow the impulses of the true self. Why did he become "sad"? Because the longing for the spiritual world, for "eternal life," lives in him, but because of his ties to the earthly world, it cannot be fulfilled. Indeed, his drive for possessions is not only aimed at material wealth. It also focuses on the spiritual treasures that the ruler believes he has acquired through fulfilling the law and through moral achievements. This kind of possessiveness is addressed indirectly in the story: Through his

abiding by the law from his youth, the rich man has also accumulated moral treasures to which he is attached. But people who want to “inherit eternal life” must also free themselves from immaterial wealth.

How difficult it is to overcome the drive for possessions, be it for material or for immaterial wealth! This is not possible from one’s own, earthly, moral strength. The earthly love of people for life, for themselves, and for the material and immaterial goods of the earth is too great. Left alone, people would perish in these attachments to earthly goods. To be “saved,” to be released from these earthly bonds and taken into the dimension of spirit where true life is, is only “possible with God.” Only God, the spiritual world, can strengthen the true self in such a way that it frees itself from the grip of earthly drive for possessions in order to enter the kingdom of God.

Fulfilling these Conditions

18:28 *And Peter said, “Behold, we have left all that is ours and followed you.”* ²⁹*And he said to them, “Truly I say to you that there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children on account of the kingdom of God, ³⁰who will not receive many times more in this time and in the age to come, eternal life.”* (LEB)

That the possibility of abandoning the drive for possessions exists is confirmed by the disciples of Jesus who left all their possessions, yes, siblings, parents, children, and partners “for the account of the kingdom of God.” Here, too, a physical abandonment of all things and people is not meant. What is meant is to replace all earthly love for life, for people, and for goods with love for God, which has a different quality than earthly love and assigns the latter its actual position. The disciples of Jesus followed the true self. God made it possible for them. And as a result, they will have treasure in heaven, yes, they already have it now – “in this time” – and even more so after death – “in the age to come.” The “eternal life” that the rich ruler wants to inherit is a state of the true self: freedom from conditioning, from self-righteousness, and from the drive for possessions, love for all people, and thereby oneness with divine order. This state already occurs now when people fulfill the three great conditions for entry into the kingdom of God, and it will last forever.

The “Journey to Jerusalem”: Third Day

Destiny of the Son of Man in the Earthly World III

18:31 *And taking aside the twelve, he said to them, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written by the prophets with reference to the Son of Man will be accomplished. ³²For he will be handed over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and mistreated and spit on, ³³and after flogging him they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.” ³⁴And they understood none of these things, and this saying was concealed from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said. (LEB)*

The “journey to Jerusalem” enters its third “day,” the stage in which Jesus’ spiritual path reaches its goal with death and resurrection. This is the occasion for Luke to insert here how Jesus announces for the third time that he must be put to death and rise again on the third day. This will happen in “Jerusalem,” the city that as “city of peace” should actually be a picture of the kingdom of God on earth. However, its function has been reversed by people’s self-centeredness: People kill the one who brings divine peace. The “Gentiles” are the worldly power, the non-Jewish Romans who, driven by the Jewish clergy, carry out the judgment on Jesus. Nevertheless, the true self, Jesus, rises again from the death of his earthly shell on the third day.

For the third time, Jesus’ disciples do not understand this announcement. Everything in them blocks this insight. They believe that the long-awaited redeemer will triumph over his enemies and establish an earthly kingdom of God. So they fail to see that the resurrection of the true self presupposes the dissolution of all selfishness. They fail to see that the path to the resurrection of the true self involves persecution by the earthly powers, even killing. They want to be followers of Jesus, but at the moment, their selfishness resists the dissolution and danger to life and limb that comes with the spiritual path. They are afraid. And because of that, “they did not comprehend the things that were said.” Only when Jesus has gone ahead of them on this path, has overcome self-centeredness, has consciously endured the persecution and killing of his body in the powers of his true self,

and his true self has risen with a new spirit body, will they be able to follow this path for their part – and then also to understand.

Bearing Fruit: Fourth Phase of the Spiritual Path of the Pupils

Jesus arrives in Jerusalem via Jericho. Here begins the fourth phase of the disciples' spiritual path. And so their spiritual development now runs in phase with the development of Jesus according to their lesser possibilities, for Jesus has been in the fourth phase of the spiritual path since his "transfiguration."

The third phase of the disciples had been their realization of their true selves, which enabled them to see the embodiment of the enlightened true self, Christ the Anointed. Inner consequences resulted from this awareness, many insights into the nature of the kingdom of God, into the conditions for entry into it, and into the way of its coming. In Mark, Luke's model, the consequences of this awareness are presented in a very coherent and logical manner. Luke dissolves this connection and places the events in the context of the "journey to Jerusalem." When the true self "sets its face to Jerusalem," it means that it turns consciously toward the "city of peace," the kingdom of God, of which it became aware in "Galilee," the realm of spiritual work. And all the insights and experiences of the disciples in the third phase were under the sign of this conscious orientation toward "Jerusalem." It was important for them to draw the consequences of this orientation, namely, to recognize self-centeredness and what new attitudes and behaviors must be developed for entry into the "city of peace," the kingdom of God.

In the fourth phase of the spiritual path, on the other hand, a new interaction between Jesus with his disciples and the world arises. The powers they made available to other people, which bring about healing, liberation from "demons," and new insights, now echo back to Jesus and his disciples. Jesus and his disciples receive the "fruits" of their work: They are met with gratitude, devotion, and enthusiasm. This is the fourth phase of their path.

From now on, Luke is again closely based on the model of the Gospel of Mark. Beginning with Luke 18:35, it becomes apparent that the activity of Jesus and his disciples has actually taken hold of the entire nation. His speeches relate to topics that affect the

entire nation and their political and religious situation. Jesus is referred to as the “Son of David,” representing the best of the people of Israel, which culminated in the kingship of David. “Jericho” is also characteristic of this fourth phase of the spiritual path. “Jericho,” the last stage on the way to Jerusalem, is the “city of palms.” The palm tree is a symbol of hope, growth, power, and glory.

The Blind Beggar: Manifestation of the Son of David

18:35 *Now it happened that as he drew near to Jericho, a certain blind man was sitting on the side of the road begging. ³⁶And when he heard a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. ³⁷And they told him, “Jesus the Nazarene is passing by.” ³⁸And he called out, saying, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ³⁹And those who were in front rebuked him, that he should be silent, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁰So Jesus stopped and ordered him to be brought to him. And when he approached, he asked him, ⁴¹“What do you want me to do for you?” And he said, “Lord, that I may regain my sight. ⁴²And Jesus said to him, “Regain your sight! Your faith has saved you.” ⁴³And immediately he regained his sight and began to follow him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God. (LEB)*

In Jericho, Jesus gives sight to a blind beggar. At this point in their spiritual development, he and his disciples can unleash the highest level of spiritual power. That is why the beggar called Jesus “Son of David.” As a spiritual king, he possesses spiritual powers in abundance – and as a true king, he gives them in abundance. Jesus is also a “nazirite,” someone who is connected to the spiritual world from the womb and birth on (see Judges 13:5-7) so that he is to a special degree the way by which the spiritual powers flow to humanity.

The blind beggar, on the other hand, is an image for the soul of the people, which is poor in spiritual powers and longingly hungers for them.

The result of the interaction between the longing of the starving people and the fulfillment through the powers of the spiritual king is that the blind beggar regains his “sight.” The “blind” are given insight into the condition of humanity, their own condition, their

inherent purpose, and the inherent purpose of humanity through the powers of the true self acting outside and within them. Now they “see” what the goal of their life and the life of humanity is, and now they can direct their steps towards that goal.

When an impulse from the true self acts on the earthly soul of an individual or a people, like Jesus “passing by” the blind beggar, that soul can become aware of its poverty and blindness and open itself to this impulse. That is “faith.” Its longing for knowledge and meaning flares up; it begs for illumination. There is an intensive discussion and interaction between it and the true self. This process of the concentrated encounter between the two is expressed in the narrative by Jesus’ question, “What do you want me to do for you?” and the blind man’s answer, “Lord, that I may regain my sight!” And nothing and no intervention from anybody, “those who were in front,” can divert this soul from its longing.

The Chief Tax Collector Zacchaeus: Joy for Salvation

19:1 And he entered and traveled through Jericho. ²And there was a man named Zacchaeus, and he was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. ³And he was seeking to see Jesus—who he was—and he was not able to as a result of the crowd, because he was short in stature. ⁴And he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree so that he could see him, because he was going to go through that way. ⁵And when he came to the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down quickly, because it is necessary for me to stay at your house today!” ⁶And he came down quickly and welcomed him joyfully. ⁷And when they saw it, they all began to complain, saying, “He has gone in to find lodging with a man who is a sinner!” ⁸And Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, “Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I am giving to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone, I am paying it back four times as much!” ⁹And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save those who are lost.” (LEB)

The enthusiasm and joy that characterizes the fourth stage of the path is expressed in the story of Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector. The story is unique to Luke’s Gospel and exhibits the distinctive

features of the evangelist Luke: the contrast between opposites and the exultation over the salvation bestowed on the physical world by the redeeming powers from the spiritual world. The beggar in the “city of palms” was blind and can now see. But there are also people in the “city of palms” who already have eyes to see and want to consciously see the bringer of salvation, the embodiment of the true self. The longing for the spirit is kindled; the fire that Jesus wanted to kindle on earth burns in individual human souls.

Such is Zacchaeus’s longing to behold the kingdom of God and its messenger that, though short in stature, he rises above the crowd that obstructs his sight and climbs a sycamore tree: a beautiful image for earthly souls who, though not among the greats in the realm of thinking, still exhaust the highest possibilities of their ego-consciousness in order to gain contact with the true self. With a clear mind free of conventions and interests, they work their way through all doubts about the possibility of a spirit-oriented life. They do not allow anything to block their view of the spiritual world. Indeed, Zacchaeus sees the true self, and the true self sees him. A conscious contact develops between the spiritual world and the ego-consciousness of the longing person. And even more: Zacchaeus feels prompted by this contact to leave the highest possibilities of his intellectual thinking and to allow the spiritual world to enter into his being, for a direct encounter with the true self is only possible on the level of the true self. In order to arrive at this encounter, he must descend from the heights of intellectual thinking that had led him to a glimpse of the new possibility of life and follow the power of intuition. Jesus, the true self, wants still today to come into his “house,” into his being. And the Zacchaeus soul “welcomed joyfully” into itself the true self, the impulses from the spiritual world.

It can because it fulfills the conditions for entry into the kingdom of God. It has become free from the drive for possessions and free from the drive for power. Zacchaeus gives half of his possessions to the poor just as Jesus had asked the rich ruler to do; Zacchaeus, through the use of his goods for others, acquires “treasure in heaven,” an inner state that allows the Son of Man to dwell in his soul. The tax collector uses other parts of his possessions to make amends for injustices he has inflicted on others in the exercise of his position of power. This also creates a state of his soul through which it can unite with the Son of Man.

Zacchaeus is a “chief tax collector,” a particularly great “sinner” in civil and religious terms. But there is no trace of self-righteousness in him. He knows he is a sinner, not just morally but existentially. He knows he is separated from God. And it is precisely this awareness that gives rise to the longing for salvation and the desire to see it – which in turn gives rise to the possibility of overcoming the separation from God, the existential sin. As great as his sin is, so great are his consciousness of sin and his longing for overcoming the separation. And his joy is just as great when the true self enters his consciousness and the separation from God has given way to the unity with God. This ending of separation is a feast comparable to the feast that is given to the returnee in the parable of the lost son. Salvation, healing of the breach between God and human being, has come to “this house,” to this person.

The Son of Man, the perfect true self of the human being, has incarnated in the earthly world and has become flesh in an earthly man. In his special connection with the spiritual world, as a Nazarite, this person himself walks the spiritual path of dissolving earthly self-centeredness so that he can become aware of his true self. In this way, he makes the spiritual path possible for all other people who would be too weak for this process on their own. Their true self is lost under the demands of selfishness like the lost son among the pigs. In the power of the Son of Man, it can be sought and found. It can reawaken and reject the demands of selfishness. This is exactly what happens to Zacchaeus, for he too is a “son of Abraham,” someone who, like Abraham, “believes” in the inherent purpose of humanity, in the promise of the “promised land,” entry into the spiritual world. He is receptive to the spiritual world. That is what matters, not his sinful nature.

Inevitably, the law-abiding people who consider themselves just appear here again. They criticize Jesus for his fellowship with the “sinner” because they do not understand that it is precisely the awareness of sin and the resulting longing for the spirit that enables the spirit to connect with the true self of the human being. For them, the spirit can only connect with the “righteous.” And that is also the truth: It can only connect with the true self that is “directed” to the spiritual world. But it cannot connect with the just according to moral standards who are at the same time self-righteous. There is no longing for the spirit in them because there is no awareness of their separation from the spirit, and therefore

they will not experience the joy of regained unity with the spirit.

These “Pharisees” and “scribes,” these self-righteous intellectual forces, also work against the connection between the longing soul and the spirit in every single human being. But it is the soul’s very feeling of being unworthy of salvation that allows the spirit to dwell in it.

Parable of the Pounds: Harvest of the Spiritual Work

19:11 *Now while they were listening to these things, he went on and told a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and they thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. ¹²Therefore he said, “A certain nobleman traveled to a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. ¹³And summoning ten of his own slaves, he gave them ten minas and said to them, ‘Do business until I come back.’ ¹⁴But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to be king over us!’ ¹⁵And it happened that when he returned after receiving the kingdom, he ordered these slaves to whom he had given the money to be summoned to him, so that he could know what they had gained by trading. ¹⁶So the first arrived, saying, ‘Sir, your mina has made ten minas more!’ ¹⁷And he said to him, ‘Well done, good slave! Because you have been faithful in a very small thing, have authority over ten cities.’ ¹⁸And the second came, saying, ‘Sir, your mina has made five minas.’ ¹⁹So he said to this one also, ‘And you be over five cities.’ ²⁰And another came, saying, ‘Sir, behold your mina, which I had put away for safekeeping in a piece of cloth. ²¹For I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man—you withdraw what you did not deposit, and you reap what you did not sow!’ ²²He said to him, ‘By your own words I will judge you, wicked slave! You knew that I am a severe man, withdrawing what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. ²³And why did you not give my money to the bank, and I, when I returned, would have collected it with interest?’ ²⁴And to the bystanders he said, ‘Take away from him the mina and give it to the one who has the ten minas!’ ²⁵And they said to him, ‘Sir, he has ten minas.’ ²⁶‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given. But from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. ²⁷But these enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over*

them—bring them here and slaughter them in my presence!’”
(LEB)

The “parable of the pounds or minas” illustrates the fourth phase of the spiritual path very nicely.

What are the “minas” (or “pounds” in other translations) that the nobleman entrusts to his slaves? All human beings, conceived in the image of God from the “Father,” the spirit, begin their eons-long journey through the physical world with a spiritual “endowment,” a spiritual disposition. The purpose of this endowment is that it is developed and becomes conscious, that it proves itself under the conditions of the earthly world in order to one day experience a conscious connection with the spiritual world, yes, entry into the realm of the spirit. This spiritual disposition is the “pound” entrusted to people. On their eons-long journey through the earthly world, people also encounter messengers from the spiritual world again and again who through their work, for example in the form of a religion, stimulate the image of God in them to become active. These received stimuli also belong to the “pound” with which people are to work. By applying the spiritual insights and powers bestowed on them, they should develop the true self and bear fruit. The nature of this fruit becomes apparent when the spiritual world descends into humanity or the individual: when the kingdom of God comes.

The parable speaks of a nobleman with ten slaves to whom he entrusts a pound each before his journey. The “nobleman” is either God the “Father,” who before the beginning of time impressed upon human beings his image, or a messenger from the spiritual world, who through teaching and preaching, healing from diseases, and deliverance from demons awakens the image of God in people. When it is said that the nobleman travels to a distant country in order to acquire royal power there, this indicates that God does not rest after the creation of humanity but brings forth further beings and realms, or it indicates that spiritual messengers such as Jesus work in the spiritual worlds after leaving the earthly world until they come back as “Sons of Man.”

The ten slaves of the man are those people who orientate themselves towards the spiritual world and dedicate their lives to it. Next to them appear “his citizens” who hate the nobleman. It is the vast majority of people who become absorbed in their earthly habits, see them as the content and goal of life, and in no case want to be disturbed by spiritual influences. Therefore they “hate” the

spirit, whether embodied in the Father of all things or in messengers of the spiritual world, and do not “want it to rule over them” because this would mean a reevaluation of their values and a complete change of their lives.

The slaves of the lord get different results from the pound that was entrusted to them. The first slave, the first type of person, develops the true self to a creative potency over the course of eons. This is represented by the number ten. One is the number of the spirit, ten, a one with a zero, the spiritual power in the state of activity. The type of people who get ten pounds out of one are the spiritually creative people who bring new spiritual impulses to humanity. This can be artists who convey a foretaste of the divine world through their works, religious people living from the spirit who release spiritual powers, inspired researchers, thinkers, and philosophers who show the reflection of God in nature and the human being, or statesmen, educators, and social reformers who shape the communal life of people according to new, spiritually founded principles. People of this type have increased their pound with great effort and sacrifice. Many of them are known to the world; many others are unknown. Maybe they worked in secret; maybe they apparently failed. Nevertheless, they creatively developed their “pound” further.

The type of people who get five pounds out of one are the people who are not spiritually creative themselves but make their soul powers available to the spirit. Five is the number of the soul, and the five pounds gained means that the soul of these people, inspired by the true self, has transmitted the spiritual impulses emanating from other, creative people. They are the interpreters of the creative spirits, the executors of new spiritual impulses and principles in all areas of art, religion, science, and society.

Finally, there are the type of people whose true self lies within them as a possibility for development but who do not realize this possibility. They have received a pound, a spiritual talent, but are not actively developing it. Why do they not develop it? The slave in question in the parable explains to the lord, “You reap what you did not sow.” Self-centeredness asserts itself in him. The true self flows out for others, serves the spiritual development of others and thus the spirit. It desires nothing else than to use the opportunities given to it not for itself but for the spiritual world, for the “Lord.” But the earthly ego does not want to work for others. That is why the slave says to the lord in the parable, “You reap what you did

not sow.” The earthly ego does not want to be the servant of a development that does not seem to benefit itself. It also perceives the Lord as “harsh,” because the true self is only entrusted to people so that they can develop it in earthly life with much effort and sacrifice. But the earthly ego perceives this inherent purpose as a burden, as a harsh demand that it does not want to meet.

All three types of people will be tested by the spirit when it returns as the “Son of Man” in the “end times.” The first, spiritually creative type of people are in harmony with the order of the spiritual world and the flow of its powers. Because they behaved in this way in earthly life, it is possible for them to become aware of the currents of the spiritual world as they pour out into humanity and to work creatively with them. They then have far greater opportunities and tasks than before in the earthly world. They are placed over “ten cities” as faithful servants in the realm of the spirit. They are entrusted with spiritual tasks (the symbol for this is again the number 10) that correspond to the creative potential they have developed.

The second type of people, who have developed their soul powers in accordance with the order of the spirit, also share in the stream of spiritual powers as they pour out into the world. They serve as lesser servant in the soul realms of the spiritual world: They are set over five cities. The third type of people, however, who have not developed their true self, indeed have let their earthly ego dominate over it, cannot consciously meet the currents of the spirit when they pour out and cannot work with them. Their organ for this has not developed. Their fundamentally creative disposition is therefore withdrawn from their own influence and subjected to the influence of the creative human beings. Their pound is given to the slave with the ten pounds. The uncreative people are henceforth used by the creative people as dependent tools, which increases the power and the fruits of the creative people even more but makes the independent spiritual development of the uncreative people impossible for the time being.

Incidentally, the idle slave could have let his spiritual abilities become fruitful without much effort. If without any defiance against the laws of the spiritual world, he had at least let his self-centeredness remain silent and had voluntarily made his abilities available to other spiritually working people, his spiritual powers would have benefited other people – and thus indirectly himself – without him having made any special inner progress. This

possibility is alluded to in the parable by the lord's question as to why the slave did not put the money in the bank. Even without self-responsible spiritual activity, the true self can bear "interest."

The observers of these soul-spiritual processes find it unfair that the slave with the ten pounds also receives the pound of the lazy slave for care and use. The "lord" replies to them by referring to a law of life that applies everywhere: To all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. Where there are earthly abilities, if they are exercised wisely, they will be increased. Where there are none or only a few, they will wither away because they are not practiced. Where there are earthly riches, they can easily be increased if used wisely. Where there is poverty, because there is nothing there that could create wealth, even the last penny is taken. In the spiritual realm, this law of life says, Where there are spiritual abilities that are being developed, the spiritual world will support and add strength. Where spiritual abilities are not developed, the spiritual world will withdraw and not be able to promote them. One day, perhaps against the will of the people concerned, their spiritual powers will be used by other, creative people, and their own spiritual development will stagnate and atrophy.

But the egocentricity of the great majority of people will be uprooted when the streams of the spiritual world flow into the earthly world. People will experience that all their belief in progress and their striving for earthly perfection and happiness are in vain. They will feel empty inside, and they will be left with nothing since there is nothing in them that could respond to the spiritual impulses. They are the "enemies" of the spirit who did not want it to become king over them. And they are "slaughtered" in the "presence" of the spirit, that is, confronted with the values of the spirit that they cannot experience and understand, they are robbed of all their bases of life.

Arrival at Jerusalem

After passing through the "city of palms," Jesus approaches Jerusalem via Bethphage – the "house of figs" – and Bethany – the "house of the poor." Jerusalem is the "city of peace" in which the temple of God stands, and at the same time, it is also the inversion of this identity, the "city of strife." Here Jesus fulfills his actual task. He will be killed as an ego-personality by the forces of strife

but will be resurrected as a true self and spirit personality in the powers of divine peace.

Entry into Jerusalem: Streams of the New Powers

19:28 *And after he had said these things, he traveled on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹And it happened that when he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, to the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰saying, ‘Go into the village in front of you, in which as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no person has ever sat, and untie it and bring it. ³¹And if anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you will say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’” ³²So those who were sent went and found it just as he had told them. ³³And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, ‘Why are you untying the colt?’ ³⁴So they said, ‘The Lord has need of it.’ ³⁵And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they put Jesus on it. ³⁶And as he was going along, they were spreading out their cloaks on the road. ³⁷Now as he was drawing near by this time to the descent from the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began rejoicing to praise God with a loud voice for all the miracles that they had seen, ³⁸saying,*

*“Blessed is the king,
the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven
and glory in the highest!”*

³⁹And some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” ⁴⁰And he answered and said, “I tell you that if these keep silent, the stones will cry out!” (LEB)

Before the seeming demise of the true self, it becomes apparent that on the spiritual path, all the powers of the soul and body that come into question have been made to serve the order of the spirit. In the image of the story: All positive forces of the people – the earthly soul – flow towards the king – the true self. Mediators between the two are the disciples, the spirit-oriented forces of human consciousness. This interplay is represented by the procurement of the “colt.” Jesus sends out two disciples. The true self in the individual sends out impulses of the will in order to mobilize the soul forces and physical forces of the earthly personality. As a matter of course, Jesus knows that the owners of

the colt will leave the animal to him. And these are actually ready without ifs and buts when they hear, The Lord needs it. Because the time has come to mobilize all the forces of the people, that is, the soul of the individual, and the true self can of course count on its service. The earthly personality, for its part, feels the need to make itself completely available and willingly relinquishes its powers to the true self.

The colt is a motif from the prophet Zechariah just as the entry into Jerusalem is also based on a passage from Zechariah (Zechariah 9:9-10). The colt or foal of a donkey is compared to the “war horse.” The true self, the spiritual possibilities of the human being, make use of the devotion, gratitude, and voluntary submission of the personality – these qualities are symbolized by the foal of a donkey – not the aggressive, proud, self-aggrandizing tendencies, the “war horse.” And no one has ever sat on this foal: The forces of the personality are free from conventions and conditioning. They carry the true self without being shaped by any experiences, ideas, and traditions.

The cloaks that Jesus’ disciples put on the foal so that Jesus can ride comfortably and that people spread out on the path in front of him so that he can ride on an even path are an illustration of the fact that the spiritual possibilities can also make use of all the forces of the human consciousness. With all their conscious thoughts, feelings, and aspirations, the “cloaks” of the ego, they support the true self.

But all the disciples rejoice and praise God with a loud voice as Jesus approaches the “city of peace.” They have recognized Jesus as the “Anointed One,” the “Christ” who comes “in the name of the Lord,” in the name of God, the spiritual world, and who brings the peace of the spirit and the glory of God to the earthly world. Now the circle closes. When Jesus was born, the powers of the spirit sang the praises of the Anointed One who would come out of the “city of David” and bring salvation to the people. In the meantime, the Anointed One has conquered the hearts of the people and can count on their support. The joy that back then sprang up in only a few discerning people has spread to a large circle of disciples who are praising the son of David, the king and Anointed of God.

But the enemies of the true self are always present. At the moment, they may be at a disadvantage in face of the enthusiasm that has gripped the people and disciples, but their skepticism still asserts itself. They do not recognize the nature of Jesus. They do

not understand why the disciples sing the praises of God. They are the representatives of dogma and rigid tradition, the representatives of earthly reason. For them, Jesus is at most a “master of the law.” So they ask him to forbid his disciples to call him “king” who comes “in the name of the Lord.” But Jesus points them to the power that the spirit-filled true self has gained in the fourth phase of spiritual development. The spiritual powers circulate in the soul and in the body of the whole people, yes, they influence and permeate the whole of unconscious nature, which is also a creation of the spirit. Against such a mighty tide, against such a mighty response that the spirit’s call has wrought in those susceptible and in all of nature, there is no remedy – even if Jesus wanted it. If his students would also suppress the outbreak of enthusiasm and joy in themselves – the spirit would seek its way even if it were in nature: “If these keep silent, the stones will cry out.” All animate and inanimate nature radiates back what radiated into it from the spiritual world. Once the storm of the spirit is unleashed and the fire is kindled on earth, this conflagration is stronger than all attempts at containment.

Weeping over Jerusalem

19:41 *And when he approached and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, “If you had known on this day—even you—the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For days will come upon you and your enemies will put up an embankment against you, and will surround you and press you hard from all directions. 44 And they will raze you to the ground, you and your children within you, and will not leave a stone upon a stone within you, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”* (LEB)

The outdated old can still assert itself for a long time, however, and fight the fire of the new. The old is concentrated in the “capital,” in the Pharisees and priests, the representatives of the traditional law who lead the people as the egocentric mind leads in people’s heads. Actually, the mind would be called upon to react to the impulses of the spirit. However, as a rule, it is in the service of self-centeredness, the striving for power, possessions, and recognition, and closes itself to the spirit in self-righteousness. The community of the called – Jerusalem – does not recognize what

serves for their peace. It is hidden from their eyes because of their self-righteousness and stubbornness. That is why Jesus “weeps” over the city. His aim is to lead all people and all elements in people who have separated from the spiritual world back to unity with the spirit and thereby to divine peace. But if there is no receptivity to the spirit and people are blind to it and to their inherent purpose, this striving of the spirit comes to nothing. This is a pain for the spirit itself and for anyone working as a true self in the stream of the spirit. This pain is all the greater as all those who resist their inherent purpose are sooner or later doomed to perish.

This is a spiritual law that also applies, for example, to the entire development of humanity. When a people ordained for spiritual leadership absorbs new spiritual impulses and implements them, other peoples will recognize their leadership role and follow them. However, if the leading people fail, the other peoples will revolt in disappointment and resort to hostile actions. This is also the case with Jerusalem, which should have assumed a spiritual leadership role at the time. Were not the people of Israel prepared through the efforts of the prophets for special tasks in the development of humanity? Should it not have recognized the “visitation” of the spirit in Jesus’ day and put itself at the forefront of a development that leads to the inherent purpose of humanity? Should it not have subordinated the earthly ego to the spiritual order of the true self? Not recognizing this “visitation,” its enemies, who otherwise would have had to acknowledge its leadership, will raze it to the ground. Jesus foresees these consequences of the blindness of “Jerusalem.” He, who desires to promote the development of the human being, every people, and humanity towards its inherent spiritual purpose, feels pain at these consequences.

Purification of the Old Religion

19:45 *And he entered into the temple courts and began to drive out those who were selling, ⁴⁶ saying to them, “It is written, ‘And my house will be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a cave of robbers!”*

⁴⁷ And he was teaching every day in the temple courts, and the chief priests and the scribes and the most prominent men of the people were seeking to destroy him. ⁴⁸ And they did not find anything they could do, because all the people were paying close attention to what they were hearing from him. (LEB)

The temple, the center of Jerusalem, is the clearest example of the corruption that has taken hold of the best. "My house will be a house of prayer": The temple should be the meeting place between God and the true self where people attune themselves to the order of the spirit and receive strength and direction from it. That is prayer. If this were to happen in the temple in Jerusalem, the community of worshipers would orientate themselves toward the inherent purpose of humanity, overcome liability to tradition and law, and escape perdition. But now the temple has become a den of robbers. The drive for possessions rules in it supported by the drives for power and prestige. High priests, scribes, and Pharisees abuse religion and law for their selfish interests. What is wrong on a large scale is also wrong on a small scale. The heart of the individual called to fulfill his inherent purpose should be the temple where time meets eternity. But it has become a den of robbers, filled with desires and aggression. The spirit-filled true self, Jesus, the Christ, in its confrontation with the persisting aspects of the ego personality of the human being finally reaches its "temple," the heart, where the consciousness should open itself to the spiritual world. But the spiritual impulses only find egocentric thoughts and desires there. The spiritual impulses drive these "merchants" out of the temple.

The visible merchants are only the expression of the degeneration of the collective consciousness in Judaism at that time into which the impulses of the spirit penetrate. The "temple" is the center of the Jewish religion. The representatives of this religion have turned the living contents of the religion into commodities for sale and sell them for their own interests. But Jesus, the representative of the living spirit, drives these traders out of the temple. A living impulse of the spirit cleanses religion of all degeneration and enables a direct encounter of the human being with God again. The cleansing of the temple by Jesus is therefore an event of spiritual history: The signs of degeneration of an old religion are removed by a living spiritual impulse. But it is also a picture of the fact that such a degeneration of religion, whether Jewish or otherwise, occurs again and again and that a new spiritual impulse can always eliminate this degeneration: in a people or in individuals.

This story shows that the spirit-filled true self, embodied in Jesus the Anointed, is not a powerless, weak-willed, acquiescing being. It is the law of the spiritual world itself that works

irresistibly. It just does not work in the service of egocentric interests. This strength of the law of the spiritual world is also shown in the four following conversations of Jesus with the scribes.

Last Altercation between Spiritual and Earthly World

Legitimization of Jesus

20:1 *And it happened that on one of the days while he was teaching the people in the temple courts and proclaiming the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes approached together with the elders ²and said, saying to him, “Tell us, by what authority you are doing these things, or who is the one who gave you this authority? ³And he answered and said to them, “I also will ask you a question, and you tell me: ⁴The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men? ⁵And they discussed this with one another, saying, “If we say ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ ⁶But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us to death, because they are convinced that John was a prophet.” ⁷And they replied that they did not know where it was from. ⁸And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.” (LEB)*

The final confrontation between the true self and the ego begins in the decision-making center of the individual or of a people. Jesus teaches in the temple – the spirit tries to communicate its order to the consciousness in the form of knowledge. But the egocentric aspects of consciousness, the “chief priests, scribes, and elders,” cling to their privileges and habits and seek to rid themselves of the danger that threatens them.

In the individual person, the egocentric mind will try to use arguments to weaken the activity of the spirit, which affects the authority of the ego. It will denounce this activity as a fantasy, as a psychological disorder, or as superstition and thus want to take away its justification. Likewise, on the whole, the leaders of the people try to deprive the spiritual impulses, embodied in Jesus, of their basis of legitimacy. If they could do that in front of the people, they would have won the game. And so they ask Jesus about his authority. Their reasoning is: He can hardly say, “My

authority comes from me as an earthly human being.” With that he would put in doubt the basis of his legitimacy among the people, who consider him to be a prophet sent by God and some even the Messiah. But if he says, “My authority comes from God; I am a prophet,” he would be demonstrating his egocentricity and hubris because those who actually act from the authority of heaven legitimize themselves through their deeds and words, which come from heaven, not through their words about themselves. Those who describe themselves as someone sent from heaven indicate that their ego is speaking and prove that they are not heaven-sent. If Jesus were to answer truthfully, his legitimacy would also be called into question. (The I am sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of John have a different background.)

Jesus sees through this game. He knows that the questioners are not asking out of a thirst for knowledge but to bring him down. He asks them a counter-question, which is allowed and customary according to the rules of the game for discussions at the time, which puts them in the precarious situation they intended for him. He asks about the authority of John the Baptist. Their two possible answers to this question would shake their position with the people. If they say that John has his authority from heaven, they would have to give up their previous convictions and challenges against John, at least outwardly. If they say, of human origin, they would lose all credibility with the people.

At the level of the arguing mind seeking not truth but power, there will always be such deadlocks. Only the longing for truth and openness to the truth could bring an answer and decision here. A seeker after truth would see that John the Baptist really has his authority from heaven and that he points as a forerunner to the Anointed One, Jesus, who has authority from heaven to bring fulfillment.

Jesus’ answer throws the questioners back to their own position. The true self is not irritated by the wiles of the mind. It belongs to another dimension.

Parable of the Vineyard: Relationship of Jesus to Representatives of the Old Religion

20:9 *And he began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard, and leased it to tenant farmers, and went on a journey for a long time. ¹⁰ And at the proper time he sent a slave*

to the tenant farmers, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenant farmers sent him away empty-handed after beating him. ¹¹And he proceeded to send another slave, but they beat and dishonored that one also, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹²And he proceeded to send a third, but they wounded and threw out this one also. ¹³So the owner of the vineyard said, 'What should I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.' ¹⁴But when the tenant farmers saw him, they began to reason with one another, saying, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him so that the inheritance will become ours!' ¹⁵And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶He will come and destroy those tenant farmers and give the vineyard to others." And when they heard this, they said, "May this never happen!" (LEB)

In the parable of the vineyard and later of the cornerstone, Jesus indirectly reveals his identity and authority. The conversation about Jesus' authority described above took place between him and the chief priests and scribes and was also intended for the ears of the people. The chief priests had speculated on depriving Jesus of his basis of legitimacy among the people. Now, in the parable of the vineyard, Jesus addresses the people directly in the hope of being understood by them while his words are also indirectly intended for the ears of the chief priests to make clear to them his role and their own role.

God creates the earthly world, the "vineyard," puts people in it as "plants," and appoints religious leaders for them: priests and educators who are supposed to take care of the plants as "tenants." They have to ensure that people learn under the conditions of the earthly world what their task and their inherent purpose in life are and that they also live in the sense of what they have learned. Their insights into what is good and evil acquired through the "law," their actions according to these insights, and their spiritual development are the fruits that they are supposed to bring forth with the help of the tenants.

Some of these fruits accrue to the spiritual leaders, for they too can expect devotion and gratitude. For the most part, however, they belong to God, the owner of the "vineyard." The plants were planted and should be given care for this: to bear fruit not primarily for the caretakers but for the spirit. Again and again, God sends prophets, messengers from the world of spirit, who

make it clear to the spiritual leaders that the gratitude and devotion of those they look after only partly belong to the religious organization and its representatives, but the essential part belongs to God. God deserves the sacrifice of the heart. Moreover, the spiritual leaders deserve gratitude and devotion only when they really work for the inherent purpose of the people entrusted to them. The tenants, however, do not listen to the messengers of God, reject them, and keep to themselves the fruits of their care: devotion, gratitude, veneration, and physical benefits.

Finally, God sends the “Son,” the model of the true self, the Anointed. The whole earthly world will one day belong to the true self of humanity. It is the heir of creation. It is the realization of the divine order itself to which all human fruits, their ego and their abilities, should belong. But the tenants reflect, If we “kill” this true self, then the earthly world with all its glories and fruits belongs to us. And they kill the embodiment of the true self.

This murder is by no means a one-time act, for through the centuries up to the present, the spiritual and ideological leaders have repeatedly “killed” the impulses from the spiritual world and thereby repeatedly killed the Christ, the incarnation of these impulses, in order to use for their own benefit the fruits of life of the people entrusted to them. With the help of religion, which was intended to serve the inherent purpose of humanity, they subdued those entrusted to them and built powerful earthly empires with the devotion and achievements of those they subdued. In doing so, they have withheld from God what belongs to God. They have withheld from God the results that life on earth is designed to produce.

It is inevitable that the order of the spirit, the “owner of the vineyard,” corrects this development. The “Son of Man” is coming again. Falsely based empires collapse; the spiritual and ideological leaders who put them together are left with nothing. The religious care of the people will be transferred to other groups in which the impulses of the spiritual world live and are implemented for others.

The parable also applies to individuals. They are tenants in their own life and charged with developing their earthly faculties. Again and again, however, they feel an intuition, a “messenger from God,” that the results of their abilities, the fruits of their life, do not belong to them alone but to God and to God’s image, the true self. Only when they subordinate these fruits to the directives of a

higher power in their nature does their life become meaningful and do they fulfill their inherent purpose. It may be that this notion grows to great power, that the true self makes itself felt as the clear realization that the human ego belongs to the image of God, which is from God. Then the “son” acts as God’s messenger in people. And they can, like the tenants in the parable, “kill” the “son.” They can completely repress the clear knowledge to whom their life and its fruits belong in order to be able to enjoy their life fruits in self-centeredness. In the course of time, however, the feeling of emptiness and meaninglessness will overtake them since they have cut themselves off from their spiritual roots. They will be “destroyed,” and what they have built will prove unsustainable.

New “tenants” will be appointed who will develop and serve the earthly abilities of these people in the sense of the order of the spirit. Perhaps the personality of these people has been changed by painful experiences, which will change their behavior in this life; perhaps it is a new incarnation that has learned from the negative experiences of the previous incarnation.

Those who hear the parable exclaim, “May this never happen!” Are they saying this in reference to the earthly situation from which the parable begins and are outraged at the unlawfulness of the tenant’s deeds? Or do they understand the parable as such and take an inward stand against the behavior of the spiritual and ideological leaders of humanity through the ages and against the tendency in their own being to repress the true self? Does the connection between this repression and the destruction of their own joy for life and purpose in life become clear to them? Luke leaves it open.

Parable of the Corner Stone

20:17 *But he looked intently at them and said, “What then is this that is written:*

*‘The stone which the builders rejected,
this has become the cornerstone.’*

¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and the one on whom it falls—it will crush him!” ¹⁹ And the scribes and the chief priests sought to lay their hands on him at that same hour, and they were afraid of the people, for they knew that he had told this parable with reference to them. (LEB)

Jesus continues with a second parable, also dealing with the identity of Jesus as the true self of the human being. It begins with the words, “He looked intently at them.” The spirit-filled true self, the divine reality itself, looks at the religious leaders and asks them not to repress this reality, not to kill the true self, but to bear its claim and seriousness, and to reconsider their own life in the light of this claim.

The stone that the builders rejected and that has become the chief cornerstone, quoted from Psalm 118:22, is again the true self of the human being, embodied in Jesus. The builders are the priests and spiritual leaders of humanity. They erect their edifices of ideological, theocratic, and physical realms and systems out of the physical labors, the powers of faith, and the enthusiasm of the people entrusted to their care. The basis of these realms are traditions, religions, and ideologies that serve the egocentricity of the builders. Religion and ideology are instruments of power of the ruling class. However, the spiritual and ideological leaders reject the true self, the order of the spirit, as the foundation of their edifices. It contradicts their egocentric needs.

But it is precisely the true self of the human being, the order of the spirit, that is the cornerstone on which alone lasting, sustainable buildings can be erected. Any political and social system based on egocentric needs is bound to collapse sooner or later for lack of spiritual substance and the tensions created by conflicting interests. Only a human community based on unity in the spirit, freedom in the spirit, and well-founded trust is enduring.

This also applies to the life plan of each individual. The spiritual reality in people, whether conscious or unconscious, is immovable and irresistible. When the ego-consciousness encounters this reality, its limitations and rigidity are unmasked, and people – if they are insightful – feel compelled to dissolve their egocentricity. It shatters against the reality of the unity, freedom, and love that look at them from the true self. Conversely, when the reality of the true self encounters the ego-consciousness, people experience the all-encompassing and eternal powers of the cornerstone. It becomes clear to them that their egocentricity has no right to exist before this reality. It is “crushed.” But whether their ego meets the reality of the spirit – they fall on the cornerstone – or whether the reality of the spirit meets their ego – the cornerstone falls on them – is irrelevant. It is one and the same process with the same

consequences.

The only consequence of the parables of the vineyard and of the cornerstone in the Gospel is that the ego of the persons addressed, seen and exposed by spiritual reality, only rears up even more. The scribes and high priests, whether concrete persons or tendencies in individuals, try to silence the true self. However, the soul forces that sympathize with spiritual reality, the “people,” are still stronger for the time being.

The Tax Coin: Relationship of Spiritual Power and Earthly Power

20:20 And they watched him closely and sent spies who pretended they were upright, in order that they could catch him in a statement, so that they could hand him over to the authority and the jurisdiction of the governor. ²¹And they asked him, saying, “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and do not show partiality, but teach the way of God in truth. ²²Is it permitted for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” ²³But seeing through their craftiness, he said to them, ²⁴“Show me a denarius! Whose image and inscription does it have?” And they answered and said, “Caesar’s.” ²⁵So he said to them, “Well then, give to Caesar the things of Caesar, and to God the things of God!” ²⁶And they were not able to catch him in a statement in the sight of the people, and astonished at his answer, they became silent. (LEB)

When the embodiment of the true self comes into the earthly world, all earthly conditions and imbalances declare themselves before its spiritual order and not just once but continuously. Incessantly the earthly currents and tendencies try to appropriate or bring down the embodiment of truth. So the question of the chief priests and scribes about Jesus’ authority was only the concretization at a particular point in time of a constantly ongoing situation: The representative of the spiritual order is tested for his legitimacy by the representatives of the earthly order. They keep trying to shake the basis of his legitimacy among his supporters.

Likewise, the scene with the tax coin is only the actual escalation of a situation in which Jesus finds himself all the time. Israel bows to the rule of the Roman emperor. According to the Mosaic Law, this is a crime. Israel should recognize only God as the sole ruler whose law regulates all political and social matters. Every other

ruler besides God is an idol, and when Israel worships an idol, it betrays the covenant with the one God. In this situation there were two possible reactions: The Zealots insisted that one should disobey the emperor and refuse to pay taxes to him – at the price of perpetual guerrilla warfare. The other, moderate party, to which the religious leaders belonged, put on a good face to the bad situation, conformed, but hoped for a change in the future.

The scene with the tax coin can be seen against this background. Jesus, representative of the spiritual order, is always in danger of being co-opted or pitted by one party against the other. If he had answered the people instigated by the high priests, Yes, it is lawful for us to give taxes to the emperor, he would have proved, at least in the eyes of the high priests and zealots, that he was not standing on the ground of the Mosaic law – he would have lost all authority as a teacher. If he had answered no, he would have been delivered up to the power of the Roman governor. And the questioners are still trying to pin him down to this no, for if he really teaches “the way of God according to truth,” he would have to answer no in accordance with the requirements of the law, which requires serving only God.

The high priests are not concerned with the problem of how people should decide between the demands of the divine and the earthly world. They are just trying to take advantage of an actual, dangerous situation to lure Jesus into a deadly trap.

The tax coin that is shown to Jesus is an indication of the precarious state in which Israel is living at that time and at the same time an unmasking of the questioners, for it proves conclusively that Israel and its religious leaders are serving an idol, the emperor, and thus incessantly violating the first commandment of the law. Whoever possesses such a coin and uses it acknowledges the idol depicted on it. How dare such a person oblige someone to say no to this transgression? Even more: Israel and its religious leaders also violate the second commandment of the law: “You shall not make for yourself an idol” (Exodus 20:4, NRSV).

But the answer that Jesus gives to their question illuminates the problem from a higher level, thereby solving it, and removing Jesus, representative of the spiritual world, from the partisanship of the earthly world. Jesus says, Give to God the things that are God’s and to the Caesar the things that are Caesar’s. The key here is to recognize what belongs to God and what to Caesar.

What belongs to God? The image of God in human beings as well as their earthly abilities and needs belong to God. Even the earthly needs and concerns – that which belongs to Caesar – should be subordinate to the spiritual order and serve it. The spiritual always takes precedence over the earthly, for only then does the earthly get its meaning whereas when the earthly takes precedence over the spiritual, the spiritual becomes powerless, and the earthly also loses its meaning. Therefore, the first commandment of the law is fully valid. The earthly ego making itself independent in the drives for power, prestige, and possessions amounts to the creation and worship of an idol. That would mean giving Caesar what is not his due.

Jesus' answer also sheds light on the cause of the foreign rule under which Israel is groaning and on the possibility of eliminating this foreign rule again. Israel violated the first commandment of the law. It has given up its original identity, which is based on the covenant with the divine world, by turning to all sorts of idols. The prophets have castigated this apostasy of Israel countless times and prophesied that the loss of its identity would also bring with it the rule of the "Gentiles." Had Israel remained true to the first commandment and thus to its identity, the "Gentiles" would have respected it. However, since it fell victim to the idol of power itself, it encountered someone more powerful on the level of the struggle for earthly power and was subjugated.

Jesus' answer therefore also says, Give *back* to God what is God's, then you will rediscover your identity as the image of God, then you will leave the level of earthly power and the struggle for power thereby eliminating the cause of foreign rule and thus removing this rule itself. But until then give to Caesar what is Caesar's: Accept the consequences of your mistake and the loss of your true identity. Accept the fact of foreign rule while it is a fact. If you try to change it by fighting as the Zealots do, you are going to the level of the earthly struggle for power, you are serving the idol of power again, and you will lose. But you can change the fact of foreign rule when you give back to God what is God's, rediscover your spiritual identity, and thereby earn the esteem and respect of the "Gentiles." Even if political dependence on Rome were to remain, it would only be an administrative dependence more than offset by cultural and spiritual superiority. Then the right relationship between the spiritual and the earthly plane – whether represented by Caesar or by their own political leaders – would be

restored.

The highest goal of every political community is to enable and promote the inherent purpose of people. Pursuing this purpose, the unfolding of the image of God, means giving to God what is God's. All regulations of earthly needs are then under the auspices of this great goal, and if they do not promote it directly, they can still be designed in such a way that they make it possible and favor it. This applies to the constitution of a community as well as to the way of life of an individual. Then what is given to Caesar, the earthly needs, stands under the sign of what is given to God. It is therefore important to also recognize what is Caesar's.

What is Caesar's? It is not Caesar's right to monopolize human life and thought. This would make him absolute and elevate him to the status of an idol of power. Caesar only has a serving role. The earthly life and abilities of people are the soil on which the spiritual life and abilities thrive in the light of the spiritual world. The soil needs suitable care for this, and people should shape their earthly conditions accordingly.

That Caesar only has a servant role does not mean that he should serve the religious leaders and that the religious leaders should dominate him. If they wanted that, they would already be on the level of earthly power and would have betrayed their mission to serve God. The task of both Caesar and the religious leaders is to serve God, each in their own domain. In particular, the role of the religious leaders is to develop their true self and to help others in the same process. If they do this, they will recognize what constitution of the earthly community best serves this task and can make their knowledge available to Caesar and to those who are spiritually entrusted to him.

Individuals too will come under "foreign rule" if they do not give to God what is God's and do not give to Caesar what is Caesar's. If they do not give to God what is God's and if they do not turn to their inherent spiritual purpose, they will lose their real identity. They will give to Caesar what is not Caesar's, namely, making their ego absolute, thereby moving alone on the level of the earthly struggle for existence and sooner or later drawing the short straw. They will become inwardly dependent on their superiors, government regulations, and authoritarian figures because they are not at peace with themselves. External dependency will increase in proportion to internal dependency. But if they turn to their inherent spiritual purpose, their true identity will grow, they

will be anchored in the spiritual order, and as a result, their environment will feel that it is dealing with independent people at peace with themselves. They can then calmly give to Caesar, to earthly concerns, what is Caesar's without losing their inner independence.

With his answer, Jesus has shed light on the fundamental, timeless relationship between the spiritual world and the earthly world. He further has shown what consequences occur when this relationship is disturbed and that these consequences can be eliminated if the primacy of the spiritual over the earthly is restored. At the same time, he has escaped the danger into which the questioners have put him.

The Sadducees: Laws of the Spiritual and the Earthly World

20:27 Now some of the Sadducees—who deny that there is a resurrection—came up and asked him, ²⁸ saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us if someone’s brother dies having a wife, and this man is childless, that his brother should take the wife and father descendants for his brother. ²⁹ Now there were seven brothers, and the first took a wife and died childless, ³⁰ and the second, ³¹ and the third took her, and likewise also the seven did not leave children and died. ³² Finally the woman also died. ³³ Therefore in the resurrection, the woman—whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife.” ³⁴ And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, ³⁵ but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, ³⁶ for they are not even able to die any longer, because they are like the angels and are sons of God, because they are sons of the resurrection. ³⁷ But that the dead are raised, even Moses revealed in the passage about the bush, when he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. ³⁸ Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him!” ³⁹ And some of the scribes answered and said, “Teacher, you have spoken well.” ⁴⁰ For they no longer dared to ask him anything. (LEB)

Jesus constantly had to deal with a powerful theological current of his time. The conversation with the Sadducees puts this

altercation into a dramatic scene. This time, it is about a theological problem apparently unrelated to practical life. But with their objection, the Sadducees are actually trying to dispute the aim and justification of Jesus' work, indeed the aim and justification of the spiritual path in general. If Jesus were to succumb to this objection, his entire mission would be called into question.

For what is the resurrection from the dead? The true self is "dead" in most people, that is, unconscious and ineffective. Even if they live as earthly personalities, people are spiritually dead according to their true nature. But the resurrection from the dead is the becoming conscious and active of the true self through a new spirit personality that corresponds to it.

The resurrection from the dead thus means that people fulfill their inherent purpose: to bring to life the unconscious and ineffective "dead" image of God within them in order to consciously live in unity with the God of life again, with the world of the spirit. The whole Gospel of Luke and of the other evangelists is nothing more than a presentation of the spiritual path of development on which this resurrection from the dead takes place. Jesus exemplifies this path under the special conditions of his connection with the spiritual world, and he gathers those people around him who can follow this path. That is the meaning and justification of his mission, of his incarnation.

"Those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead" are those people who have walked the spiritual path in the powers of the spiritual world mediated by Jesus and others, those people whose true self has become conscious and active through those powers – not through their own achievement and strength – and who have now entered the "kingdom of God." With the true self that has become alive, which is a spiritual being, they have become aware of the spiritual world and live in it. They are reunited with God and immortal because both their true self and its corresponding spirit personality are anchored in the immortal structures of the spiritual world. They are thus "like angels," spiritual beings of a higher creation of God who also live imperishably from the imperishable structures of the spiritual world.

And they are "children of God" because when the true self is filled with the Holy Spirit and thereby becomes aware of itself and

the spiritual world, it becomes a “child of God.” Jesus becomes the Christ, the “Anointed One,” the “Son” of the “Father,” begotten by the “Father”: The divine spirit begets a spiritual consciousness, a “child” of the spirit, in the divine power of the Holy Spirit. That is already resurrection, for with that, the true self that was “dead” is alive again and has become aware of itself. What lay dead has arisen. People who have walked a spiritual path to the full awakening of their true identity are “children of the resurrection,” and thereby “children of God.”

It cannot be said more clearly that the resurrection from the dead is not a process that is granted to *all* human beings on “judgment day” without their doing. Only those “who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead” are children of God, children of the resurrection. It is only those people who free themselves from bondage in the earthly world according to their true self and consciously enter the kingdom of God. Every human being will one day be considered worthy of this resurrection of their true self. But for the time being, there are only a few. And this resurrection from the dead is not an automatic process like a sleeper being awakened by someone approaching them. It is a question of maturity and receptivity to the spiritual world, for only receptive people can be “considered worthy” and then also respond to the powers of the spiritual world that bring the true self to life. Far from claiming an automatic resurrection of all people on “judgment day,” the Gospel itself speaks here of a resurrection from the dead that comes only to the “worthy.”

It also follows from this that the kingdom of God is not the hereafter into which people enter after physical death. The “place” of which Jesus speaks is the world of the spirit, neither this world in which people exist physically alive but spiritually dead nor the hereafter in which they, physically dead, continue to exist as spiritually dead. It is precisely from this state of spiritual death in this world or in the hereafter that people rise through the resurrection of the true self. This resurrection of the true self can occur while a person is still alive in this world, that is, before physical death. Yes, it must happen in this world or at least be started here since only here is there the possibility of a conscious encounter with the spiritual world and a conscious reaction to it.

In his conversation with the Sadducees, Jesus explains that such a resurrection from the dead is in principle possible for every

human being with another argument to which his interlocutors are particularly amenable. Because even if they deny the resurrection of people from the dead, they still believe in the existence of an eternal God and thus of an immortal spiritual world. According to Jesus, however, from this existence of an eternal God follows the resurrection from the dead for every human being.

For God, “all are alive”: The true self, as the image of God, is of the same kind as God and is alive in principle. In the course of history, it has become alive in many people: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for example, are people who have been “considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead.” God is alive. The true self of every human being is from God and is therefore fundamentally alive. So, like the true self of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it will actually become alive and be able to rise from the dead. That is Jesus’ reasoning.

The Sadducees’ argument against the possibility of a resurrection from the dead stems from the perspective of the earthly mind bound to the world of the senses. They transfer earthly, spatiotemporal conditions to conditions in the kingdom of God. But Jesus makes it clear that other laws prevail in the spiritual world. Nobody needs to get married there, for there procreation is no longer necessary, as those whose true self has risen from the dead are immortal. Procreation in the earthly world is a necessity arising from the fact of physical death. When physical death is overcome through the resurrection of the true self and an immortal spirit personality – which is the goal of the spiritual path – this arrangement is no longer needed.

As clear as this passage is, it has often given rise to misunderstandings. In the early days of Christianity, there were people who believed that they belonged to the “children of God” through the ritual of adult baptism and therefore no longer needed or were allowed to marry. Later, people who felt they had a special relationship to the spiritual world through ordination as a monk, nun, or priest thought this way. But rituals do not change people’s nature. At most, through a ritual of this kind, people announce that they want to embark on the spiritual path or to continue on it at a higher level. Nevertheless, they still “belong to this age” and must take into account the needs and duties of the “those who belong to this age.” If they behave differently, this amounts to forced asceticism with the corresponding consequences.

Only people who by their nature are no longer of “this age” but

“children of God” no longer need to marry. But they do not need to force themselves to practice asceticism, for they live as a conscious and spirit-filled true self, which, as soul and spirit, as “bride” and “groom,” is bipolar and self-sufficient and has an immortal spirit personality as a means of expression. They are no longer dependent on earthly needs of sex.

Jesus takes the Sadducees’ question, which is supposed to put his work into question, as an opportunity to describe the conditions in the spiritual world and to emphasize that they are completely different from those in this world or in the beyond. The mind, which is bound to the senses, imagines eternity analogous to the world of the senses and must therefore encounter contradictions. On the other hand, Jesus describes the fact of the resurrection from the dead, emphasizing its character, necessity, and possibility, for since God is a God of the living, all people, having emerged from God with their eternal true self, must one day become alive again according to their true self and become – and be able to become – “children of God.” The work and mission of Jesus as the embodiment of the true self of the human being are reflected in this goal.

As the Sadducees of that time did, the earthly mind at all times tends to deny the possibility of a resurrection from the dead or even of a spiritual world in general, whose existence the Sadducees still recognized. Conversely, the existence of a spiritual world and the possibility of a resurrection from the dead cannot be proven with arguments from the earthly mind. The competence of the mind relates only to the sense world from which it emerged. That is why it must be denied the right to judge at all about the existence of a spiritual world and the possibility of resurrection, be it denying them, be it proving them. The spiritual facts can only be experienced by a spiritual organ, the true self. Anyone who does not want to accept this spiritual organ will have to remain in the darkness of the sensory world. But those who let their true self speak within them will be able to accept these spiritual facts at least as hunches. In this sense, some of the scribes say, “Teacher, you have spoken well.”

Relationship of Rank of Spiritual and Earthly World

20:41 *But he said to them, “In what sense do they say that the Christ is David’s son? ⁴² For David himself says in the book of Psalms,*

*‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
⁴³ until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.’*’

⁴⁴ David therefore calls him ‘Lord,’ and how is he his son?” (LEB)

In the fourth phase of the spiritual path, Jesus as the embodiment of true self of the human being is confronted with all the great currents and forces of this world and the hereafter and makes his relationship to them clear. First, his origin and legitimacy are questioned. Then his relationship to political power and then to earthly philosophy or theology are discussed. And finally, Jesus himself raises the question of the relationship of the spiritual power to the true self. All of these clarifications are important because the true self of every person on the spiritual path must become clear about its own nature and that of the earthly currents. This is one aspect of its development. If this did not happen, it would always be in danger of falling prey to these currents. But as it is, it recognizes them and can put them in their appropriate place.

In the Gospel, the question of the relationship between the spiritual power and the true self is clothed in the question of the hierarchy of David and Christ. David is the epitome of theocratic spiritual power ruling through religion and morality. He is king and prophet in one. Christ as David’s son is a symbol for the idea and hope of the people of that time that the Messiah would establish a morally and religiously conceived kingdom of God on earth. That would include the abolition of Roman foreign rule because according to this view, there can be no other ruler apart from God and God’s law. The scribes, chief priests, and Pharisees as well as the people have this idea of the Christ-Messiah. Yes, even Jesus’ disciples are of this opinion, for they did not understand three times when Jesus explained to them that the Messiah would have to suffer and be put to death in Jerusalem.

But the kingdom of the Christ-Messiah is a realm of the spirit.

While it can express itself in political structures, it is not identical with it. It belongs to a dimension that is not only contrary to the earthly world and the hereafter with its principles of power but also superior. This fact is expressed in the circumstance that David calls the Christ-Messiah his “Lord” (Psalm 110:1). David knew the right order of rank. The spiritual world, the true self, is the highest. It would have the function of giving meaning and legitimacy to everything earthly including the religious powers and of organizing earthly life accordingly. Conversely, the religious leaders would have the task of serving the spiritual world, implementing its impulses in their own ranks, and helping others with this implementation. The spiritual world is an invisible, intangible realm that only lives in the hearts and heads of people, but from there, it can also order earthly life including the body politic. Thus, through his questioning, Jesus encourages his listeners to think about their role as a religious elite.

But he also encourages them to think about the function of the Christ-Messiah. This is not a particularly talented representative of religious and political power. Rather, he is a representative of the spiritual world, claims no earthly power, but is the embodiment of the true self, the order of the spiritual world, which should arise in his listeners. When this order arises in them, they will freely carry out the law of the spirit inscribed in them.

The same is true in the life of the individual. The human ego takes center stage, organizes its life according to religious and moral laws, and under certain circumstances, turns it into a private theocracy. However, the true self, the offspring of the world of the spirit, belongs to the origin and basis of all life. It is superior to all religious and moral regulations. These derive their actual legitimacy only from the spiritual law. Therefore, the ego must learn to subordinate all its activities to the law of the true self. The true self lives freely from the law inscribed in it; the ego becomes its expression and instrument.

Characterization of the Spiritual Power

20:45 *And while all the people were listening, he said to the disciples, ⁴⁶“Beware of the scribes, who like walking around in long robes and who love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets, ⁴⁷who devour the houses of widows and pray lengthy prayers for*

the sake of appearance. These will receive more severe condemnation!” (LEB)

David was at least still a king who bound his rule to God’s commandments and sought social justice. The scribes at the time of Jesus, on the other hand, have long since abandoned this path. They love power: the best seats in the synagogues, respectful greetings in the marketplaces, places of honor at banquets, and possessions. They squeeze the people and “devour widows’ houses.” At the same time, they pretend to be in perfect harmony with the commandments of God and say long prayers for appearance. The Christ-Messiah characterizes this theocratic layer of his day once more and warns his disciples not to place any trust in it. The same tendency to power, honor, and wealth is inherent in everyone as is the tendency to clothe them in the cloak of piety and morality in order to better control one’s own life and that of others. Only the true self, its honesty, and clarity of cognition are able to lay bare these relationships.

The Poor Widow: Relationship between Spiritual and Earthly World

21:1 And he looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the contribution box, ² and he saw a certain poor widow putting in there two small copper coins. ³ And he said, “Truly I say to you that this poor widow put in more than all of them. ⁴ For these all put gifts into the offering out of their abundance, but this woman out of her poverty put in all the means of subsistence that she had.” (LEB)

How a person acts in whom the spiritual world is the basis of life is represented by the scene with the poor widow. Jesus “looked up”: He turned his gaze from the lower to the higher, from the external, earthly to the internal, spiritual, from outer behavior to the heart in which the innermost human motives are at work. Seen from the outside, the gifts of the rich far outweigh the widow’s paltry copper coins. Looking from the inside, however, it appears that the widow gives all her possessions, the rich only a small part of their surplus. This also shows the relationship between the giver and the spiritual world. The widow gives everything she has to the spiritual world and with it her whole ego, which is usually tied to earthly possessions. In this way she enables the spiritual world to

work in her. The rich, however, keep the majority of their belongings – and with it their whole ego, which is tied to these belongings. They do not let the spiritual world affect them. Maybe they feel a moral obligation to it; maybe they think they can be on good terms with God through their gift. In any case, they do not love God as the poor widow does, so they cannot give themselves to God.

This concludes the fourth phase of the spiritual path of Jesus and his disciples, which is characterized by fruit bearing, with a scene showing what real fruit bearing looks like. The egocentric rich sacrifice parts of their wealth to God to gain benefits for themselves. But the God-loving ego sacrifices everything to God including itself because it strives to be absorbed in God.

Timeless Meaning of these Processes

In the fourth phase of the spiritual path, the powers of the true self work unhindered in the pupils. In the third phase, the pupils had become aware of their egocentric interests and gradually dissolved them. Therefore the spiritual powers now have the opportunity to work freely in them and through them and to use their earthly forces as an instrument. Yes, their entire earthly personality structure is transformed in the fourth phase because they consciously act out of the spiritual powers and let them flow. New thoughts born of the world of the spirit guide their life; new feelings born of the world of spirit give them strength; new goals arise from thoughts and feelings, and their actions are completely attuned to these requirements. The “clothes” of their spiritual soul, of their true self, are the organization of their thoughts, feelings, and aspirations and these are “transfigured” by the spirit. This state of Jesus was portrayed in the transfiguration on the mountain.

Such a situation also has an impact on the environment. All people who have affinity with the world of the spirit are irresistibly drawn to such masters or pupils and turn to them and place themselves at their disposal. The masters or pupils are reaping the harvest of their work up until then. On the other hand, all people who want to remain in the old, egocentric structures react to masters or pupils with hostility but are thrown back on themselves with force. They experience that they cannot get hold of and penetrate the dimension of spirit; indeed, they are exposed in their

spiritual poverty. Both aspects are clearly shown in the Gospel: When Jesus enters Jerusalem, all the forces of devotion and gratitude of his followers meet him. And by driving the merchants out of the temple, he repels forces hostile to him. The true self, the order and power of the spirit, shows its irresistible power in this phase. All earthly forces are only fruitful when they submit to it. This fact is demonstrated by the discussions about the tax coin, the resurrection from the dead, and the relationship between David and Christ.

The many parables that Luke tells as part of the fourth phase of the spiritual path also revolve around the relationship between the earthly and spiritual dimensions. Some parables tell of the conditions for entering the realm of the spirit, others of the laws applicable there. All earthly qualities and abilities, the fruits of the vineyard, that people, guided by their spiritual leaders, have developed over the centuries belong primarily to God, not to the spiritual leaders. The pound entrusted, the true self, must be developed over the centuries by individuals and by humanity as a whole. That is the inherent purpose of human beings. Only in this way can they behave in harmony with the laws of development that underlie their existence.

Discourse on the End Times

At this point in the gospel, Luke presents a great speech by Jesus about the “end times.” The conditions of the end times are a great extension of the activity in the fourth phase of the path of the messenger of the spiritual world – only with one important difference. At this point, Jesus is still working through a material, visible body among humanity. But after the resurrection, after laying aside his physical body, his true self and spirit personality work directly out of the spiritual world into the organism of humanity. This can be called the seventh and final phase of his spiritual path. The true self resurrected in the spiritual world and the spirit personality living in the spiritual world, the “Son of Man,” are information and structures that will then penetrate the organism of humanity with a completely different power than before and will provoke corresponding reactions. Also then, the reactions will be positive or negative but in increased intensity due to the increased activity of the perfect true self of the human being. The longing for the spirit within the true self of individuals, the

“below,” will forcefully attract the pattern of the true self of the human being, the Son of Man, the “above” – and vice versa. Both will strive to unite with each other. At the same time, the negative ego forces are increasingly beset by the growing spiritual impulses. They feel their days are numbered, for the more they cut themselves off from the spirit that sustains everything, the fewer powers they receive to be able to sustain themselves. That is why they behave ever more fanatically and rage ever more senselessly in their fear and hatred of the spiritual world and its followers. The “end times” are therefore a difficult time for people who orientate themselves towards their true self.

Development of Humanity

While Jesus is still living in a physical body and can visibly work among his disciples, just before entering the fifth phase of his journey, he explains to the disciples what will happen in the world after his resurrection and ascension when he will work directly from the spiritual dimension into the organism of humanity. The “discourse on the end-times” by Jesus gives the disciples insights into the development of humanity and their own development – be it that they are taught by an external Jesus, be it that they come to the disciples as insights from within, from their own true self, the inner Jesus.

What is the meaning of the path of the pupil, the meaning of human life? It is the unfolding of the true human identity, the image of God that has been inherent in the human being and in humanity since eternity. This must happen contrary to human egocentricity, which has caused the chaotic conditions of the earthly world and which envelops the true self like armor and hinders it.

Both aspects of humanity are evolving: the earthly, self-centered aspect and the image of God. Both aspects are also embedded in larger contexts. The context in which the earthly human being and earthly humanity live are the laws of this world and the beyond. The evangelist expresses this through the symbols “earth” and “heaven.” “Earth” is the world that can be perceived with the senses, this world. “Heaven” is the unseen forces, the energy fields or radiation fields that penetrate and surround the earth, the afterlife. When it says in Luke 21:26, “the powers of the heavens will be shaken,” what is meant are these energetic fields that

surround the earth and permeate the planetary system of which the earth is a part. The planetary orbits are the visible expression of the structures of force lines of these fields. Human beings are embedded in them as earthly, worldly beings and are determined by them like small magnets by large magnetic fields. The earthly consciousness and unconscious of people draws its nourishment and direction from these fields.

In addition, over the centuries humanity has produced countless thoughts, feelings, and will impulses that are collectively repeatedly revived and thus continue to exist. Belief systems, ideologies, feelings of revenge, hopes, fears, and expectations are energy fields generated by people, which become independent of them and exert compulsion on them as “demons.” Those who want to free themselves from an ideology or a belief that they have recognized as untrue will notice how strong such a compulsion can be. These energy fields – Paul speaks, for example, of “the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12) – are also part of the “powers of the heavens” of which verse 26 speaks. Earthly people are dragged along, make their experiences, and develop in the cycles of these forces, both the planetary radiation fields that are independent of humanity and the ideological fields created by people, collectively referred to as the beyond or the hereafter.

On the other hand, humanity is surrounded and permeated by power fields of the divine world that correspond to the image of God within the human being. Whether people can react to these influences from the divine world depends on how far their armor of self-centeredness has been broken and how active and awake their true self has become. The divine world is constantly striving to touch the spiritual core in people and thus to take them into a completely different development than where the force fields of the earthly world are taking them.

After his resurrection and ascension, Jesus acts as a true self and spirit personality in the power fields of the divine world and from there on humanity. When the time is right, contact is established between the people in this world who are receptive to the spiritual world and the power fields of the spiritual world. The “Son of Man,” the embodiment of the structure of the spiritual world, comes to humanity as energy and information on “the clouds of (the spiritual) heaven” (Matthew 26:64, Daniel 7:13). “Clouds” are the symbol for concentrations of energy, with “heaven” here

representing the divine energy fields.

The Son of Man no longer embodies himself in an earthly body but comes to people as energy and information, as “lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other,” as an energy field encompassing and penetrating the entire earth and humanity. These energies are not visible outwardly but are experienced as “light” inside the human being, as an illuminating “flash of lightning.” People become aware of their true self and their homeland, the divine world. There is an inner clarity, a conscious understanding of the structure of the spiritual world and the structure of the true self, which is the “Son of Man.” This is the vision of the Son of Man, the returning Christ. No person is seen, no luminous being standing outside of the human being. One cannot say of the returning Son of Man, “Look, there!” or “Look, here!” One does not see him as an external appearance, neither in this world nor in the hereafter. He is earth-encompassing divine power and information that penetrates and illuminates the human true self from within, causing people to see and experience the world and themselves in new ways. They do not even have to know that it is the Son of Man who is working in them. They will only experience that new powers and insights are active in them.

At the same time, a judgment, a correction, is connected with the increased activity of the power fields of the spiritual world and the return of the Son of Man “coming on the clouds of” (the spiritual) “heaven” (Matthew 26:64, LEB). Those who have prepared themselves for the energetic activity of the Son of Man, for his return on the clouds of heaven, by consciously or unconsciously dissolving their self-centeredness and consciously or unconsciously unfolding their true self will be permeated by the information and powers that are becoming active because they more or less conform to them and will experience them as strengthening. Remnants of their selfishness will be dissolved by the new powers. But many have not prepared. They are completely attached to their self-centeredness and thus remain in the grip of the energetic force fields of the beyond, the “powers of the heavens.” Since the structure and forces of selfishness and of the force fields of the beyond are opposed to those of the spiritual power fields, when the latter become powerfully active, all tendencies and structures opposing and contradictory to them will be dissolved, even broken up. And if people have not developed qualities corresponding to the structure of the spiritual world –

what is left? Emptiness and nothingness, as in the parable of the pounds.

The resulting turbulence and terrible experiences are addressed in Jesus' end-times discourse. Those who only take note of this side of things will think of the return of the Son of Man with dismay and fright. The apocalypse will appear to them as a terrible judgment. But in reality it is about a correction, a demolition of all structures that have no right to exist in the face of the structure of the spiritual world. The aim of the rectification is to enable people who are confronted with the frivolity and futility of their previous self-centered lives to make a new start. Precisely because of this experience, they can turn to the powers of the spirit that are also present in them as the true self.

The return of the Son of Man, the end times, can refer to an individual as well as to a group of people or to all of humanity. It is always about the fact that after a period of the visible activity of the spirit in this world, the energies of the spiritual power fields, the clouds of the spiritual heaven, have an invisible effect on people. An individual or a group of pupils on the spiritual path are suddenly confronted with the power fields of the spirit. These penetrate them, breaking through the armor of selfishness and merging with the largely unfolded true self of the individual or group. The processes of purification and correction that occur in this process correspond to the representations of the end-times discourse. But there can also come times in the history of humanity when after a long period of preparation, such an activity of the power fields of the spirit takes place in all of humanity. The events in the days of Noah or the destruction of Sodom described above (Chapter 17) are examples of this.

So the end times are not unique, not a time period after which the life of humanity would be finally extinguished. End times happen periodically over and over again. Again and again, there is a period of a new beginning in the earthly world, a time of preparation and construction, and a time of the end of an epoch in which individuals, such as Noah or Lot, or a group of people are taken into the spiritual world while the vast majority experiences a correction and must experience a destruction of all previous values – in order to make a new beginning.

For the disciples of Jesus, the union of their true self with the pattern of the true self of humanity came at Pentecost. At Pentecost, the power of the spirit broke into the earthly world for

them and connected with their true self. At Pentecost, the Son of Man, who had left this world and ascended to “heaven,” returned in the clouds of the spiritual heaven and made himself known in them as the Holy Spirit. In the Holy Spirit, they “saw” the Son of Man, the structure of the true self, and it became active in them. With Pentecost, a new life began for them in the earthly world. Pentecost and its consequences are part of the fifth phase of their spiritual path. For Jesus, the Pentecost of his disciples, his return in the clouds of heaven, is the seventh stage of the path. The sixth is his ascension into heaven, the conscious connection with and entry into the kingdom of God.

Since then, Pentecost, the end times, can happen to every person and every group of people that consciously prepares to enter the kingdom of God in order to one day experience the return of the Son of Man. Looking at the whole of humanity, one could therefore say that the end times are uninterrupted since individuals and groups experience the Pentecost event again and again, and the powers of the spirit surrounding the earth are constantly attacking people’s self-centeredness and putting them face to face with nothingness.

Motive for the Address on the End Times

21:5 *And while some were speaking about the temple, that it was adorned with precious stones and votive offerings, he said, ⁶ “As for these things that you see—days will come in which not one stone will be left on another stone that will not be thrown down!”* (LEB)

The reason for Jesus’ end-times discourse is a comment made by some disciples (see Matthew 24:1) about the temple in Jerusalem. The temple is a symbol of God’s activity in the physical world and people’s response to it. Once before in Jewish history, before the Babylonian exile, the temple had been destroyed. Once before, the end times had come for the Jewish people after a period of the preparatory and fulfilling activity of God. A new beginning had been made with the rebuilding of the Temple under Zerubbabel after the people had returned from the Babylonian captivity. But this new epoch since the Babylonian captivity will also come to an end. Jesus predicts it. He knows that rhythmic developments take place in the earthly world and that everything that has started will

come to an end. He also knows the causes of the end: People no longer react to the activity of God in the heart, the inner temple, in a lively way. They turn their temple of the heart into a “den of robbers.” They replace their turning to God with a turning to the ego personality and the egocentric motives for power, honor, and possessions. When this negative development, parallel to the positive development of the true self in other people, has reached a certain point, repercussions must take place according to the law: The end times are initiated; a correction takes place.

Beginning of the End Times

21:7 And they asked him, saying, “Teacher, when therefore will these things happen, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?”⁸ And he said, Watch out that you are not deceived! For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he,’ and “The time is near!” Do not go after them!⁹ And when you hear about wars and insurrections, do not be terrified, for these things must happen first, but the end will not be at once.”¹⁰ Then he said to them, “nation will rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom.¹¹ There will be great earthquakes and famines and plagues in various places. There will be terrible sights and great signs from heaven.

¹² “But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, handing you over to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and governors because of my name.¹³ This will turn out to you for a time of witness.¹⁴ Therefore make up your minds not to prepare in advance to speak in your own defense,¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom that all your opponents will not be able to resist or contradict.¹⁶ And you will be handed over even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put to death some of you.¹⁷ And you will be hated by all because of my name.¹⁸ Even a hair of your head will never perish!¹⁹ By your patient endurance you will gain your lives.” (LEB)

Jesus begins with a warning to his disciples, which he had given before (Luke 17:23): Do not run after false teachers in this world or after apparitions in the beyond! The return of the Son of Man is an experience within the human being, an encounter of the human consciousness with the structure and powers of the spiritual world

resulting in an illumination and strengthening of that consciousness. The pattern of the true human self connects with the true self of individual people, which then becomes conscious and active. All life and the world appear in a new light. Therefore, when false prophets in this world say, It is I, I am the Son of Man, that cannot be right, for the returning Son of Man manifests within the human being. When apparitions born from the unconscious, from the beyond, become visible and claim, It is I, I am the Son of Man, that cannot possibly be right, for the Son of Man is not a product of the unconscious beyond but is the true self becoming conscious. All these phenomena and appearances only distract from the process that has to happen within the human being: the becoming conscious and active of the true self. Appearances in this world or the beyond make people dependent on external authorities and rob them of their independence. Therefore, “Do not go after them!” They could say, Look here! or, Look there! Yes, even the ego itself could assert, It is I. I am the Son of Man. It can act as if it were the true self, the true self filled with the knowledge and power of the spirit. The following also applies to this: “Do not go after it!” The true human identity is free from the drive for power, prestige, and possessions, the earthly motives that are always associated with the ordinary ego.

Chaotic Situation

The danger of the pupils of the spirit being misled will be all the greater, as the longing for the manifestation of the Son of Man within oneself grows immeasurably in the end times. External and internal distress will increase. When the order of the spiritual world approaches humanity as a structure of lines of force, the order of the earthly world gets out of joint both on this side and on the other side. What people had believed in collapses: power, honor, and wealth, and what had provisionally organized their lives collapses: hierarchies, power relationships, property situations, and the beliefs and ideologies that legitimized them. The consequences are political and social chaos. People rise against people and kingdom against kingdom. People’s exploitative attitude towards nature leads to famine, disease, and earthquakes. Horrors in the form of human-made catastrophes, environmental pollution, weird diseases, climate change, and food spoilage beset people. Great signs from heaven appear: This can

mean the visible earthly heaven where signs of the disturbance of the natural balance become noticeable but also the “heaven” of the energetic world that is disturbed by the collective misconduct of people. All of this plunges people into extreme distress and insecurity so that the longing for a savior becomes irrepressible. How easily do they then expect an external savior instead of reflecting on the powers in their own being, on the Son of Man who will manifest in their own being and thereby also build up a new external order! How easily can earthly people and beings from the spheres of the beyond pose as saviors and claim, It is I, and find followers!

Position of the Pupils of the Spirit

The coming of the end times is prepared by the true self of the people who have matured for it unfolding in the earthly world. In this way, there is a polarization between below and above, between the people in the earthly world who are receptive to the power fields of spirit and these fields, the pattern of the true human self, above. At some point, the attraction becomes so strong that the spiritual powers discharge downwards like an electric current – with the corresponding consequences for the force fields in this world and in the beyond. So there is a constantly increasing tension, which is also noticeable to those who remain in self-centeredness in this world and the next. They feel the coming lightning. They know it is hostile to them since it endangers their egocentric existence. They instinctively identify those people who open themselves to the spiritual world as their opponents who attract the lightning. That is why the tension between people who are consciously or unconsciously on the spiritual path and people and institutions who remain in their traditional self-centeredness grows in the end times.

The situation of the pupils of the spirit in these circumstances is described in the following verses. The disciples can still speak publicly about their experiences. Complete chaos with wars and uprisings has not yet broken out. But it is precisely the public appearance of the disciples that draws the attention of the religious and secular rulers, and since they see the disciples as enemies of their lifestyle, their view of life, and their privileges, they persecute them. The religious leaders of all times – represented in Jesus’ time by the rulers of the “synagogues” – and

the political leaders of all times, kings and governors, who can fill the “prisons” will seek to bring the pupils of the spirit into line and to eliminate them. They accuse them of the betrayal of sacred traditions.

How should people touched by the spirit respond to such accusations? Jesus, the true self, lets them realize: Relying on earthly reason and its arguments is of no use then. By doing so, they would be moving on the plane of the earthly world and become entangled in it. Rather, they need to rely on their own inner being, which is filled with the spirit of the Son of Man: “I will give you a mouth and wisdom.” No adversary is a match for the spirit of truth, for the latter encompasses and sees through all levels of this world and the beyond and thus also the rational mind and its arguments. Jesus says to his disciples, Rely on this power of truth within you, which assesses every situation and every person correctly and brings the essence of every person and every situation to light. No rulers will be able to resist or contradict the truth about their own nature. They can defend themselves against it and kill those who say it. But even then it will be stuck in them like a barb.

And how is it with the personal relationships of the pupils at such a time of tension? No different than it is with their relations to public institutions. Here, too, the pupils find themselves increasingly at odds with earthly values and their representatives. Because of their true self, because of a new world that wants to take shape in them – “because of my name” – they will be hated by all those around them who want to remain in the old world. In the organism of the family, friends, and acquaintances, they may be experienced like a foreign body and be expelled instinctively. They pose a threat to everyday life. People may even seek an alliance with the earthly institutions that can render the foreign body harmless and hand it over to these institutions – no matter how strong the ties of family and friendship may be. Here the incompatibility between the true self and egocentricity is demonstrated again. The pupils on the spiritual path will “hate” egocentricity not the people in whom it works. But in their self-centeredness, people will hate the pupils, expel them from their community, and possibly kill them.

Yet “even a hair on your head will never perish.” This promise refers to spiritual human beings and to their powers and contents of consciousness. Nothing is lost of these since they are eternal and

no one can destroy them – except the pupils themselves. Hence Jesus’ call to his disciples to remain steadfast. If the pupils remain in tune with their inner being, with the Son of Man, the spiritual world remains present and can work through them. However, if they give in to threats from authorities and loved ones out of fear of being cast out, disadvantaged, or killed and return to the old way of life, the connection to the spiritual world is severed and consciousness of it is weakened, even extinguished. With that, conscious life in eternity is lost again. But through steadfastness on the basis of their true identity, they strengthen it and thus gain eternal life.

Destruction of the Temple

21:20 *“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. ²¹ Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside it must depart, and those in the fields must not enter into it, ²² because these are days of vengeance, so that all the things that are written can be fulfilled. ²³ Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing their babies in those days! For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people, ²⁴ and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”* (LEB)

End times also mean that an old impulse from the spiritual world, which has gone through its development in the form of a religion, loses its power and that its forms are destroyed. It loses its power because self-centeredness increases and cuts off all connection with the spiritual world. This escalation is represented in Jesus’ discourse on the end times by “Jerusalem surrounded by armies.” “Jerusalem” is here a symbol for the traditional religion. But it has now become a “den of robbers.” Ambition, greed, and the drive for power have nested in this religion; the belief in the omnipotence of the ego and its intellect has supplanted the activity of the divine world. People dedicated only to earthly ends, the “Gentiles,” have no respect for forms that no longer express a living spirit, yes, which, under the pretense of being an expression of the holy, are only vessels for the thirst for glory, power, and possessions. They are also drawn to the tangible and intangible

treasures that Jerusalem has accumulated over the centuries.

That was the situation on a smaller scale in Jesus' time. The Jewish religion had frozen in old forms. At the same time, Jerusalem besieged by "Gentiles" becomes the image for similar situations in all periods of history, including in the modern world, where the ancient values, valid for centuries, which had been nourished by various religious impulses, are losing their force and their forms are being swept away.

Those people who are nevertheless inwardly connected to the spiritual world – these are the people who live "in Judea" – can only save themselves by fleeing "to the mountains" – namely to the mountains of the spirit, into the stillness of the inner communion with God, while in the planes of earthly life, the struggle rages between dogmatic representatives of different forms of religion from which the living spirit has departed, and the "armies of the Gentiles," adherents of materialism and earthly progress, destroy these outlived forms of religion – "Jerusalem."

All who have hitherto found their home in the outdated forms of religion would do better to leave this home that will be destroyed and also flee to the mountains of the spirit, and those who are already outside of "Jerusalem," outside of these forms, are well advised to no longer seek refuge within them and to not go into "Jerusalem," for the destruction of these forms is inevitable. They no longer offer a home to the seekers after truth.

The "days of vengeance" have come. The religious leaders had the task of staying in touch with the spirit and leading people to experience the spirit in a living way. Having long since lost that connection, they had still given the impression that the spirit lived in them and in the forms of the religion. But the people who are only oriented towards earthly goals, the "Gentiles," now feel that only an appearance is being maintained here. They had been powerless before forms filled with living content. But now they are moving in and destroying the rotten framework – with violence and through science and "enlightenment." This is the "vengeance," the inevitable reaction, repeatedly foretold by the Old Testament prophets. Because these are lawful processes, one does not have to be able to read the future to describe them. In this way "all the things that are written can be fulfilled."

Those people who are pregnant with a new, living faith in the spiritual world or have just "born" it and those people in whom the true self is growing unconsciously like a child in the womb or

becomes noticeable in the consciousness as a tentatively nurtured notion of another world are particularly at risk just as are those who are “pregnant” or “nursing” in such a chaotic time. They cannot find a home in “Jerusalem,” the old religious forms. They are in danger of being overrun by the “Gentile” impulses, and they are too weak in their faith and consciousness to flee to the mountains of the spirit or do not yet know the direction.

The destruction of the old religious forms by the “Gentiles” can take place very concretely. Luke refers to what happened before the Babylonian captivity of the Jews when Jerusalem was destroyed and the inhabitants were exiled to Babylon. After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70, many Jews again had to go into exile, and Luke may be referring to these events if he wrote his gospel after that time. But the concrete occurrences are an expression of inner facts. When people or a culture lose their living relationship with spiritual reality and life leaves the religious forms that have hitherto expressed that reality, there inevitably comes a moment when materialistic tendencies destroy these forms – violently or through intellectual assault. Even today, such inner processes always manifest themselves externally when revolutionary movements under the sign of materialistic ideologies or of the progress of civilization destroy old social and political structures based on weak religious traditions.

Influence of the New Powers

21:25 *“And there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity from the noise of the sea and its surging, ²⁶people fainting from fear and expectation of what is coming on the inhabited earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷And then they will see the Son of Man arriving in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸But when these things begin to happen, stand up straight and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near!”* (LEB)

In the background are the power fields of the spiritual world, which want to manifest a new impulse of the spirit in humanity. They want to touch the true self of as many people as possible or if it has already developed, strengthen it and unite with it in order to awaken in people a new religious life with new forms of

expression. These power fields have an enormously strong effect on people's consciousness and weaken previous patterns of thinking and feeling. The rational consciousness, the "day consciousness" that wants to absolutize itself and organize all areas of society and nature, loses its power of conviction and orientation under the pressure of new thought patterns that arise in people, stimulated by the spiritual world. People feel that a purely rational view of the world does not do justice to the structure of reality.

Is it not a very apt symbol when this process is described as signs coming "in the sun"? In Mark, it says in this context that the "sun will be darkened" (Mark 13:24, NRSV). The "sun" is the image for the rational consciousness illuminating people's "day," their visible world. This rational view of the world is now obscured and put into perspective by the new, comprehensive, spiritual world view that is penetrating into people's consciousness.

The "moon," the light that illuminates the unconscious of people, their "night," is also "darkened." It is their orientation in the world based on instinct, unquestioning belief, and feeling. This orientation also loses its viability. Signs appear "in the moon" and darken it. Yes, the course of the "stars" is also disturbed: The connections of fate, which can be researched astrologically, are influenced by the spiritual power fields. They can no longer be calculated exactly, and so this option of orientation is also no longer available. The new worldview brought into consciousness by the spiritual power fields overrides all previous worldviews, be they rationally, emotionally, or "magically" based. With this, all institutions and establishments that were based on such an old world view enter into the twilight. They collapse and people do not know how to help themselves, for at the same time, the drives and passions, until then held somewhat in check by the old patterns of orientation, begin to break their chains like "the noise of the sea and its surging." After the loss of all coherent rational or irrational order, they claim dominance over people, and unbridled aggression, passion, crime, and anarchy flood over society.

In this chaotic confusion, people do not know what to do anymore; the fear and horror increase immeasurably. Many "will faint." It can mean that, no longer able to cope with the enormous pressure of confusion and disorientation, they become totally calloused and fall into dull resignation. In extreme cases, they even lose their mind, perhaps as an unconscious self-protective

measure in order to no longer have to expose themselves to the demands of the environment, for all these terrors are expressions of “the powers of the heavens being shaken.” The power fields of the spirit disturb the energetic force fields of the earthly hereafter, which are characterized by self-centeredness, which surround people, and which control and nourish their earthly existence. “Sun”, “moon,” and “stars”, the human organs of cognition determined by the force fields of the hereafter, are “darkened.” Thus, through the influence of the spiritual power fields, people’s self-centeredness and the patterns of order determined by it are shaken. People are torn from the otherworldly contexts that control and nourish this world’s existence.

This is a prerequisite for the spiritual power fields that are breaking through the armor of the ego in the earthly force fields and in people being able to reach people’s true self. The “Son of Man,” the pattern of true human self, touches the dormant true self beneath the armor of selfishness in people. So the very chaos that arises from the dissolution of all old orders means the chance for the new order of the spirit to take root in humanity. The disorientation is a necessary transitional stage to a new orientation that corresponds to the essence and inherent purpose of the human being. For many, this appearance of the Son of Man “in a cloud” may initially mean a correction, an annihilation of the forms and ways of thinking based on self-centeredness with all the disorientation and fear associated with them: This makes a new beginning from the true self possible. And all those who, consciously or unconsciously, have allowed their true self to unfold can “stand up” and “raise their heads” despite all their fear and disorientation. They can elevate the structure of their true self into the structure of the approaching pattern of the true self and breathe a sigh of relief in this order of the spirit that is in accordance with their human essence. They are loosened from the shackles of the order of selfishness, which is not appropriate for human beings. Their true self is redeemed.

Lawfulness of these Processes

21:29 *And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. ³⁰ When they put out foliage, now you see for yourselves and know that by this time the summer is near. ³¹ So also you, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of*

God is near. ³² Truly I say to you that this generation will never pass away until all things take place! ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” (LEB)

All these “signs” – destruction of old religious and cultural forms, dissolution of all previous order, rebellion of primitive passions, advance of materialistic thinking, hunger for salvation from these conditions, and exploitation of this hunger by countless false teachers – characterize the approaching end of a cultural period or a stage in human development. Such periods are organic, lawful processes comparable to the organic developments in nature.

Every hibernation is followed by a spring in which the fig tree and all the trees sprout again. From this it can be seen that summer is near. Likewise, every ending of a religion, with all the horrors that come with it, is followed by a new beginning. Seeds of life from the spirit are emerging, and every observer knows that they will grow to full bloom in the realm of the spirit. Each end also means the appearance of new impulses from the spiritual world. When people’s ties to the old earthly order dissolve, there is freedom to experience the spiritual order. However, it is then decisive whether an organ of perception for this order has been developed at least in a rudimentary manner. If not, people will be left with nothing after the collapse of the old order.

In this way, the “kingdom of God” reveals itself again and again at the end of certain periods of development in the earthly world. It manifests itself to individuals, entire cultures, and all of humanity, depending on the length and extent of those periods. And as these revelations and their application increase human responsiveness to the spiritual world at large, more and deeper aspects of the spiritual world are revealed in the course of human history. There comes a point when the true human self, the image of God, is revealed in perfection. This revelation happened in Jesus. It has since happened, less perfectly, in many of his followers, whether Christian or not. The kingdom of God is near; it can appear again and again to people, cultures, or the whole of humanity, since it once appeared in all its fullness and has anchored itself in humanity, depending on people’s openness to it. Since the time of Jesus, we have been in the end times for all of humanity. Within the framework of this “great” end time, smaller end times are possible again and again, like smaller waves in a large wave train, end times for certain groups of people or for

individuals.

For the generation of Jesus, their end times had arrived. The spiritually receptive people of this generation experienced the revelation of the true self. In an end time, the previously valid orders in this world or the hereafter always pass away. “Heaven” and “earth” pass away. But the spiritual order of which the true self is the expression, which creates and gives life to all, the divine Word, never perishes. “My words,” the spiritual lines of force that correspond to the lines of force of the spiritual world and which break up everything in this world and in the hereafter with the appearance of the kingdom of God in the earthly world, “will never pass away.”

Preservation of the Receptivity for the Spiritual Powers

21:34 *“But take care for yourselves, lest your hearts are weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of daily life, and that day come upon you suddenly ³⁵like a trap. For it will come upon all who reside on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶But be alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to happen, and to stand before the Son of Man.”* (LEB)

It is essential that people are receptive when the lines of force of the kingdom of God become active when all previously valid earthly orders collapse. If they are receptive, they will attune themselves harmoniously to the spiritual order and be able to merge into it. They can let the powers of the kingdom of God dissolve without great pain whatever earthly qualities and ties still live in them. It would be different if people had receptivity but blocked it by getting drunk on earthly joys and hopes or getting too caught up in the earthly world with existential worries. Then they would not be prepared for the kingdom of God that wants to become active in them. It would destroy their state of intoxication and their earthly ties, leaving them with nothing.

Hence Jesus’ exhortation to his disciples to be careful that their hearts remain open to the spirit and not closed to it by illusions or worries. It also depends on having enough strength from true self to endure the chaotic collapses of the end times. It is not possible to escape with your own, earthly strength from the general

disorientation and fear, the conflicts that are breaking out everywhere, and the eruption of passions. Only the powers from the spiritual world and a firm anchoring in it, an “escape” to the mountains of the spirit, resting in the center of the true self, can help people to escape from the chaos and confusion. Hence Jesus’ advice to his disciples to ask for the strength to face these challenges. That means: Recognize that you are not able to do this on your own, but direct yourselves to the hills from where help comes (see Psalm 121:1).

Thus, through vigilance, the pupils withdraw from the illusions and worries that ensnare them in the earthly order and remain directed to the kingdom of God, the spiritual order, in order from this basis to let the chaos and confusion of the end times pass by them like a thunderstorm. Through this, they will develop sufficient consciousness and an inner state attuned to the spiritual order to “stand before the Son of Man.” Without vigilance, soul strength, and awareness, people would either not notice the “Son of Man,” the structure of the true self, or would not be able to endure the sight of the true self and its order. The old order that supported them would be destroyed, and they would fall because they did not conform to the new order and could not be raised by it. However, vigilance and constant orientation to the power and structure of the spirit will produce in them a state of soul that is congruent with the “Son of Man.” They will be able “to stand before the Son of Man,” to endure the sight of the order of the kingdom of God, and to be uplifted by it, for the Son of Man “is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel” (Luke 2:34, NRSV).

Conclusion of the Fourth Phase of the Spiritual Path

21:37 So throughout the days he was teaching in the temple courts, and throughout the nights he was going out and spending the night on the hill that is called the Mount of Olives. ³⁸And all the people were getting up very early in the morning to come to him in the temple courts to listen to him. (LEB)

At the end of the fourth phase of his development, Jesus, the pattern of the true self, has taken possession of his house, the temple of God. He works in the center of the capital Jerusalem, the

“city of peace,” for he is the divine peace that reigns in the head and heart of humanity and of the individual and from there can flow into the whole organism of humanity and into the individual. In this sense, the “people” come to Jesus in the temple to hear him. And they come “early,” so eager are they to hear him. They put all other things on hold.

In the hours of the day, the hours of waking consciousness, the true self in the human being moves and is active. But at night, the hours of rest and sleeping consciousness, it retreats to the mountain of the spirit, the “Mount of Olives.” A harmonious interplay takes place between rest and activity, between retreat into the sphere of the spirit and spiritual activity in the sphere of the temple, where God and the earthly world meet. As powerful and harmonious as this activity of the true self is at the end of the fourth phase, so enormous in contrast to it is the seeming fall into misery and powerlessness, which among other things characterizes the fifth phase of the spiritual path.

Fifth Milestone of the Gospel of Luke: Death and Resurrection

What happens in the fifth phase of the influence of the spiritual impulse in humanity or, referring to the individual, in the fifth phase of the spiritual path?

The spiritual impulse had touched the world, was anchored in it, had become conscious in some people, and had permeated the world with its powers in a healing and liberating way. It had called up positive and negative reactions. Now in the fifth phase of its development, it overcomes the world and overcomes death.

It overcomes the world. It pulls the people receptive to it up to its heights and makes them equal to the order and power of the spirit: It becomes for them a “rising.” It unmask the people opposed to it in their earthly way and becomes for them a “fall,” which in the long run, however, also means the possibility of a new beginning and a positive reaction.

And it overcomes death. The spiritual impulse is seemingly extinguished and “killed” by its enemies. It is apparent, however, that it overcomes the cause of death, the drive for the self-maintenance of the earthly life, and thereby death itself. It resurrects itself in power and has continued to work since then as

the structure of the true human being, as information in the organism of humanity.

In reference to individuals, this means that the true self in them has now, in the fifth phase of their path, become so strong and is so closely connected with the world of the spirit that they can change and overcome the world in the consciousness and in the power of the spiritual world. The true self in the individuals lifts the forces of the ego-personality receptive to its influences to its heights and makes them its instrument. It overcomes at the same time the root of egocentricity, the drive for the self-maintenance anchored in the material body. This drive for the self-maintenance dies; the true self that up to now was bound to the earthly personality as its means of expression also seems to die. But it resurrects in the powers of the spirit with a new means of expression, a complete spirit personality. It has lived since then independent of an earthly material body in the spiritual world and expresses itself in it. It has overcome the cause of death, the drive for the self-maintenance, and thereby death itself.

In this fifth milestone of the gospel, the dimension of the spirit is again brought forth concretely and made clear. In Gethsemane, where Jesus overcomes the drive for the self-maintenance and therewith the cause of death, an angel appears to him and strengthens him. And at the empty grave, which shows that Jesus has left the dimension of the earthly and entered the dimension of the spirit, that is, resurrected, two men in dazzling clothes appear, messengers of light from the world of the spirit.

That the spiritual impulse, the true self, wants to pull the human beings receptive to it up to its heights and how they react to this is told in its essentials in chapter 22. The theme of chapter 23 is above all the altercation of the true self with its opponents. The true self overcomes the world. And the theme of chapter 24 is the overcoming of death by the true self. A new consciousness no longer bound to the earthly material body and equipped with a new means of expression, a spirit body, has arisen.

The Passover: the Events Embedded in the History of Humanity

22:1 *Now the feast of Unleavened Bread (which is called Passover) was drawing near. (LEB)*

All the events are embedded by the evangelist in the history of humanity by referring to the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the events of the New Testament are already prefigured. What is celebrated in the festival of Passover? The exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt; the removal of the true self, Israel, from its imprisonment in “Egypt,” the earthly world. And this exodus is followed by the entry into the “Promised Land,” the kingdom of God. The overcoming of slavery in the earthly world and the overcoming of death by the true self followed by the resurrection of the true self, its becoming conscious in the kingdom of God, are celebrated. This exodus is made possible by the sacrifice of a lamb. The families of Israel each sacrificed a lamb according to God’s instruction, which is why they were spared from the judgment that God had decreed for the Egyptians. They could move unhurt out of the country, while the Egyptians suffered the judgment that finally broke their stubborn resistance to let Israel go.

The sacrifice of the “lamb” is thus a decisive occurrence in the process of the exodus and entry into the Promised Land, that is, death and resurrection. The lamb is the symbol for two completely different circumstances that have to be conceptually kept separate so that they can be understood. A symbol can stand for different, even opposite circumstances. In the first case, the lamb symbolizes the perfect true self of the human being, which is innocent but sacrifices itself for egocentric humanity separated from God (a humanity by which the true self is killed ever and again) so that the individual true self of individual people can resurrect in the power of the pattern of the true self. In the second case, the lamb symbolizes just the opposite, namely the animalistic in the human being, animalistic egocentricity and the drive for self-maintenance, which the human being must voluntarily “kill” so that the exodus from Egypt becomes possible.

When Jesus is identified with the Passover lamb, he is the carrier of both of these opposite functions symbolized by the lamb. Firstly, he represents the pattern of the true self, which voluntarily incarnates in humanity, which has become indebted, in order to place the powers of the divine world at the disposal of human beings. As spirit-filled true self, he is at the same time a Son of God, an Anointed One. And with this, the divine light as the only-begotten Son of God also works in him. These three aspects – Jesus as true self, Jesus as Christ, and Jesus as the carrier of the unique divine light that works in him – sacrifice themselves like an

innocent lamb for indebted humanity, carry its burdens, and let themselves be hated, persecuted, and inhibited by humanity, that is, “killed.” Thereby they can gradually grasp and strengthen the true self of every individual until it breaks through the hard shell of egocentricity into the consciousness. Jesus as true self, Jesus as Christ, and Jesus as the carrier of the unique divine light is thereby the innocent sacrificial lamb that is killed again and again by humanity, that is, repressed into the unconscious. In “death,” it takes all human hate on itself. It recognizes this hate and despite this hate continues to work in the human unconscious. Thus through its voluntary incarnation in an earthly personality, it takes on the “sins of the world” and enables the human being to finally recognize and overcome these sins in the powers of the spirit. This is one of Jesus’ functions symbolized by the lamb.

In the other, the lamb symbolizes the animalistic in the human being: egocentricity. At the exodus from Egypt, the Israelites have to voluntarily kill their animalistic ego, their animalistic “firstborn” – otherwise they cannot leave the earthly world, “Egypt,” which is stamped by egocentricity. When they kill it, they reach unity with God and stand in harmony with the divine powers. The Egyptians on the contrary do not voluntarily sacrifice their animalistic ego, their animalistic “firstborn.” Their animalistic ego is killed against their will by God, by the powers of the spirit. Their resistance against the exodus of the true self is thereby forcibly broken. When Jesus denies himself and voluntarily loses “his” life, his egocentricity, for the sake of the true self, then he is doing nothing different than what the Israelites did at the time of the exodus from Egypt and which they symbolized by the sacrifice of the lamb.

Both functions of the lamb are manifested in Jesus’ crucifixion. On the one hand, the crucifixion is the expression of the fact that the enemies of the true self “kill” this innocent self and that the true self allows itself to be killed like an innocent lamb in order to anchor the divine power in the world, including in the enemies of the spirit. On the other hand, at the time of the crucifixion, Jesus finally loses his old egocentricity. He voluntarily sacrifices his animalistic aspect just as the ancient Israelites sacrificed a lamb at the exodus from Egypt and thus enables the resurrection of his true self, the entry into the Promised Land.

As contrary as the two functions symbolized by the lamb are, they also reciprocally cause each other, for only as the divine

powers sacrifice themselves for people are they in the position to voluntarily carry out the sacrifice of the animalistic, their egocentricity. But also the opposite is valid: Only thereby that the people voluntarily sacrifice their egocentricity do they give the divine powers the possibility to flow into them and to take on their debts. The condition is in each case also the cause, and the cause is the condition.

By embedding the events described in what follows in the festival of Passover, their meaning becomes clear. Verse 1 of this chapter is like an introduction and interpretation of the events that follow.

The Situation of the Participants

22:2 *And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they could destroy him, because they were afraid of the people.* (LEB)

In order to better understand the events that occur between Jesus and his opponents in what follows, it is meaningful to investigate the situation and motives of the participants.

Motives of the People

In the people, there were two motives to follow Jesus. The one motive moved those who expected from Jesus primarily a just social order as well as a new political order free of Roman rule, perhaps in the form of a theocracy. They were the adherents of the Mosaic Law, which demanded that justice reigned in the social realm – consideration for the poor, widows, and orphans – and that in the political realm only God and not any foreign idols reigned over the people. The “Zealots” for the law believed and hoped that Jesus was their desired Messiah: the one sent by God who on the one hand appeared as the people’s representative against the scribes, elders, and chief priests and criticized their injustice and on the other hand reestablished the kingdom of David as a political revolutionary. He would drive out the Romans and put an end to the situation of “heathen” rule, which made a mockery of God’s law. No one would have to pay taxes to the Roman emperor anymore. Thus these Zealots saw in Jesus, mistakenly, a social revolutionary and a political revolutionary. And for them – again they were mistaken – the promised Messiah

possessed these characteristics. In their mind therefore, Jesus was – or at least could be – this promised Messiah, and what he did was secured by this Messiahship.

On the other hand, some persons among the populace were confronted by Jesus with a new possibility of inner life, were healed of “illnesses,” and freed from “demons.” They had felt in him the powers of the kingdom of God, and these powers were transferred to them through Jesus and his disciples -- they were “fed.” They could have a premonition of what the kingdom of God was: an inner state, not primarily outer life conditions that were just, although these might follow from the inner state – sometime in an indistinct future.

Motives of Jesus’ Disciples

Some members of the populace, the closer disciples of Jesus, had even stepped on a spiritual path on which they recognized Jesus as the “Anointed” who brought the kingdom of God as an inner reality. They had taken steps to consciously dissolve the characteristics of egocentricity and self-righteousness, which stood in the way of the inner experience of the kingdom of God. But they also were still convinced that Jesus would somehow, even if not with violence, reestablish the kingdom of David as an outer realm of social justice and political independence.

Motives of the Religious Leaders

The hate of the chief priests, elders, and scribes towards Jesus had increased in the measure that Jesus had unmasked their motives and ways of behavior and won followers among the people.

Just as the people did, the chief priests, elders, and scribes expected a Messiah who would be a social revolutionary and political revolutionary. But they denied Jesus was the Messiah. In the mind of the religious leaders, the Messiah would stand on the ground of the Mosaic Law. For them, however, Jesus did not stand on the ground of the Mosaic Law. How then could he be the Messiah? Did he not heal on the Sabbath offending against the law? Did he not question the Mosaic commandments of fasting, eating, and cleanliness? Did he not consort with “sinners,” which was unworthy of a teacher of the law?

And did he not attack them themselves, the representatives of

the law legitimized by tradition? Jesus' cries of woe to the scribes and Pharisees and his parables of the unfaithful tenants of the vineyard and the builders who reject the cornerstone showed sufficiently how he valued them.

Although there was no denying that he possessed charismatic powers, they could also be from Beelzebul, however, yes, they had to be from Beelzebul. Jesus' conversation with the scribes about the origin of his powers when he was driving out a demon testifies to this constant argument with the religious leaders about his legitimacy as does his last conversation with them about the relationship between David and Christ.

Jesus did not succeed in making clear to the religious leaders what he understood by the Messiah and in convincing them of the truth of this view. They were too rigid in their self-righteousness and their dogmatic understanding of the Mosaic laws. Jesus embodied the true self of the human being. In him, the kingdom of God was realized as an experience of unity with the spirit. Thereby, he objectively fulfilled the criteria of the Anointed One, the long-awaited Christ-Messiah. However, these objective criteria were not the subjective criteria of the religious leaders. They could not understand that the kingdom of God was an inner state, detached from fixation on outer laws and social forms, a state of freedom, the realization of the laws of the true self.

There may have been two groups among the religious leaders. Perhaps some really believed in the need for social justice and political autonomy in accordance with the Mosaic Law. However, they did not understand that the kingdom of God does not primarily consist of external orders and cannot be established by establishing external orders either. Therefore, in spite of their honest obeying of the law and their sincere desire for justice and liberty, they did not accept Jesus as the Messiah. Their self-righteousness and dogmatism made it impossible for them to see the freedom of the kingdom of God.

The second group pretended to themselves and others that they believed in the Mosaic law but were in fact not interested in its realization in the social and political spheres. A realization in the social sphere would have meant the annihilation of their privileges, the abolition of injustice and exploitation on which, alongside their traditional authority as religious leaders, their property, prestige, and power rested. A realization in the political sphere would have disturbed the comfortable arrangement with

the Roman occupying power. Should one jeopardize the peace and prosperity of the ruling class, which after all prospered under Roman protection?

It was this mentality that Jesus so relentlessly castigated and branded as hypocrisy and sanctimoniousness: speaking of the Mosaic law but violating it in one's actions and justifying them to oneself and to others with the authority of religious leadership. Such members of the religious elite were even less able and less willing to understand what Jesus was and brought: an inner kingdom of unity with the spirit, of inner truthfulness from which also follow acts of integrity on the outside. Besides their self-righteousness, their interests massively stood in the way of such an understanding. Thus their self-image as God-appointed stewards of the Mosaic Law and their interests worked together. Ideology and interests supported each other. Already at the beginning of his public ministry in Nazareth, Jesus had declared that an understanding of what the Messiah really was would be quite impossible here. He had explained the true nature of the Messiah using a passage from Isaiah and then explained that because of self-righteousness and vested interests, this nature would certainly not be understood.

Perhaps there was a third motive in the religious leaders to hate and oppose Jesus, at least in some of them. Perhaps they sensed that Jesus was right: that indeed all hope of attaining righteousness before God through outward behavior and outward forms was vain, that the previous basis of their life and their leadership was no longer valid, and that really new conditions – an inner kingdom of God – had to come. Nevertheless, the power of the old conditions was stronger. Should they, the religious leaders, give up everything they previously believed, their security, and their legitimacy through this belief? Through his teaching and life, Jesus challenged them to do so. But they could not accept this threat to their way of life up to then. And this dichotomy and the resulting secret bad conscience had to intensify their hatred of Jesus and their fight against him.

For all these motives, the religious leaders did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Yes, they consider him a blasphemer, a "heretic," because he ascribed this dignity to himself without, in their opinion, possessing it. But the people stood behind Jesus. For the religious leaders, he was therefore a seducer of the people, and the people were stupid enough to allow themselves to be

seduced. They did not realize, that is how the religious leaders perceived the situation, that Jesus could not be the Messiah because he did not stand on the ground of the Mosaic law.

The more people followed Jesus, the more dangerous he became for the religious leaders. They saw that the people saw him as a messianic social revolutionary. They had to assume that he saw himself as such. Being caught up in power-political thinking, they had to accuse him of power-political thinking as well. And that is why they feared him. But a false Messiah was not allowed to touch the social structure under any circumstances – this was also the opinion of those religious leaders who wanted just social structures. And the religious leaders who wanted their social privileges to be maintained thought so even the more. Jesus was not one of them; he did not stand on the ground of the Mosaic Law. How could they allow him to change the social system?

The religious leaders also saw that the people saw Jesus as a messianic political revolutionary and believed that he saw himself in this role. Again, in accordance with their own nature, they had to accuse him of dangerous power-political thinking. But a false Messiah was not allowed to play the role of a liberator from foreign rule. Jesus was not one of them; he was an upstart, an outsider. Such a person was not allowed to set up a theocratic kingdom of peace with himself at the head, perhaps independently of Rome on top of that. They feared Jesus as a competitor. They could not grant him success. And apart from that, it was still questionable into what kind of adventures the politically inexperienced Jesus would draw them. They may have thought, Who knows what would happen if one day Jesus gave the signal to rise up against the Romans? Such an uprising would cause a tremendous bloodbath and destroy the wealth and comfort of the established elite. Could anyone want that? That had to be prevented. Also out of political cleverness and even a sense of responsibility towards the people, the unpredictable leader of the people had to be rendered harmless.

To do this, they had above all to drive a wedge between the people and him and to destroy the people's faith in the Messiah. The scene with the tax coin already proves an attempt by the religious leaders to compromise Jesus among the people – or among the Romans. But now, just before Passover, things had progressed so far that he had to be made harmless, whatever the cost. They had to arrest him. That would have rendered him

harmless as a leader of the people. And that would have proved at the same time that Jesus was not the Messiah: The Messiah would not allow himself to be arrested. In this way, they could open the eyes of the blinded people and bring them back into the bosom of tradition and the authority of the clergy.

However, it was difficult to get hold of him because if he were publicly arrested by the temple guards – the Roman occupying power had granted the clergy the use of this executive body – the people would probably have defended him and the temple guards might have been defeated. Especially before the upcoming Passover festival when countless pilgrims including followers of Jesus flocked to Jerusalem, an arrest in public would have been problematic. “They were afraid of the people” (Luke 22:2, LEB) refers to this likely behavior of the people at a public arrest of Jesus. In this situation, Judas’ betrayal came in handy for the chief priests. It offered them the opportunity to arrest Jesus “apart from the crowd” (Luke 22:6, LEB), at night and secretly. And once he was arrested, the chief priests knew that the mood of the people would quickly change, for a powerless Messiah was no Messiah.

The calculation of the chief priests worked. After the arrest of Jesus, the enthusiasm of the people actually gave way to the blindest hatred, which can only arise from disappointed love. All hopes of liberation from the pressure of the occupying power and from the pressure of the unjust religious leaders were dashed. The speculation of the chief priests that after Jesus’ arrest the people would again stand by the religious leaders, who were apparently right in their assessment of this upstart and false messianic pretender, was also correct, even though they themselves had made a pact with the occupying power and suppressed the people.

Even Jesus’ closest disciples were in a state of extreme irritation after his arrest. What had become of their vision of reestablishing the kingdom of David? They had experienced the power of Jesus as the Anointed One and the effects of this power within themselves. Why was Jesus now evidently failing and unable to withstand those holding religious and political power and to triumphantly prove superior? The inner situation of these followers of Jesus after his arrest was complete disorientation and paralysis. Despite their inner experience of the kingdom of God, they too still had wrong ideas about the Christ-Messiah and his function and could not reconcile his passive behavior with their expectations. This explains their behavior. For example, Peter was trying to save what

he felt needed to be saved during Jesus' arrest. He drew the sword to thwart the capture of Jesus and to still allow Jesus to establish the kingdom of David. But when the arrest took place and the kingdom of David finally became impossible, the disciples fled and even denied their master. Added to the irritation was the fear of being captured, tried, and sentenced as Jesus himself was. They could not cope with this fear for their lives.

Motives of Pilate

The religious leaders accused Jesus of proclaiming himself the Messiah. Since they held that he was not because in their view he was not on the ground of the Mosaic Law, they considered him a blasphemer, a "heretic." Nevertheless, they feared him as a social revolutionary and political revolutionary, for in their opinion, revolutionary action necessarily followed from Jesus' messianic claim. According to their definition, the Messiah brought social justice and liberation from foreign rule.

Therefore, the members of the council accused Jesus before Pilate as one who is "misleading our nation and forbidding us to pay taxes to Caesar" (that is, as a political revolutionary), "saying he himself is Christ, a king" (that is, as a blasphemer), as well as one who "incites the people, teaching" (that is, as a social revolutionary, Luke 23:2, 5, LEB).

Pilate was indifferent to Jesus' "heretical nature." Whether or not Jesus stood on the foundations of the Mosaic Law was an uninteresting perhaps even inaccessible theological question for him. It only had to be important to him whether Jesus really was an inciter of the populace and a rebel against the emperor. In his eyes, that would have been a crime worthy of death.

But after Jesus was questioned, Pilate declared him innocent. "I found nothing in this man as basis for the accusation which you are making against him." (Luke 23:14, LEB). Jesus was neither a social revolutionary nor a political revolutionary as the prosecutors made him out to be. And if he claimed to be the Messiah and "king of the Jews," it was not in a political sense, which would actually have been a crime worthy of death, but in a different, spiritual sense likely inaccessible to Pilate. Jesus stood by his title "king of the Jews." But Pilate understood this much: Jesus was not a political king who wanted to establish his rule by force through rebellion and incitement of the people.

Pilate was convinced of Jesus' innocence. But he bowed to the pressure of the religious leaders and the populace. He saw through the religious leaders that they had handed him over "out of jealousy" as Mark says (Mark 15:10, NRSV). But it seemed too dangerous to disappoint the fanatical passions of the prosecutors. That could have landed him in trouble in the country itself in the future. He could also have been denounced to the emperor – this is again what Mark reports. Better then not to make enemies of the despised clergymen and the rabble and to secure his order.

The Being of Jesus

This is how the motives of the representatives of religious and temporal powers, of the people, and of Jesus' disciples can be understood. But what is expressed in the behavior of Jesus himself? Can his "motives" be fathomed?

Jesus, a Social or Political Revolutionary Who Thought of Himself as a Political Messiah?

Like the zealots and religious leaders of the time, later interpreters of the gospels often saw Jesus as a social revolutionary, reformer, or political revolutionary who used his charismatic abilities for his political ends. His self-image was supposedly that of a political Messiah.

Consistent with the theory that Jesus was a social revolutionary, he sharply challenged the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and scribes and demanded a just society as envisioned by the law of Moses. And was he actually a political revolutionary, a rebel against the occupying power? According to this theory, perhaps Jesus really did have seditious motives; only at first, he was adept at hiding them. He may have hoped gradually to gain enough popular supporters that he could one day strike out with some prospect of success against the Romans. His neutral behavior towards the occupying power – as illustrated, for example, in the scene with the tax coin – would then only have been a tactic. The passages in the gospel in which he asks his disciples to remain silent about his status as a Messiah could be interpreted in such a way that he did not want to be suspected of being hostile to Rome prematurely.

But did not Pilate himself, who had the best information,

conclude that Jesus was not a rabble-rouser and rebel? Would not Pilate have intervened in his own interests if there had been even the slightest suspicion?

And above all: Does this theory fit with the many sayings and parables of Jesus about the kingdom of God? Does it fit with the Sermon on the Mount? Does it fit with the many teachings given by his disciples and listeners on proper conduct in relation to the kingdom of God, all teachings relating to aspects of a spiritual path? Even if the “miracles” and the resurrection were inventions of enthusiastic and later disappointed followers: The sayings and teachings of Jesus, which relate to the spiritual path and make up more than half of the Gospel, cannot be interpreted as compensatory inventions by his disciples. They have their own weight.

Above all, does this theory fit with the many conversations Jesus had with the scribes and Pharisees in which his legitimation was at stake and in which he constantly pointed out that he brought the kingdom of God as a state within the human being? He is a spiritual not a political Messiah. Does he not vehemently deny all allegations that he is a political Messiah? “The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you” (Luke 17:20-21, NRSV). Outer social justice is only a by-product of the inner kingdom of God. “Instead strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well” (Luke 12:31, NRSV). Christ is Lord over David. That means, first comes the inside, the kingdom of God, then the outside, social justice and political independence. And he, Jesus, brings the inside, the true self; everything else is secondary. In any case, he does not make himself the executive body of social and political visions and interests. “Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?” (Luke 12:14, NRSV).

All of this, together with a spiritual interpretation of the “miracles” and resurrection, shows that Jesus’ behavior needs to be seen in a different light. With Jesus, a new humanity entered the world, an inner life erupting from the spiritual source in the human being, which then also shapes outer life: the becoming conscious and active of the true identity of the human being, the true self, the image of God.

Jesus, a Teacher of a New Ethics?

This new humanity is not an especially high ethic of the earthly human being. The Gospel has also been interpreted in this direction again and again: Jesus, the teacher of a high ethic of universal love for humanity that surpasses all ethics that had been valid until then. Jesus himself is the perfect expression of this new ethic, who also dies for the new values: the ethically highest human being on earth, loving towards all people, even towards his enemies. But Jesus himself does not seem to practice this “love of enemies” with his often very harsh words towards the scribes. It must be a different kind of love.

Jesus is not the friendliest and most generous earthly person, nor the humblest, most childlike, unprejudiced earthly person, nor the spontaneous, free, mindful earthly person, nor the pious, god-fearing earthly person, nor the earthly person standing up for the poor and oppressed. Jesus’ arguments with the scribes about the “righteous” and the “sinner” clearly show that the highly ethical earthly human being is not the primary content and goal of Jesus’ teaching nor is it the primary content of his life. The content of the teaching and the life of Jesus is the unfolding of the image of God, the spiritual human being. The decisive prerequisite for this is that people recognize that as earthly people, whether of high or low morals, they are separated from God and do not realize the image of God. Everyone whether of high or low ethics is existentially speaking a “sinner.” Those who want to fulfill their inherent human purpose, their true humanity, and regain unity with God must first become aware of this fact.

People who live their spiritual humanity and whose true self is increasingly unfolding will also meet high ethical standards as earthly people. The thoughts, feelings, aspirations, and actions of their earthly personality are gradually taken over by the spiritual laws and changed into a spirit personality. But that is a natural consequence of the unfolding of the true self not a result of moral effort.

The True Self: a New Humanity

The experience of the true self is a state equivalent to experiencing the kingdom of God, equivalent to realizing the image of God, which is also the abolition of the egocentric motives of earthly people. The true self is oneness with God, the regained connection

with the spiritual world. It is the freedom of people who realize their inner law, their true identity. And it is love for fellow human beings based on the order and powers of the spirit. When such a state has unfolded in people, they live out of the spiritual world and their egocentric motives are abolished. This state is non-violence, for example. Such people cannot be violent although filled with great inner strength. Their non-violence is not a tactic to achieve earthly goals. They no longer have such goals. They do not want to assert themselves and are not striving for any social or political influence. They simply live from the spiritual order and power and carry them out.

The new humanity also has consequences for the earthly behavior and ethics of the people concerned but is not absorbed by them. It also has consequences for the formation of earthly society but is not absorbed by it. Because such ethical and social consequences arise when a person such as Jesus lives and teaches the new humanity and because these consequences are also described in the Gospel, it can appear that Jesus acted out of ethical-moral or revolutionary earthly motives.

But Jesus *wanted* nothing. He had no motives of the kind that earthly thinking people ascribe to him. Jesus had become aware of the new humanity within himself. It had unfolded within him. He went on a path that resulted logically from his nature, the true self. He went on a path on which this humanity was finally anchored in people. He did not want to achieve anything. He performed a necessity.

It consisted in the inherent purpose of humanity being realized in himself and that the possibility for this was finally anchored in humanity in such a way that this “information” could never be removed from the human organism. That is *why* Jesus had to go into the lion’s den. That is why he had to carry the “information” of the true self through direct confrontation to all parts of the human organism, whether hostile or friendly to him. *All* friendly and hostile characteristics of the organism of humanity had to be “impregnated” with this information. It was precisely at the stage of their highest development of power that the hostile characteristics had to be attacked by this information so that at least the germ of overcoming the hostility was planted in them. Because the structure of the true self, even as a fleeting impression placed in a person who is hostile to it, continues to work in the person and in the long run breaks open the structure of self-

centeredness.

From the perspective of human evolution, the spiritual impulse embodied in John the Baptist and Jesus was indeed a necessity. It enabled the decisive step in the development of humanity: after the building of a self-responsible earthly ego, it enabled the becoming active and conscious of the true self, with the positive qualities of the ego, independence and responsibility, made to serve it.

From the time Jesus entered the womb, he was connected to the contents and powers of the spiritual world. In the course of time, he became aware of the contents of the spiritual world. At the same time, he became aware of the critical situation of the earthly world and the need to give human development a new impetus towards its inherent purpose. He *realized* that he was the embodiment of this impulse from the spiritual world. And since also the powers of the spiritual world had developed to a great degree in him and he had become conscious of them, he had the *power* to intervene at this critical point in human development. It was possible for him; he could overcome the world. He was able to do this by stimulating and strengthening the weak spiritual being of other people through his strong spiritual being. He could also do it by exposing his strong spiritual being to the earthly being of his opponents and letting it affect them. *One individual* had to expose himself to the enmity of the world and overcome it in principle through his being. Then others could follow him. And Jesus waited for the *right moment* to intervene. The moment had come after the journey through Galilee when the enemy forces had finally formed up in Jerusalem.

Realizing, having power, waiting for the right moment: Jesus fulfilled these requirements. If someone else had acted similarly in a similar situation without these prerequisites, it would have been blind lust for destruction, false heroism, foolish martyrdom, overconfidence, and stupidity. Someone else without these prerequisites in a similar situation would *have* to withdraw. For such a person, a journey to Jerusalem would have been pure provocation. Did Jesus himself not say to his disciples, "If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town" (Matthew 10:14)?

So Jesus, following a necessity and correspondingly "empowered," consciously goes to Jerusalem, into the lion's den, in order to make the new humanity visible and to let it work in the

“head” of the people, in the center of self-centeredness, which is represented by the religious leaders.

The person and life of Jesus are a revelation of new human possibilities, the actual possibilities of the human being. Opinions differ on this revelation. Jesus rejoices when he finds discerning followers and is saddened when he encounters misunderstanding and enmity. He knows that in the long run in human development, even the negative reactions will have a positive result. But achieving those results is not his *motive*. He knows they will happen. He does not sacrifice himself to get a result. He allows himself to be killed because his killing is only a reaction to the new humanity that he is bringing into the world. He knows that all of these reactions must be allowed if the new humanity is to be anchored in humanity. The sun also sends its rays to the earth and allows them to be partly assimilated, partly reflected, partly swallowed. But this is how its light works in the earth.

Such behavior is nothing other than the accomplishment of the spiritual path. Jesus had described this path himself: Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow the image of God. He denies himself, that is, in other words, he loses his earthly life of selfishness, interests, and motives. He does not want to achieve anything: He does not want to win followers for political goals; he does not found a new religion; he does not let himself be killed; he does not sacrifice himself. These would all be motives arising from self-centeredness. But this he denies, loses, and he allows only the image of God to work in him, which he follows. At the same time, however, this evokes the “cross,” for the power of the image of God in Jesus not only causes the image of God to be awakened in many other people, it also causes many others to misunderstand Jesus, others to hate, persecute, and kill him. He takes this “cross” upon himself because he follows the true self within himself and because the true self does not defend itself with violence and cunning but only *is*. He is not a revolutionary and therefore does not “fail.” He is not primarily a teacher of high ethics who seals the truth of his teaching with death. He is the representative of the new humanity, whose presence he places before all self-centered people. He accepts their reactions.

Thereby, Jesus not only walks the spiritual path himself, but in him, all of humanity goes this path in anticipation. He is the pattern of true human self. In him, humanity loses its egocentricity in principle, and in him, the true self of humanity takes up its

cross. All conceivable earthly forces of hatred and violence are concentrated on Jesus, and he consciously experiences them in the powers of the spirit. The soul of humanity experiences what it experiences. The inherent purpose of humanity, the development of humanity, the law according to which it began, the divine line of development that is laid out in it, is revealed through the path of Jesus. It is as if all of humanity were *one* human being walking this path – the experiences that they will have on this path in the future are concentrated in Jesus.

Jesus perceives all positive and negative forces at work in humanity and processes them on the basis of the true self. They are represented in the Gospel by the disciples, the people, the religious leaders, and the political rulers. The life of the true self is the conscious implementation of spiritual laws experienced inwardly by the human being. One with the “Father,” he freely and lovingly fulfills the necessity predetermined by his being and consciously accepts all the consequences of the inner law. He is “obedient” to the inner law of his own development and the development of humanity. This inner law is the “will of God,” and to that extent, Jesus is obedient to the will of God, not because he follows a “plan of salvation.” The will of God, the developmental law of human beings, is that they change from their self-centered life in the dimension of the ephemeral to a life shaped by unity, freedom, and love in the dimension of the divine.

That is why Jesus remains calm in everything he encounters and does not react defensively or attack: Judas’ betrayal, Peter’s denial, the imprisonment, the interrogations, the taunts, and finally the crucifixion. He accepts the reactions that the kingdom of God working through him triggers in others and allows them because the law of human development demands it. His non-violence is not a high ethical quality or even just giving in to the inevitable by putting up a brave front. It is a property of the true self, the peace of the kingdom of God in the human being, paired with the knowledge that this is the only way humanity can develop: by the true self allowing and accepting all human reactions.

Because Jesus is aware of the law of human development, which is also his own, he also *knows* “in advance” what will happen and how those involved will react. He knows the betrayal in advance, the denial, the imprisonment, and the killing in advance, also the resurrection. And yet he does not prevent events precisely because they must necessarily happen within the framework of human

development. He had three times announced his arrest, death, and resurrection to his disciples. Some will say that the evangelist attributed this “clairvoyant” knowledge to Jesus in order to underscore his omniscience as the Son of God and to emphasize that he willingly accepted all his suffering because he wanted to fulfill God’s plan of salvation.

Others will say that this is not an imputation of the evangelist. Omniscience and voluntarily carrying out God’s plan of salvation were actually characteristics of Jesus as the Son of God. Be that as it may, in both cases, the conduct of Jesus, even of God, is drawn into the realm of plans, motives, and purposes. Instead of an inner necessity, there is supposedly a plan of God that it was Jesus’ motive to fulfill and instead of knowledge of an inner law, to which every human being can attain, the infallible omniscience of a Son of God.

Jesus’ knowledge was not a clairvoyant looking into the future but knowledge of the reactions that necessarily and lawfully occur when following the spiritual path. Therefore, the Old Testament prophets to whom Jesus refers in his announcements could also know what would happen when the Christ-Messiah appeared. They, too, knew the lawful developments. They did not foresee them clairvoyantly.

The Lord’s Supper: Jesus and His Disciples

Chapter 22 until verse 62 has the theme of how the forces of the true self are finally connected with the people receptive to them and how they work in Jesus and his disciples in the fifth phase, the phase of decision of the spiritual path.

Jesus’ disciples have opened themselves to the forces of the spiritual world. Therefore the state of the new human being awakened by Jesus can continue to work through them – with the exception of Judas – into humanity and also awaken others. Jesus’ disciples were the first in which he could anchor the kingdom of God. They will anchor it in turn in others and thus continue Jesus’ mission. In this way begins a chain of positive effects of the true self of humanity. The dimension of the spiritual world will manifest ever more clearly in humanity, and ever more human beings will leave their consciousness and life according to the

dimension of the earthly world of this side and the beyond and change over to the dimension of the spiritual world. The Passover meal that Jesus has with his disciples shows how the pattern of the true self anchors its order and power in its pupils in order to continue working positively in humanity. It shows how the streams of the true human self, the order and power of the spiritual world, flow into the disciples as the “flesh” and “blood” of Jesus. In the “Lord’s Supper” Jesus ritually strengthens the positive reactions of people to the true self.

At first, Jesus’ disciples fail in the fifth phase of their spiritual path, however. They betray and deny the true self. Their egocentricity, their drive for self-maintenance, and the fear of death connected thereto are stronger than the true self in them.

The scene of Jesus in Gethsemane, however, shows how one true self overcomes the drive for self-maintenance and the fear of death.

Motives of Judas

22:3 *And Satan entered into Judas, the one called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. ⁴And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers of the temple guard how he could betray him to them. ⁵And they were delighted, and came to an agreement with him to give him money. ⁶And he agreed, and began looking for a favorable opportunity to betray him to them apart from the crowd. (LEB)*

What may have gone on in Judas’ mind? Can his motives to betray the master be understood?

Judas changes his position. Luke clearly expresses the “motive” for this: “And Satan entered into Judas.” What is meant thereby can be understood when one looks at the situation of a pupil on the spiritual path and the outer circumstances of that time. A change of position, a betrayal of the true self, is always possible on the spiritual path. From the beginning, two tendencies work in the pupil. On the one hand, he feels attracted by the true self, by a new, spiritual possibility of life, and seeks to realize it. On the other hand, the earthly drive for self-maintenance and the demonic drives for power, importance, and possessions still want to assert themselves. From the true self, the insight wants to come to Judas that Jesus’ kingdom is a realm of the spirit without the drive for power, importance, and possessions, but egocentricity

constantly suggests to him that Jesus could be a political Messiah after all. He, Judas, would then have a share of Jesus' power and glory.

Judas has long gone with his master. He has received and distributed spiritual powers, and he has healed the sick and driven out demons on behalf of his master and together with him. The true self in him has unfolded to a certain degree. He has begun to dissolve the old egocentricity in favor of his true identity. He has ever and again recognized the demonic, satanic forces within himself, the drives for power, importance, and possessions, and thereby they have lost their power over him to a certain degree.

Now there comes a final climax, however. Judas and the other disciples feel the extremely tense atmosphere in Jerusalem. They feel the danger from the religious leaders threatening their master and themselves. If they continue to follow their path, the possibility exists that they will be arrested with their master and be facing an uncertain destiny. Now it finally shows that Jesus is really not a political Messiah and that everyone who follows him has to give up every hope for power, honor, and wealth. Loyalty to him could even mean a physical downfall. Judas' drive for self-maintenance, not yet overcome in its roots, rears up against this, and the drives for power, importance, and possessions, the "Satan" in him, also oppose it. The satanic forces, laboriously held in check on the spiritual path and not yet dissolved, use a situation of inner weakness and fear in order to regain power over the pupil. Now Satan – the drives for power, importance, and possessions – again rules in him instead of the true self. It is as in the parable told by Jesus earlier: The house of consciousness freed from the demon, which had not yet been or not yet completely been taken in possession by the spiritual powers, is occupied again by the demon.

Why does Judas hand Jesus over to his enemies, however? He could have left it with his change of position after all. He hands Jesus over because in the new position of egocentricity, he experiences the old position of spirituality as a danger that needs to be removed. Jesus embodies Judas' previous – even if still unclear – goal of life, the voice of the true self that continues to press for realization. This voice must be silenced. It signifies a constant reproach. It also signifies fear, for a return to the spiritual path could mean destruction at the hands of Jesus' enemies. Jesus, as embodiment of the spiritual position the mere sight of whom is

already a reproach and calls up fear, must be removed.

Added to this is a compulsion for vindication. The defection and the new position have to be justified. Now the will for power, for greatness, and for life count as the highest values. All hopes for a powerful political kingdom of David that proudly holds its own place among the nations, that is justly ordered within, and that offers prosperity for all come to life again in Judas. Satan seizes the mastery in Judas' soul. The spiritual values are rejected and in a drive for justification, seen as bad. The spiritual life is inferior, contemptible, hateful, a danger for the earthly, "real" life, and a deceit of life. It has to be eradicated. Jesus, as the embodiment of the spiritual life, again becomes the object of scorn and hatred.

Personal reproaches can also come to the fore in this situation. Judas says to himself: Jesus has lured me to this despicable spiritual path. I have sacrificed years of my life for a false and bad thing. Jesus is a deceiver; revenge for this deceit! Such a stupidity that I believed him! Revenge for that I have sold myself as stupid! You, Jesus, have deceived me. Now I will deceive you!

Thus the breach of trust that accompanies every betrayal is justified. There is no obligation of loyalty towards a contemptible, hated deceiver. One may use all means to oppose him. It is like the parable. The demon that moves back into the empty house of the consciousness brings along still many more demons and with these companions rages worse than before.

The additional motive given by Luke of Judas' greed for money fits with this. For once everything that was holy up to now has been betrayed and the person is again occupied by all earthly and demonic powers, he will no longer see a reason to renounce a material advantage when it is offered to him.

Thus deadly fear was the prerequisite that the longing for the kingdom of God in the spiritual pupil Judas and his still weak experience of this kingdom withdrew and that Satan, the kingdom of the earthly powers of this side and the beyond, again gained dominion over him. When the plans of the chief priests to kill Jesus took on a tangible form, the fear became unendurable, and in Judas' dissenting soul, the satanic powers were victorious. Surely Judas would have gladly entered the kingdom of God, but out of fear, he betrayed this goal, went over to the opposing side, and handed the powers of the kingdom of God over to the earthly powers. He betrayed the actual inherent purpose of the human being to earthly goals.

One can thus see Judas as a pupil on the spiritual path, a soul torn in two that first opened itself to the forces of the spirit but then in a life-threatening situation when the practical consequences of this path became clear, let itself be taken again by the forces of Satan.

Another often heard interpretation of Judas' motives claims that he had been mistaken from the beginning. He had joined Jesus as a zealot because he believed in him as the political and social Messiah. He became a betrayer when he suddenly realized that Jesus who made no move to strike in Jerusalem was after all not the political Messiah that he had expected. He became immensely disappointed and recognized that staying with Jesus meant the highest mortal danger – for nothing. Then he renounced being Jesus' follower.

The handing over of Jesus by him would then have been motivated by disappointment. Judas now had a deep hatred for Jesus as an enemy of his ideals, as a charlatan, a deceiver, a dangerous fool who had to be stopped. This hate would have been the Satan that went into him and drove him to hand Jesus over.

This would be the less deep interpretation, for here it would not be a matter of an inner change of position. Judas would have remained loyal to his former values.

According to some interpreters who also begin with the supposition that Judas thought of Jesus as a political Messiah from the start but impute an "honorable" motive for the betrayal, Judas would have committed even less of an actual betrayal in the sense of an inner change of position. He had wanted to bring Jesus into a life-threatening situation and force him to finally show his colors. He impatiently had wanted to accelerate the self-revelation of the Messiah. Another version of this theory is that Judas had begun to doubt that Jesus was a political Messiah. He had wanted to remove this unbearable doubt by bringing on a moment of truth.

The Satan that entered him would then have been insolence: either the insolence to forestall Jesus' self-revelation or the insolence to put a human life on the line only to gain certainty in an unbearable, not transparent situation.

In both cases, there would be no inner change of position, not even the wish to hand Jesus over to the enemy. According to this theory, Judas had only wanted to bring Jesus into a life-threatening situation in which Jesus had to show his colors. If

Jesus were the Messiah, he would not allow himself to be handed over, Judas believes. If Jesus was not the Messiah, then Judas' behavior would even almost be justified. Jesus would then have been only a charlatan and deceiver whose being handed over to the authorities would have been logical. One cannot speak of an actual betrayal with this theory.

The Passover Meal

The Water Bearer

22:7 And the day of the feast of Unleavened Bread came, on which it was necessary for the Passover lamb to be sacrificed. ⁸And he sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, so that we may eat it. ⁹So they said to him, "Where do you want us to prepare it?" ¹⁰And he said to them, "Behold, when you have entered into the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house which he enters. ¹¹And you will say to the master of the house, "The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"' ¹²And he will show you a large furnished upstairs room. Make preparations there." ¹³So they went and found everything just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. (LEB)

Before Judas' betrayal, Jesus celebrates the Passover meal with his disciples. The story is very similar in its structure to the earlier one of obtaining the donkey's colt for Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Now Jesus also sends out two disciples, and now also the one addressed by the disciples reacts to the "master's" – then it was the "Lord's" – demand as if it was self-evident. Jesus now also knows in advance what will happen. As in the earlier scene, this one is a picture that describes the real relations between Jesus and the total organism of the people in this phase of the events.

This picture shows very peculiar traits: a mysterious water bearer and a mysterious owner of a mysterious house. In these person and circumstances, special spiritual powers, powers within the people, and the relations between these powers are presented. What is the significance of the "owner of the house"? In the earlier story of obtaining the donkey, the disciples were sent into a *village*. They made contact with the positive forces of feeling in the

people: the gratitude, devotion, and enthusiasm that helpfully came to meet Jesus in that phase of his work. Now the disciples meet the owner of a house in the *city*, in Jerusalem. It is the capital in which the owner of a house supports Jesus in his work. If one takes it figuratively, it deals with an aspect of the “ego” of the people, of helpful thoughts of the people that are active in the capital. The owner of the house represents the members of the leading class of the people who are favorably inclined towards Jesus. Later in the gospel, one learns, for example, of the counselor Joseph of Arimathea who “was looking forward to the kingdom of God” (Luke 23:51, LEB). The members of the leading class of the people form a mental realm, a “guest room,” in which Jesus can celebrate the Passover meal with his disciples, that is, take up and pass on certain spiritual powers. Under the protection of these members of the leading class, Jesus celebrates the Passover meal.

And the water bearer? So that Jesus’ disciples can receive spiritual powers of a certain quality, they first need cleansing and strengthening. The water bearer embodies spiritual powers of a certain kind that undertake this cleansing and strengthening. In his time, John the Baptist baptized with the water of repentance. A preparatory spiritual impulse had summoned people to conversion and to the preparation for the meeting with Jesus, with the true self. This impulse had enabled them to “make the paths straight” and led them towards the true self. In the same way, the water bearer, a higher octave of John the Baptist, now leads the disciples to a new meeting with Jesus, a meeting on a higher level of development on which new spiritual powers are received. The “living water” that strengthens the disciples prepares them to receive these powers. The water bearer in this story shows the disciples the way to the house in which spiritual powers are to be received.

The statement of the scene becomes even clearer when it is related to an individual person. Then it represents the play of forces occurring in this moment of the spiritual development in the soul realm of a pupil. Jesus is the true self from which consciousness impulses go out to the ego, the owner of the house in the head. Peter and John are named as the messengers: The two impulses of consciousness are the influences of will (Peter) and feeling (John) that bring the message of the true self to the ego.

Parts of the ego, therefore, are open to the true self and place working spaces in the head at its disposal, not only in the feeling and energy centers of the body as before. The “room upstairs” in which in what follows the true self and the aspects of consciousness led by it receive the substances and powers of the spirit can be taken quite literally as the “upper room,” as the realm in the head that can exercise the highest functions in human life and that can process the highest influences. In the Old Testament, the prophet Elijah, for example, lives in a “room upstairs,” and in this room he wakes a “dead” person to life through his spiritual powers (1 Kings 17:19). The “water bearer” is also a reference to Elijah, for Elijah is the one who is lord over the water of life and who on behalf of God can bestow or withhold water. John the Baptist, who baptizes with water, is also explicitly Elijah come back to prepare the way for the Lord.

During the Passover meal, Jesus and his disciples sit on “cushions” (in some translations of Luke 22:12), which is also not just an embellishment of the story and depiction of the festive atmosphere but a picture for the disciples’ experiences on the spiritual path up to now. These experiences are the “foundation” that enables every disciple to receive new spiritual substances and powers.

That Jesus already knows all these details in advance is again an expression for the lawful course of the processes in this phase of the spiritual path. The participating powers, the relations between these powers, and the realms of their activity are in all times constituted in this way and not otherwise. The powers of the spirit can now be received directly by the powers of consciousness, the “disciples,” found in the head, the domain of the ego.

Passing on Spiritual Powers

22:14 *And when the hour came, he reclined at the table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶For I tell you that I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷And he took in hand a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and share it among yourselves. ¹⁸For I tell you, from now on I will not drink of the product of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”*

¹⁹And he took bread, and after giving thanks, he broke it and

gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20 And in the same way the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is poured out for you." (LEB)

The text shows that it is a matter of two "meals": on the one hand of the Passover meal (verses 14–18), on the other of the Lord's Supper (verses 19 and 20). With the Passover meal, Jesus connects to the Old Testament and embeds the soon to follow events of his crucifixion and resurrection in the symbolism of the old covenant. With the Lord's Supper, he ritually anchors the events of his crucifixion and resurrection in his disciples. They are to celebrate the Lord's Supper in the future "in remembrance of me." This is the new covenant, the New Testament.

The Passover meal and the Lord's Supper are the reception of spiritual substances and powers through the spiritual human being. Just as earthly people must nourish themselves with earthly substances and forces, so the spiritual human being lives by spiritual nourishment. No substances and powers that serve to nourish the spiritual human being can be obtained from the earthly world.

In the Passover meal, a lamb is eaten and wine is drunk. The sacrifice of the lamb and therewith the Passover meal are symbols for two very different processes: for the sacrifice of one's own life to benefit others and for the sacrifice of one's own egocentricity so that the true self can unfold.

When Jesus' disciples eat the Passover lamb and the drink the wine that goes with it, then this is firstly a symbol for Jesus, the true self, having sacrificed himself for others during his life like a lamb. During his life, he had given his "life" (his realizations and talents) – symbolized by the meat of the lamb – and poured out his "blood" (his energies and powers) – symbolized by the wine – to enable others who reacted positively to this "nourishment" to walk the spiritual path. The "death on the cross" and "flowing of the blood on the cross" are only the last intensification of an influence that went out from Jesus during his whole life: a distribution of life substance and life energy for others. Therewith the death on the cross and the flowing of the blood on the cross can become a symbol for the influence that went out from Jesus his whole life. Furthermore, a Son of God, an Anointed One, a spirit-filled true self, sacrifices itself in Jesus, the true self. And therewith also the only-begotten Son of God, the light of God itself,

sacrifices itself in him and through him for humanity. This is the first symbolic meaning of the “Passover lamb.”

The second symbolic meaning is the sacrifice of animalistic egocentricity that is carried out in every pupil on the spiritual path. By the Israelites at the first Passover voluntarily sacrificing their egocentricity, the “lamb,” they opened the way for the exodus from the transitory world and the entry into the Promised Land, the eternal world of the spirit. In the same way, Jesus voluntarily “kills” the animalistic egocentricity in his own being. By losing his life and sacrificing his animalistic egocentricity, he gains the true life.

By Jesus carrying out this process in himself, he enables it for his disciples. He forges the path on which others can follow him. The eating of the Passover lamb thus also symbolizes that the disciples are taken up into this process of the sacrifice of their egocentricity that Jesus lives exemplarily for them.

The receiving of the spiritual substances and powers by Jesus and his disciples occurs before Jesus “suffers.” And both times, when eating the Passover lamb and when drinking the wine, he says he will now not eat it anymore and not drink the wine anymore before he eats and drinks them in the kingdom of God. His resurrection means the true self becoming effective and active by means of a spirit personality in the realm of the spirit. Now Jesus still possesses an earthly body that veils and hinders the arising spirit body. Thus the reception of spiritual substances and powers is only imperfectly possible. Once the physical body has fallen away, however, the spirit body can work unhindered in the dimension of the spirit corresponding to it and take up the substances and powers of the spirit unhindered. In the kingdom of God, Jesus can completely celebrate the “Passover meal” and completely “drink” from the fruit of the vine. That he himself eats and drinks, not just distributes, shows: He is conscious that he can only sacrifice himself because the order and power of the spirit, the only-begotten Son of God, sacrifice themselves in him.

These words of Jesus also show that the Passover lamb and the wine are surely only symbols and not the substances and powers of the spirit itself. Should one imagine that in the kingdom of God, lambs are slaughtered and grape vines are planted?

On the other hand, however, Jesus is not *allowed* anymore to take up the substances and powers of the spirit “before he suffers.”

Shortly before and during his capture, during his altercation with the opponents, and at his death, he no longer consciously takes up these substances and powers. If they were active in him, his opponents could not grasp him. The spiritual powers would protect him from physical violence, which works on the level of earthly substances and forces. Only by his renouncing of the spiritual forces for a time do his capture and execution become possible. This renunciation of the direct connection with the world of the spirit as he had it during his life and the renunciation of being nourished by the spiritual world also belong to his self-sacrifice. It makes it possible that also human beings who react negatively to the substances and powers going out from him can be “met” and in this way drawn into the great dimensional change of humanity. Jesus, the “lamb,” sacrifices flesh and blood, his life substances and life forces, also for them.

Institution of the Lord’s Supper

It is of utmost importance to Jesus to create an indissoluble bond between the substances and powers of the world of the spirit and his disciples. For only thus is it guaranteed that the process of change that made its definitive beginning in him, Jesus, will continue in his disciples and be passed on by them. Through the Passover meal and the Lord’s Supper that follows, the stream of divine substances and powers flows on to those receptive to it, anchors them in the world of the spirit, and can continue to flow until all of humanity is included in this stream. Therefore Jesus eagerly desires to celebrate the meal with his disciples at that moment. After his capture, it will no longer be possible to create this connection on the earthly plane with the disciples.

Jesus connects to the communal Lord’s Supper the request for his disciples to observe it in the future without him, “in remembrance of me.” Jesus means thereby, Repeat this process of receiving the spiritual substance and power ever and again, and thereby go ever and again on this spiritual path that I have gone for you and on which I have enabled for you to go! Connect ever and again with my example, and follow me by carrying it out! *This* is what it means to observe the Lord’s Supper in remembrance of Jesus. The bread is Jesus “body,” his life substance, which he has already continually sacrificed in life for his disciples and followers. He has always lost his life for others and loses it in death for others

as well. The wine is Jesus' "blood," his life energy. He has already continually poured out his blood for others and pours it out for others more than ever in death. His life substance and life energy enable others who are receptive to them in their turn to lose their life for others in life and in death on this basis. As Jesus walked the spiritual path in the life substance and life energy of the spiritual world, so by transference of this life substance and life energy, he enables others to go the spiritual path and in their turn to transfer life substance and life energy to others.

Already at the beginning of Jesus' activity, many people were "nourished" by Jesus' spiritual substances and powers. Through Jesus' teaching and preaching and later of his disciples, many were healed of the illnesses in their souls and freed from their inner conflicts. The feeding of the 5000 was a picture for this appeasement of the hunger of the people receptive to the spiritual substances and powers in the first stage of Jesus' activity. The loaves and the fish had symbolized spiritual substances and powers that corresponded to that stage of human development. The "loaves" stood for life meaning and the "fish" for life courage.

Now, after the disciples have recognized the Anointed One and new possibilities have developed in them on the spiritual path, it is a matter of a feeding by spiritual substances and powers of a higher quality than the "loaves" and "fish" of the earlier feedings. The true self of the spiritual pupils that has become conscious of itself now lives from the higher spiritual substances and powers that are symbolized by the bread and the wine. "Bread" stands for independently and consciously won spiritual understanding. "Wine" stands for independently and consciously taken-up and given-out spiritual power.

The taking up of spiritual substance and power is only possible in the "room upstairs" after the water bearer has led people thereto. Only after the preparation and strengthening through the "living water" of the spirit do people gradually gain the suitability to directly receive spiritual nourishment and power in the "upper room" of their consciousness.

The bread does not symbolize Jesus' visible body but the spirit body, which consists of inexhaustible spiritual life substance. The wine does not symbolize Jesus' visible blood but the infinite energy of his spirit body. The visible bread and the visible wine also only symbolize this spiritual life substance and life energy; they are not these in a literal sense, just as the Passover lamb and

the vine in the kingdom of God of which Jesus speaks are not concrete things. In the same way, the outer ritual of receiving bread and wine is only a confirmation and stimulation of an inner process of acquiring spiritual substance and power, not the process itself. Someone can ingest outer bread and wine that are blessed, holy, and consecrated and also believe that it is Jesus' life substance and life energy and can on the inside still be like a dead piece of wood that has not gone through the changes of the spiritual path. Can the ritual have any kind of influence on such a person?

Judas' Betrayal

22:21 *“But behold, the hand of the one who is betraying me is with me on the table! 22 For the Son of Man is going according to what has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!” 23 And they began to debate with one another who then of them it could be who was going to do this.* (LEB)

The hand of the one who betrays Jesus is “on the table” during the Lord’s Supper. Thus Judas also takes up the substance and power of the spirit although he has already decided on the betrayal. Taking up this spiritual power even activates this decision; it activates the demonic-satanic forces that now enter Judas, for the spiritual world is perceived by the satanic forces of the beyond as a challenge.

What occurs within Judas can and will occur in all pupils on the spiritual path whose true self is not yet sufficiently developed, does not yet possess sufficient power of discrimination in regard to divine and demonic forces, and possesses still too little power of resistance against the demonic forces that especially in climactic, threatening situations can seize hold of them again. Thus in every pupil on the spiritual path there is a Judas who betrays the spiritual powers in the pupil’s own being, precisely when they have been specially strengthened, to the egocentricity and drive for self-maintenance on the basis of a vehement opposing reaction of the demonic forces. Every pupil on the spiritual path can and will experience this from time to time, for the betrayal is not a singular act but can occur on the path ever and again.

Jesus’ disciples suspect something of this danger and know that every one of them is capable of such a betrayal. That is why they ask among themselves who it could be that will betray Jesus.

“For the Son of Man is going according to what has been determined.” How can these words be understood? The religious and secular rulers who embody the self-maintaining ego gain power over the true self. The true self allows itself to be handed over, taken prisoner, and killed, for it only *is*; it does not *want*. It manifests itself in the world and allows the lawful reactions that are the result of this manifestation. It also allows reactions hostile to it because only in this way can the state of the new human being also be anchored in its enemies. For by the rulers killing Jesus, they “impregnate” themselves with the contents and powers of the spiritual world. In their intensive meeting with the truth and their attempt to destroy it, it leaves an inextinguishable impression in their being. This impression will from then on work in them and in the long run will destroy their egocentricity. So the possibility for the true self to unfold will also be freed in them, perhaps by way of great resistance and pain. In the long run, they are redeemed through the blood of Jesus that is also spilled for them and that they themselves spill. Jesus knows these effects of the manifestation of the true self for his own earthly personality and for the development of his opponents. He knows that they have to be lawfully carried out if the state of the new human being is to be anchored in the whole of humanity. He consents to this lawfulness and helps carry it out. He “is going as it has been determined.”

Jesus also consents to the betrayal by Judas. He allows himself to be betrayed. Just as he foresaw the behavior of the rulers and could have escaped from them, he also foresaw the betrayal of Judas. He knew Judas’ twofold inner constitution and could therefore have taken precautions against the betrayal and been careful. He did not do so. Why not? Because he allowed also this reaction to the state of the new human being embodied by him. Only in this way could what was hidden in Judas come to light; only in this way could Judas become conscious of his hidden drives and the character of his deed.

Thus Jesus allowed the reactions of the rulers as well as the reaction of Judas because the true self accepts all reactions that are aroused through its appearance in the earthly world. He also knows that the negative reactions in the end will serve the inherent purpose of humanity. Jesus goes in the manner determined by these preconditions and these human states of consciousness. He accepts what cannot be different in his disciples and in humanity under these preconditions.

However, “woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!” Judas becomes the prey of demonic forces and acts as their victim because his spiritual consciousness is still too weakly developed. The consequences will be terrible for him. His true identity had already developed to a certain degree. He experienced the freedom and tranquility connected with it. Now this identity is as if extinguished. Hate, the drive for self-importance, and unrest have taken its place. The true self had already changed the house of the personality; it only had not yet moved in. Now that the demon again occupies the house of consciousness, Judas has to experience hell. In other words, Judas has committed the “sin against the Holy Spirit.” After the Holy Spirit had already worked within him and set changes in motion, Judas has chased it away again. The resulting emptiness has been occupied by demonic forces. Such a state cannot be resolved by the spiritual powers alone. They are betrayed and handed over as soon as they appear. Thus this blasphemy cannot be forgiven. It can only be resolved by the work of the person concerned. He has to build up a new personality structure in order to then be able to step on the spiritual path anew with a clearer consciousness. Even for such a person, there is thus the possibility of regeneration. It leads through the consciousness that is created out of the destructive experiences: the consciousness that such a betrayal has the worst consequences also for one’s own being. In this consciousness, the person concerned can work to reestablish the destroyed personality structure and then step on the spiritual path anew.

True, Jesus allows the betrayal and consents to it, for only thus can come to light what is hidden in Judas. Judas has to act in such a way; it follows from the constellation of powers active in him. Precisely thereby, the “woes” come over him, however. The connection described in verse 22 is, True, the Son of Man does not deny the betrayal to the betrayer because it is the consequence of the betrayer’s being because only in this way is the being of the betrayer revealed and because it is the nature of the Son of Man to allow this disclosure even if he thereby needs to undergo death. The betrayer is not excused thereby, however, and must bear the consequences of his behavior.

This verse has often been understood differently. One has wanted to see it in the frame of a “plan of salvation,” as if God had purposes like an earthly human being and would take measures to

fulfill these purposes. *So that* Jesus, in the sense of a divine plan of salvation, can redeem the world, he has to be sacrificed. So that he can be sacrificed, he has to be betrayed. *Someone* has to betray him. In this case, Judas was the betrayer. Judas was necessary and *had* to betray so that God's plan of salvation was fulfilled. Jesus consented to the betrayal *so that* the plan of salvation would be fulfilled.

However, apart from the fact that the plan of salvation could have been fulfilled without betrayal, God and Jesus are not shown in a favorable light in this way of seeing things. Did they have to use a human being as an instrument for their purposes, in the consciousness of what miseries this person would have to suffer as a result? Could God not have found another means of letting Jesus fall into the hands of the rulers such as having the rulers arrest him in the open or even better, having Jesus voluntarily give himself up? In this way of seeing things, one gets into the dilemma with no way out that evil is supposedly necessary in God's plan but that he who carries out the evil will be mercilessly punished.

In the face of this dilemma, the idea came up repeatedly that Judas had actually been a hero. Judas had known of God's plan of salvation and had voluntarily made the sacrifice of betraying and of letting himself be punished for this in order to fulfill the plan of salvation. He is to have been at least equal to Jesus, if not an even greater hero, for he had carried away nothing but shame, while Jesus had finally triumphed.

If one thinks further along this line, the question arises from where Judas knew of God's plan of salvation. He could have been initiated into it by Jesus, but then everything would be even more absurd. He would then have been like the defender of a castle who opens the secret gate to the enemy with the consent of the lord of the castle. That would have been only the farce of a betrayal, for betrayal presupposes that the betrayer believes that the one betrayed does not know of his action. If the betrayer knows that the one betrayed knows of the betrayal, then he is acting in accord with the betrayed. That would be the opposite of a betrayal.

The only other possibility is that Judas had guessed the plan of salvation without knowing that Jesus knew of his knowledge. In this case, Judas would have acted at least in accordance with God. And would Jesus then have predicted "woes" for him who acted in accordance with God?

No, the supposition of a "plan of salvation" in the sense of God

thinking purposefully and the imputation that Judas knew of this “plan of salvation” leads to absurd results.

World and humanity are not led by a purposeful divine “plan of salvation.” They carry out a development in which ever more encompassing and deeper characteristics of God are revealed and become conscious and active in God’s creatures. Jesus represents a moment in this development in which the true self of the human being, as image of God and coming from God, is perfectly revealed in and becomes conscious and effective in humanity. This true self manifests itself and unmask by its presence the egocentricity, the ego making itself absolute, that had set the pace of human development and caused the separation from God.

Judas did not know anything of a “plan of salvation.” He became the victim of his egocentricity and betrayed Jesus without intending or foreseeing any redemption thereby. By using Judas as their instrument, the demonic forces in him even wanted to hinder the inherent purpose of humanity. When his “mistake” and its consequences nevertheless indirectly contributed to the fulfillment of the inherent purpose of humanity, then this was not his intention and not the intention of the forces driving him but the working of a spiritual law that allows good to arise also from evil. It was the result of the sacrifice brought by the spiritual powers. They sacrificed themselves to evil. By this, the agents, the religious and political leaders as well as Judas, could become conscious of the evil of their egocentricity. This way, they could in the long run decide after all for the good, the unfolding of the true self also in them, its former enemies.

Jesus’ Farewell Discourse

Relations of Rank in the Earthly and Spiritual World

22:24 *And a dispute also occurred among them as to which of them was recognized as being greatest. ²⁵So he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶But you are not to be like this! But the one who is greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the one who leads like the one who serves. ²⁷For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am in*

your midst as the one who serves.

²⁸“And you are the ones who have remained with me in my trials, ²⁹and I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred on me, ³⁰that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (LEB)

The law that action equals reaction is also valid in the spiritual and soul realms. Just when a person takes up the spiritual forces and is elevated into new heights of consciousness, the earthly and demonic forces of opposition attack even more. After the Lord's Supper, Judas really goes out to betray Jesus, and Jesus' other pupils begin to dispute as to who is the greatest among them. Their drives for self-importance and power announce themselves. But precisely by the hidden sources of egocentricity appearing can the consciousness see and overcome them.

When Jesus speaks to his disciples, this means that the true self is becoming active in them and shows them how the way of being in the spiritual world replaces the relations of rank and power in the earthly world. Rule and authority bolstered with ideology – “those who have authority over them are called benefactors” – are the ways of being in the earthly world. Here beings want to have power and ever more power. The move of the pupil into the dimension of the spiritual world reverses the relations, however. The way of being of the inhabitants of the spiritual world is service. There people let their forces stream out for others. Thus in the kingdom of God, the one who serves is the leader, and the youngest, that is, the lowest in earthly rank, is the greatest. In the kingdom of God, egocentricity, the separation of the ego from others, the drive of the ego to put itself in the foreground and to feel its own greatness and power, has disappeared. In the kingdom of God, people are embedded in the streams and order of the infinite spiritual powers. They work in these powers and through them. They consciously work with these powers and like them, stream out for others – without special aims and without making distinctions. It is the nature of the true self to stream out in this way.

Jesus expresses this fact again in another way. In the earthly world, the one sitting at the table is the master; he lets himself be served and is therefore the greater. The ones who serve are the lesser ones. In the spiritual world on the other hand, the one who serves, the one who distributes powers, is the greater, and the one

who receives powers, lets himself be served – figuratively the one who sits at the table – is the lesser.

Therefore, regarded with the standards and customs of the spiritual world, Jesus, the Lord and Son of Man, is among his disciples “as one who serves.” He distributes powers to them and serves them, even when in the earthly world, he may be sitting at the table and be served by his disciples.

The greatest one in the kingdom of God is the one who serves the best. As this greatest one in the kingdom of God, Jesus will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Are these not again earthly standards? Is the judge not the ruler and person in authority? Those who live out of the order and the powers of the spirit work in the sense of this order and cooperate with these powers. The law of the spiritual world takes form in them; they themselves *are* this law. In that they cooperate with the powers of the spirit, they as true self and resurrected spirit personality permeate the whole universe with the powers of the spirit and with its order, as an electromagnetic force field permeates the universe. And as a strong electromagnetic force field dissolves all weaker force fields that depart from its structure or adjusts them to itself, so a true self active in the spiritual world corrects all arrangements that do not correspond to it and adjusts them.

Jesus, the Son of Man, is as the embodiment of the true self of the human being the greatest one serving in the spiritual world. He is the center in which the order and power of the spiritual world concentrate. All others who like Jesus’ disciples will someday enter into the kingdom of God as true self will collaborate with him by virtue of their being, which is congruent with the structure of the Son of Man. They will then have stood by the Son of Man in his “trials”: They will have gone the spiritual path with him, perceived their egocentricity and self-maintenance with him, and overcome them. They have thereby allowed their true self and a spirit personality to resurrect. Therefore they will “eat and drink” with him at his table in the kingdom of God: They will take up the substances and streams of the spiritual world with him, directly and without still needing the rituals and symbols of bread and wine for illustration. They “will sit on thrones” with him: They will work out of the spiritual power fields whose power is over all other powers. The powers and structures of the spiritual world are the powers and structures from which all forces and

structures of this world and the beyond first originated.

Out of these power fields of the spirit, the true self of Jesus' disciples lying concentrically in the central true self will correct and newly adjust all structures not harmonizing with the spiritual world. The disciples as the twelve apostles of the central true self correspond to the twelve aspect of the people of Israel as far as this people is in harmony with the structures of the spirit. As far as its twelve tribes, its twelve soul aspects, do not correspond to these structures, they will be corrected and newly adjusted by the central true self and its twelve aspects. Since in this connection, the people of Israel can be seen as a representation of all of humanity, the judgment of the twelve aspects of the true self refers to all of humanity.

One does not need to aspire to be such a judge. There is no enjoyment and intoxication with power in it nor any mania for retribution. The judgment is carried out as a natural law without a special aim. It follows from the unity with the spirit, in the freedom of the true self, and is love for others, for through the dissolution of the false structures, the revival of the structures corresponding to the spirit becomes possible in all twelve tribes of Israel and in all of humanity. Unity with the spiritual world, freedom as harmony with the true self, and love for others as efficacy without egotism become thereby also possible for them.

Following the Lord's Supper, Jesus awakens in his disciples a great vision of the relations in the kingdom of God. He does not hold out the prospect of fame and honor, nor compensation for those humbled in the earthly world. If they would comprehend it this way, they would not be pupils on the spiritual path. In their egocentricity, they would strive for self-importance and power and precisely not dissolve this egocentricity. This dissolution, however, is the condition for entry into the kingdom of God. Only when this condition is fulfilled does accordance with the order and power of the spiritual world reign and can the true self "judge" the earthly world.

Border Experiences of the Pupils

22:31 *"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to sift you like wheat, ³² but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail. And you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your*

brothers.”³³ But he said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death!”³⁴ And he said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know me!” (LEB)

But the disciples of Jesus are not yet in the state that would make their entry into the kingdom of God possible. They are still victims of their self-centeredness, quarrelsome, self-serving, and unable to remain spiritually alert and endure Jesus’ temptations with him as will be shown in Gethsemane. Satan “demanded to sift them like wheat” as he demanded of God to do with Job in his time. Why does God leave people to Satan? Is it not cruel to allow a weak creature to be subjected to the fiendish attacks of evil? God sets human beings free, releases them from the custody of instincts, from the custody of Old Testament laws, from the custody of the guidance of tradition and authority. So the true self in human beings, the image of God in them, releases them from earthly bonds, even drives them out of the apparent security of these bonds so that they can become free. As true identity, people want this freedom themselves despite the fear of the insecurity that befalls their ego in this freedom. God releases people into freedom so that they can independently recognize what is true and untrue, what is divine and ungodly, what is the image of God and what is earthly and satanic so that they can learn from this knowledge to consciously follow the image of God and to realize it. Just as Job, set free by God and left to the temptations of Satan, learned to see God with his own eyes (Job 42:5) and learned to consciously surrender himself to the laws of the divine world, so Jesus’ disciples are now set free by God and left to Satan’s temptations.

In these temptations, in fear of death, depression, and despair, they are shaken like wheat in a sieve. The shaking in the sieve separates the wheat from the chaff. Thus the discernment of the disciples is sharpened by the temptations of Satan, by the surge of egoism and self-maintenance in the face of the threat of death, and by the despair of the possible demise of their master and their cause.

It is precisely in their internally and externally turbulent situation in which the dregs of their soul are stirred up that they recognize what is earthly and what is divine in them, what endures and is fruitful like wheat, and what passes away and is barren like chaff. Precisely through the pains, fears, and threats that shake the

innermost marrow, even through the fact that they succumb to temptations, such as Peter denying Jesus, their innermost self-centeredness and their drive for self-maintenance are turned outwards, the most secret things are exposed to the light of consciousness. This is how self-knowledge and knowledge of the world grow. Through succumbing to temptations and the temporary power that Satan gains over them, through the inner darkness into which denial of the light plunges them, the image of God finally shines all the brighter and they are able to follow it. This is true of all who deny the true self, even of all who betray it, even though the spiritual turmoil and spiritual devastation wrought by Satan in the traitor is far greater than in the disciple who denied it. But once such a person has regenerated, their consciousness of what is earthly and satanic and what is divine will also have grown.

As inevitable as it is for the development of consciousness in human beings that they are granted freedom, that they are released from the custody of external orders that guide them and are exposed to the temptations of self-centeredness, the true self of others and their own true self can and will supply power to them in this process so that they do not despair completely. Their openness to the spiritual world, their "faith," does not have to dwindle in the face of enormous temptations. Just as Job does not lose his faith in God, so the disciples do not need to lose their faith, their receptivity to the spiritual world. Jesus, the true self, strengthens Peter by "praying" for him. The powers of the image of God are at work in Jesus; he consciously connects with them; he "prays," and so these powers can strengthen the image of God in Peter. When Peter has lived through all temptations on this basis, even if he succumbs to them at first, and when he has "turned back" and is unshakably turned to the spiritual world, he can in turn strengthen his brothers and followers. He does not strengthen them with moral determination. He strengthens them through the powers of the spirit that have finally taken up residence in him.

Before the final intensification of the temptations, Peter does not yet know himself. He believes he can stand up to all challenges. He is determined not to be intimidated by any threat or fear. But mere belief in yourself and moral resolve are of no use in such situations. Jesus knows what is in people, even in a disciple who has walked the spiritual path with him for so long. The drive for self-maintenance and the fear that goes with it can overthrow any

moral resolution or belief in one's own power. This is proved in Peter's denial. And Jesus, who knows the human soul as every true self that has become conscious knows the selfishness and the drive for self-maintenance in human beings, knows that human moral powers will fail in hopeless situations. He predicts Peter's denial. Again, this is not clairvoyance but knowledge of the forces at work in the soul.

Time of Persecution

22:35 *And he said to them, "When I sent you out without a money bag and a traveler's bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?" And they said, "Nothing." 36 And he said to them, "But now the one who has a money bag must take it, and likewise a traveler's bag. And the one who does not have a sword must sell his cloak and buy one. 37 For I tell you that this that is written must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was counted with the criminals.' For indeed, what is written about me is being fulfilled." 38 So they said, "Lord, behold, here are two swords!" And he said to them, "It is adequate." (LEB)*

After the peak of Jesus' ministry, the time of persecution has come. Until now, the powers of the spirit working in Jesus and the disciples had also taken hold of large sections of the populace. A stream of gratitude, devotion, hope, admiration, and enthusiasm flowed back from the people to Jesus and his disciples. The disciples were immersed in the spiritual powers emanating from Jesus and the powers of the people responding to them. In this favorable situation, they had to concentrate on spiritual work and observe its laws. "Money bag" and "traveler's bag" had been images of a store-house mentality that would get in the way of spiritual work. The spiritual powers must flow uninterruptedly and must not be hoarded. "Sandals" had been an image of the pupils relying too much on outer, organizational measures in spiritual work. Their work should follow inner laws and must not be subjected to the laws of outer organization.

In addition, in such a favorable working situation, there are no problems with the external means of work. Back then, when Jesus sent out the twelve or the seventy, Jesus said, In the sign of the auspicious hour of our cause, you do not need to worry about earthly food and clothing – purses and bags – and earthly

possibilities of appearing and leaving – sandals. All of this will come to you without much effort, and thoughts of them would only hinder your spiritual work.

But now the times of favorable winds are over, and the signs point to a storm. The people are disappointed in the supposedly political Messiah and hate him. “And he was counted with the criminals.” Taking this changed situation into account, Jesus exhorts his disciples, Now the stream of the spirit and the return stream of the people’s devotion no longer protect and nourish you. Now you are completely on your own and must reckon with deprivation and attacks. Prepare yourselves inwardly. The instructions of Jesus to now take bags and purses and to buy swords are pictures of the need to brace oneself for hardship and attack. Public spiritual work is now no longer possible. Now it is necessary to worry about bare survival. Now it is very appropriate to think about supplies and securing one’s existence, even about protecting life and limb. That is why one buys a “sword,” a symbol of the need to protect life and limb.

Just as Jesus’ exhortations to his disciples not to take purses, bags, or sandals were images of an inner attitude that was appropriate in view of the auspicious hour, so now the exhortations to behave in the opposite way are images of an opposite attitude, which under changed conditions is necessary.

However, as so often in the past, the disciples do not understand the pictures as a parable. When they hear “sword,” they immediately think of concrete swords. They show Jesus “two” swords: They could attack others or defend themselves. Those are the two ways to use violence: attack or defend. But Jesus immediately corrects them, “It is enough” (Luke 22:38, NRSV). Stop this kind of behavior. You have practiced it long enough. Or: It is enough with your folly. You have tormented me and yourselves with your ignorance long enough. – It would be completely nonsensical to interpret the “It is enough” as if Jesus meant that two concrete swords would suffice for defense or attack. That would contradict the principle of non-violence, which he always advocated, and his actual behavior when he was later arrested. When one of his disciples uses his sword during this arrest, Jesus also says, “No more of this!” He does not mean, You have now shown your courage enough, but, Stop this kind of behavior. You have practiced it long enough. Or: Enough with your folly. And when he heals the high priest’s servant’s ear again, that

too is an expression of the fact that the true self is never violent and cannot help but be productive and life-enhancing.

Going beyond Mark, Luke followed Jesus' last supper with his disciples with a whole "farewell discourse." Its themes are first of all the conditions in the kingdom of God, which are the exact reverse of the conditions in the earthly kingdoms: The highest there are the ones who can best serve others through their agreement with the laws and powers of the spirit. And "judgment" in the kingdom of God does not mean a condemnation according to the standards of self-centeredness but the reorganization through the order of the spirit of all earthly conditions that have gotten into disorder, which takes place as if according to a law of nature. The farewell discourse then goes into the coming temptations that the disciples have to go through in order to become free inside. One aspect of these soul struggles will be Peter's denial. And finally, it describes the situation and necessary attitude of the disciples in a world that previously enthusiastically turned towards Jesus and his disciples but has now become a hating persecutor.

Dissolution of the Drive for Self-Maintenance

Jesus and the disciples are in the fifth phase of the spiritual path. Up to that point, Jesus, accompanied by the disciples, had seen the self-centeredness in thinking, feeling, and willing, had overcome them, and had built up new thinking, feeling, and willing out of the powers of the image of God: These aspects of a new "spirit personality" had been shown in of the "transfiguration." And with the help of these new aspects of his personality, Jesus, going up to "Jerusalem" and into "Jerusalem," had won over broad sections of the people and allowed the spiritual forces to work right into the center of "Jerusalem," the temple. Now, in the fifth phase, the task is also to overcome the drive for self-maintenance rooted in the material body. If the drive for self-maintenance is uprooted, the cause of death is overcome and the resurrection of a fine-material body becomes possible. A spirit body will arise. With that, the task of dissolving human self-assertion on all levels of earthly reality is fulfilled. The root of the transitory phenomena, including the drive for self-maintenance in the physical body, is dissolved. The true

self, the image of God, can become active unhindered and build up a spirit personality with a spirit body, which in thinking, feeling, willing, and acting completely conforms to the laws of the world of the spirit.

Failure of the Pupils

As will be shown, the disciples of Jesus are not yet able to accomplish this task in the fifth phase of the spiritual path and to uproot their drive for self-maintenance in the powers of the spirit. In the Last Supper, they were indissolubly connected with the spiritual powers of the true self. But it was precisely this connection that called the forces opposing spiritual development onto the scene in a particularly intensive way. The disciples are no match for them. They fail in the task of dissolving the drive for self-maintenance.

One way of failure is betrayal. In Judas, when his drive for self-maintenance is utterly threatened, egocentricity takes over again and surrenders to the old structures of the ego whatever true identity had already emerged.

A second way of failure is denial. Peter no longer professes his spiritual goal before others when he experiences that his public declaration of that goal could result in imprisonment and death. His drive for self-maintenance and the resulting fear are stronger than the rudiments of the true identity that he had developed although within himself he remains true to that identity.

Faced with these two possibilities of failure, Jesus on the Mount of Olives (in the Garden of Gethsemane as we know from Mark) gives an example of how the task of uprooting the drive for self-maintenance can be accomplished.

On the Mount of Olives

22:39 *And he went away and proceeded, according to his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples also followed him. ⁴⁰And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not enter into temptation." ⁴¹And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw and knelt down and began to pray, ⁴²saying, "Father, if you are willing, take away this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will but yours be done." ⁴³And an angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him. ⁴⁴And being in*

anguish, he began praying more fervently and his sweat became like drops of blood falling down to the ground. ⁴⁵And when he got up from the prayer and came to the disciples, he found them sleeping from sorrow, ⁴⁶and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you will not enter into temptation!" (LEB)

In Jesus, too, the drive for self-maintenance comes to the fore in the face of impending violent death. Jesus, no longer subject to the law of reincarnation, voluntarily assumed an earthly body in order to be able to work in the earthly world and, above all, to set an example for people on the spiritual path on which all self-centeredness of the soul and the body's tendency to self-maintenance are overcome and a new spirit personality with spirit body is built up. With the acceptance of an earthly body, however, he had also accepted all the weaknesses and impulses of this body, indeed the fate of earthly humanity. An immense visceral fear assails him now, a reaction of the drive for self-maintenance that resides in every cell and structure of the physical body.

How does he face this fear? Self-control, determination, and heroism would not have stood up to this onslaught. The instincts are always stronger than the moral forces of the human being. Examples are Judas and Peter. Jesus therefore does not wage a moral battle in which noble earthly motives seek to overcome base impulses. Rather, he enters into a process of self-clarification by consciously calling on the spiritual powers of the true self and leaving them to dissolve fear and the drive for self-maintenance. Prayer is the conscious invoking of the order and powers of the spiritual world. Jesus consciously connects with them and lets them work fully in him. He reflects on his true identity and lets its contours rise from the ground of his being before his consciousness.

At the same time, he contrasts this identity and the actions resulting from it with his ego and the actions resulting from it. In consciousness, he confronts the order of the ego with the order of the spiritual world. This is expressed by the words, "Father, if you are willing, take away this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will but yours be done." As long as the earthly order does not contradict the spiritual order, earthly life can take its course. But if the earthly order contradicts the spiritual order, the earthly order has to give way. The earthly order at this moment would consist in Jesus following his drive for self-maintenance and avoiding

confrontation with the rulers of the world. But with that, he would not fulfill his mission to anchor the true nature of the human being and the spiritual order in the earthly world. The spiritual order, on the other hand, is the fulfillment of this mission, the acceptance of the cross and the denial of self-centeredness. By consciously comparing both orders and the different consequences resulting from them, Jesus achieves clarity.

In this case, the spiritual order cannot allow the earthly order to take its course, so Jesus agrees to the spiritual order and renounces the execution of the earthly order. Not my will but your will be done. “Your will be done” does not mean subjugating one’s selfishness and drive for self-maintenance to an external authority. That would not dissolve them. “Your will be done” means to accept the inner authority of the true self and to let selfishness and the drive for self-maintenance dissolve in it. “Your will be done” means to manifest the true self in the earthly world and to confront it with all earthly forces. It means taking up the cross, namely, also exposing oneself to all hostile earthly forces and letting them run free. And it means denying oneself, that is, uprooting one’s drive for self-maintenance, losing one’s life. In two verses (43 and 44), which may not be originally from Luke, the gospel emphasizes and heightens this inner struggle between the spiritual order, which is true human self, and the earthly order, which is the human ego. But at the end of the inner self-clarification process, which is guided and made possible by spiritual powers – an “angel,” a spiritual power, strengthens Jesus – inner peace is gained, the drive for self-maintenance and the fear are gone. The spiritual order stands unshakable throughout Jesus’ being pervading his consciousness and body.

As did the editor who may have inserted verses 43 and 44, people have always emphasized how unspeakably Jesus had to suffer in Gethsemane and how great his sacrifice for people was. But what is decisive about this scene is the dissolution of fear in the powers of the spirit and the calm that sets in after the inner struggle. The drive for self-maintenance is not controlled, certainly not suppressed, but dissolved, and replaced by spiritual powers. The conscious harmony of the whole being with the unshakable order of the spirit, which encompasses everything, has taken the place of the ego, which is always afraid and has to fight. In the later death on the cross, what was inwardly achieved and already accomplished in Gethsemane is shown externally.

Jesus asks the disciples to pray with him so that they “will not enter into temptation.” They, too, are faced with the task of dissolving the drive for self-maintenance, the trial, in the powers of the spirit. In such a situation, all people are completely dependent on themselves. Only by calling on the powers of the spirit within themselves and taking responsibility for themselves will the inner process of clarification become possible. Hence the statement in the gospel that Jesus is a stone’s throw away from his disciples. It is an image of this necessity that the inner self-clarification process must be carried out by people alone and that they must not rely on others for this. Nevertheless, this necessity does not preclude others from helping them. The powers of the spirit released in the disciples of Jesus could stream over to Jesus on the level of the spirit, just as the powers of the spirit released in one person always benefit all other people.

But the disciples do not pray. They do not invoke the powers of the spirit but “sleep because of grief.” This is not physical sleep. Rather, they are not awake to their task and the situation in which they find themselves with their master. Their consciousness “sleeps.” Instead of considering this situation and the task of consciously dissolving the drive for self-maintenance contained therein, they are filled with premonitions about the “failure” of their master’s mission and thus of their own expectations. Their depression is so great that they are paralyzed inside. The awakened consciousness of the true self, the awakened belief in the new possibilities, the awakened recognition of the new possibilities, the strength to act that grows from it, the strength to confront hostile powers from outside and inside: everything that they have experienced and learned on their spiritual path is now stifled by their sadness.

So they “sleep” on the Mount of Olives, similar to when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain. At that time, their consciousness had initially not been able to cope with the brightness of the spiritual world. Now it is darkened by their sadness. Jesus wakes them up and tells them to “get up.” They should get rid of their depression and “get up.” They should reflect courageously and wakefully on the spiritual world and consider their task. Connect with the spiritual world within you so that you do not fall into temptation and succumb to fear and the drive for self-maintenance: Thus speaks the true self within every pupil on the spiritual path at all times when the pupil’s faith in the new

possibilities threatens to languish in the face of the innumerable enemies within and without, when depression takes hold of them because all earthly hopes fail.

Jesus' Capture: Hour of Darkness

22:47 While he was still speaking, behold, there came a crowd, and the one named Judas, one of the twelve, leading them. And he approached Jesus to kiss him. 48 But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" 49 And when those around him saw what was about to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with the sword?" 50 And a certain one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus answered and said, "Stop! No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. 52 And Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come out against him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs, as against a robber? 53 Every day when I was with you in the temple courts, you did not stretch out your hands against me! But this is your hour and the domain of darkness!" (LEB)

It is night, and a "crowd" led by Judas enters Gethsemane. It is also said that chief priests and elders came with the officers of the temple police, who apparently carried out the actual arrest. It is very unlikely that the highest religious leaders were personally present when Jesus was arrested. They would have compromised themselves by doing so. However, they are introduced into this scene by the narrator so that their relationship to Jesus and their motives become clear by their direct presence.

A situation can always arise on the spiritual path where in a decisive crisis, the earthly forces of this world and the hereafter regain the upper hand over the spiritual powers. What happens within the individual person can also happen outside, among people who embody the same configurations of forces. But the true self allows itself to be captured because it does not fight with earthly means and allows all reactions to its effects of the earthly world. It allows the darkness to temporarily exert its power. It knows that the hour of darkness must come.

The Satan of egocentricity had entered into Judas. He had to get rid of the real self, the sight and voice of which he could no longer endure. Therefore, he is now handing Jesus over to the opponents.

His kiss is not just a signal that he uses to mark Jesus for the captors. The kiss is primarily an image for the interaction of two forces. In the ancient spiritual communities, when the brothers kissed, it meant that they imparted the powers of the spirit to one another. In the kiss, the essence of the giver of the kiss flows over to the recipient of the kiss, and at the same time, the kisser absorbs the essence of the other through the most intimate touch. In the kiss that Judas presses on Jesus, however, it is not love and love that meet but hate and love. Self-centeredness appropriates the powers of love and misuses them for its own purposes. But love allows itself to be taken over by self-centeredness; it allows itself to be misused.

“Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” The most sacred relationship between people, trust, loyalty, brotherhood, symbolized by the kiss, becomes the means through which the earthly takes possession of the divine. Transmission of divine love from person to person is only possible through unreserved trust and openness to one another, symbolized by the kiss. But it is precisely this trust that makes the trusting person vulnerable and enables people to exploit this trust and love if they want. This already applies to trusting relationships on the earthly plane and all the more so for trusting relationships between true self and true self on the soul-spiritual plane.

Jesus knew that he would be betrayed and is therefore not surprised by Judas’ behavior. Despite this, he had built no defenses – that is not in the nature of the true self – and must savor the pain of the traitor’s infidelity and abuse of his trust to the full. But precisely because the true self continues to rest in itself and in the order of the spirit even in this misuse of trust, its effect on Judas is possible. This effect does not necessarily come from inaction or not speaking. When the situation calls for it, Jesus calls things by their proper names. He immediately alerts Judas to the abuse of spiritual trust by asking, “Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” He sets in motion the “woe to that man by whom he is betrayed” (Luke 22:22, LEB). Through the confrontation with the true self, Judas will sooner or later come to the terrible realization of what he is and what his deed has achieved. This knowledge will burn in him like fire and finally destroy all self-centeredness. Although at the end of this process will be nothingness for his ego, this also provides the opportunity to begin again from the ground up.

The other disciples of Jesus are also present when the true self is captured and betrayed by Judas. They embody other aspects of consciousness loyal to the spirit. They are brave, convinced of the moral rightness of their cause, and seek support from their true self, from the master. So their strength does not come from the true self that has become strong in them. They do not yet rest in the spiritual order within themselves. They ask Jesus because in their selfishness, they are looking for support from the true self, not because they want to entrust themselves to the true self. And that is the only reason why they even get the idea to ask whether they should strike with the sword. Moral beliefs are based on the ego not on the true self, which does not respond violently to violence.

Jesus, the true self, denies them this violent behavior and allows himself to be taken prisoner. "No more of this!" he says to his disciples. Leave the violence behind. You have acted out of the earthly self long enough. Leave the thinking in categories of violence finally behind you and act from the true self! Whether the disciples flee or are simply ignored by the captors, who primarily want to have Jesus, is left open in Luke. In any case, Jesus' command and the fact that he allowed himself to be arrested deprived the disciples of the basis for their actions. They can no longer practice acts of violence, and their support from another is withdrawn from them. They are thrown back into nothingness.

Again the true self acts without violence on its enemies but solely through its being. But nonviolence does not mean remaining silent about injustice. Jesus clearly calls injustice by its name. Only through this confrontation with the truth can the untruth become aware of itself and of the truth. When Jesus was with them in the temple, the chief priests and elders did not dare to lay hands on him. The hallmark of a consciousness of power that establishes itself against the actual inherent purpose of human beings is always fear and the cunning that arises from it. Such a consciousness of power only works openly when it is sure of its superiority. But the religious leaders were unsure because of the sympathy Jesus enjoyed among the people. Hence their secret measures under cover of darkness. Jesus unmasks this fear that springs from cowardice and the secret awareness of wrongdoing.

And he unmasks why the elders, chief priests, and scribes must resort to violence. In the spiritual arguments, they lost to Jesus, the true self, the new, spiritual life, and would continue to lose. So

they have to treat Jesus as a robber and render him harmless with swords and sticks. Since untruth and injustice will always succumb in intellectual disputes, they must use violence and brand the spiritual opponent as an agitator and violent criminal against whom violent measures are legitimate.

Peter's Denial

22:54 *And they arrested him and led him away and brought him into the house of the high priest. But Peter was following at a distance. ⁵⁵And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. ⁵⁶And a certain female slave, seeing him sitting in the light and looking intently at him, said, "This man also was with him!" ⁵⁷But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him!" ⁵⁸And after a short time another person saw him and said, "You also are one of them!" But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" ⁵⁹And after about one hour had passed, someone else was insisting, saying, "In truth this man also was with him, because he is also a Galilean!" ⁶⁰But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about!" And immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. ⁶¹And the Lord turned around and looked intently at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." ⁶²And he went outside and wept bitterly.* (LEB)

Betrayal is change of position. Judas takes the side of the earthly world again and surrenders his previous convictions to it. Denial, on the other hand, is a lack of courage to profess. Peter stands inwardly to his spiritual goal. But since it is not yet sufficiently anchored in him and he is surrounded by enormous threats, he is not in a position to profess it to the outside world. What happens inside a person in denial is illustrated externally by the scene in which Peter finds himself after the arrest of Jesus.

Jesus is in the "high priest's house." The true self has fallen into the grip of the self-assertive intellectual and dogmatic convictions of the human being, embodied in the high priest, and awaits confrontation. But Peter sits down in the courtyard of the high priest "among them," among the servants of the high priest who arrested Jesus. And he sits by the fire. He does not want to be

alone and in the dark cold; he wants to be safe and warmed in a community. It is the community of the old religion with which Jesus, and thus his disciples, came into conflict. In this situation, a servant-girl looks at Peter and recognizes him as a disciple of Jesus, a follower of a new spirit-based community. But Peter denies his belonging to Jesus, to the spiritual goal of a life in the spirit. Another servant of the high priest sees him and recognizes him as a disciple of Jesus. Again Peter denies Jesus. A third recognizes Peter as a Galilean who belongs to the Galilean Jesus, the “innovator.” And a third time, Peter denies this.

All pupils on the spiritual path find themselves in the same position as Peter over and over again. The goal to which they aspire and the community of aspirants they join are incomprehensible to outsiders who unquestioningly accept traditional religious goals and communities. But Peter questions tradition and the status quo. He is a heretic like his master. The protective community of “normal” people excludes such people. And the pupils cannot tolerate this. They would not be able to cope with the exclusion from the security of normal society, the isolation, possibly prison and death. At the prospect of such consequences on their way, they are so afraid that they do not dare to stand by their goal in front of outsiders. And again and again, three times, the same process happens. With the intellect, with the feelings, and with the will, the three main aspects of the earthly personality, the pupils deny because fear has taken hold of their entire being. It overrides intellectual conviction, emotional commitment, and determination of will.

And “while he was still speaking” – according to the principle of dramatic compression, the narrator links related events that do not necessarily have to follow each other immediately – the rooster crowed. The crowing rooster is the reporting conscience, the messenger of the true self: “The Lord turned around and looked intently at Peter.” The pupil’s true self living out of the spiritual world turns to the earthly consciousness, which feels “looked at” and recognized through and through. Peter recognizes what he has done in the powers and order of his true self. He recognizes the motives behind this action: fear for his place in the sun, for his security in the previous religious community, for his life. He realizes that all his moral courage and resolve to faithfully profess his goal have collapsed in the storm of fear. He recognizes that the true self had already known this constellation of forces in his

being. He sees how he really is.

And with that, his moral pride collapses. Peter “went outside and wept bitterly.” The disciple leaves the security of the old community and examines himself. He weeps over his weakness, over his inability to remain true to his intentions in a crisis situation, over the general situation of people, whose moral efforts always lose out compared to the drive for self-maintenance. The power of the drive for self-maintenance is overwhelming; pride in moral achievement is unwarranted.

But precisely at this moment of insight into human nature, at this moment of the collapse of the proud ego, which has lost against the id of instincts, must lose, at this moment of truth, as their own fear-driven action has proved how powerless the human being is basically, in this moment of crying and letting go of all moral effort and all pride, the spiritual world can work in the pupils. They can surrender to it and say as Jesus said in Gethsemane, Not my will but your will be done. Then the pupils have learned how to solve the task of the fifth phase of the spiritual path.

The Trial: Jesus and His Opponents

When they are received positively, the powers of the spiritual world, the truth, continue to work in people. In the disciples of Jesus, they enable the voluntary abandonment of self-centeredness as a prerequisite for the resurrection of the true self. But every negative reaction to the truth also connects the reacting person with the truth. The influence emanating from a repressed truth continues to work in people. In this way, too, the true self is anchored in humanity, and through the negative reactions of humanity, the powers of the spirit circulate within it. They will eventually break through from the unconscious into the conscious, perhaps only after a long struggle against self-centeredness. Under certain circumstances, they will certainly provoke a defensive fight. But in the long run, all resistances of the egocentric mind, feelings, and will will prove to be insufficient, and these people will also undergo a dimensional shift. In the long run, the rigid traditions and religions defended by the ego will be dissolved in all of humanity and make way for the living experience of the image of God.

In the Last Supper, the disciples of Jesus voluntarily receive his

“body” and his “blood,” the order and power of the kingdom of God that emanate from him, and are thereby changed. The opponents of Jesus, by persecuting and killing him, involuntarily absorb his “body” and his “blood” and are thereby changed. Thus, his sacrifice of “body” and “blood,” which he offers both alive and even in the death of the physical body, transforms friends and foes alike, enabling the long-term resurrection of the true self throughout humanity.

The confrontation of the true self with its opponents is essentially the subject of the last verses of chapter 22 and most of chapter 23. But Jesus does not “want” to change people. He is the perfect true self of the human being. His nature works according to the laws inscribed in him. It spreads its power without Jesus intending it. Like a light in the dark, it evokes friendly and hostile reactions. Jesus knows these effects of his being and knows what will necessarily result. This is precisely the dimensional shift that will be carried out by humanity: The limited world of intentions, plans, and purposes, however good or evil, will be replaced by the unlimited world of the spirit, by the unconditional, free-flowing power and the unfathomable, livingly developing order of the spirit.

As elsewhere in the gospel, the principle of dramatic condensation applies to the scenes of Jesus’ arrest, his interrogations, and his crucifixion. Already the chronological sequence would be quite improbable: the capture in the night, then four interrogations – before the council of elders and chief priests, before Pilate, before Herod, and then again before Pilate – finally the crucifixion, and all in one day; that is unthinkable. It is also unthinkable that the law-abiding Jews would have conducted such a process on the day before the Sabbath, which would have meant a desecration of the approaching Sabbath.

In a dramatic way, Luke here juxtaposes scenes that are deliberately embedded in the Passover event – in order to make the parallelism between the Passover event and the deeds of Jesus visible – and that depict a direct confrontation of all forces involved. This makes the nature of these forces and their mutual relationships clear. *These* reactions are presented to the reader. They are the key reactions. In ordinary life, they are hidden under all sorts of coincidences and everyday occurrences. Here in the gospel, however, their contours become visible through compression and tightening. Jesus, the true self, is contrasted in

turn with the aspects of the earthly self: the captors, the religious leaders, then the worldly leaders Pilate and Herod. This juxtaposition reveals the innermost nature of the participants. The nature of the ego feels challenged by the order and power of the spiritual world, embodied in the image of God, and unmask itself. So far, the world of thoughts, the world of feelings, and the aspirations of those involved have been in the foreground. Now, the innermost nature of people, their naked being, manifests itself, corresponding to the fifth phase of the spiritual path, which is also about the transformation of the material, bodily aspects of people.

Brute Violence

22:63 *And the men who were guarding him began to mock him while they beat him, ⁶⁴and after blindfolding him they repeatedly asked him, saying, "Prophecy! Who is the one who struck you?" ⁶⁵And they were saying many other things against him, reviling him. (LEB)*

Still during the night, Jesus is confronted with brute violence, the crudest, most ignorant aspects of the ego personality. The brute violence embodied in Jesus' guards has no mind of its own. It gets its attitude from its superiors. It is not possible for it to make its own judgment about what Jesus embodies. Violence and the spirit of love are worlds apart from each other. Protected by the opinion borrowed from their superiors that Jesus is a charlatan, Jesus' guards lust for violence, for beating a defenseless person who does not defend himself, and for frivolous games. But because the torturers are unable to form their own judgment, uncertainty arises about their prisoner's behavior. They do not know how to interpret his patience. And that insecurity fuels their anger.

They know there is a Christ, an Anointed One. But when he stands in front of them, they do not recognize him because they have the most primitive ideas about him. For them, Messiahship would be identical with occult abilities, with clairvoyance, divination, and sorcery. Their mockery moves on this level. Hence their game with Jesus, whom they believe to be a false Messiah. If he were the Messiah of their imagination, he would have to be able to see clairvoyantly, to prophesy, and even blindfolded to reveal who hit him. This is how this scene characterizes brute violence:

no judgment of one's own, inability to understand, sadism and mockery, primitive ideas of the divine world. The real self, which is like a mirror in which these qualities of brute violence are reflected, can only be silent here.

The Religious Leaders

22:66 *And when day came, the council of elders of the people gathered, both chief priests and scribes, and they led him away to their Sanhedrin, ⁶⁷saying, "If you are the Christ, tell us!" But he said to them, "If I tell you, you will never believe, ⁶⁸and if I ask you, you will never answer! ⁶⁹But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." ⁷⁰So they all said, "Are you then the Son of God?" And he said to them, "You say that I am." ⁷¹And they said, "Why do we have need of further testimony? For we ourselves have heard it from his mouth!"* (LEB)

Is Jesus the Messiah?

Jesus is brought before the council of elders, chief priests, and scribes. The council has the authority to decide theological issues. In this capacity, it sits in judgment over Jesus. The question to be decided is whether Jesus is "God's Son," the Anointed, the Messiah. If he falsely claims to be so, he is guilty of heresy, of blasphemy. He then usurps a divine title that does not belong to him, and thereby detracts from the majesty of God. So it is a question of legitimacy. The criteria that the council members felt the Messiah must meet follow from the Mosaic Law. First, the Messiah must believe that by fulfilling the law, people are justified before God. Secondly, he must implement this law, including the first commandment, which states that God is the only ruler of the people and that no other ruler, such as the Roman emperor, may be tolerated alongside. The Messiah must therefore want to throw off the yoke of Roman foreign rule. In addition, as also follows from the Mosaic Law, he must stand up for social justice.

In their opinion, Jesus does not fulfill the first criterion. He has often said that the law must be observed. But he denied that strict outward observance of the law justifies people before God. He always emphasized that the spirit of the law had to be fulfilled not its letter. The kingdom of God is a state of fulfillment of an inner law from which the fulfillment of the outer law and the manner in

which it must be fulfilled follow as a matter of course. Only in this way can people overcome their separation from God and become “justified.” But the scribes could not or would not understand this teaching. To them, it sounded as if Jesus wanted to unhinge the law. In any case, he did not share their conviction that people are justified before God by outward fulfillment of the law.

According to the religious leaders, Jesus at least partly fulfills the second criterion of Messiahship. It is questionable whether he is planning an uprising against the emperor. But he does stand up for social justice. However, since he does not meet the first criterion, the fulfillment of the second is irrelevant to the problem of legitimacy. It is, however, politically dangerous, since in this way, he appears as the Messiah in the eyes of the people.

Such is the theological argument of the religious leaders. For them, Jesus is a blasphemer and a heretic because he does not meet their Messianic criteria but claims to be the Messiah. This view of the religious leaders is strongly supported by their interests, which are called into question by Jesus. They envy his large following among the people and fear the loss of their privileges. A non-Messiah who fulfills certain functions of the Messiah must therefore be eliminated at all costs. Only a few have a secret guilty conscience. They feel that their traditional external relationship with God is actually no longer sustainable and should be replaced by an inner devotion to the kingdom of God, which Jesus advocates. For them, theological reasoning is essentially just a pretense to maintain their privileges. Be that as it may: With the help of this line of argument, the council can present Jesus as worthy of death with the semblance of justice in the eyes of the people and the council itself.

The religious leaders are also exposed in the mirror of the true self that is truth. How is the identity of Christ determined? Simply because the image of God, which is consubstantial with Christ, becomes active in people. People in whom the image of God is not at work cannot see the Christ within themselves and outside themselves. Only something akin to it can recognize what is akin to it.

But what are the inner constitution and the standards of the religious leaders? Their fidelity to the Mosaic law, to tradition, to dogma. They cling to this dogma and draw their meaning from it. Dogma also conceals the drives to possess, to be recognized, and to have power, and in many cases, it becomes an instrument of these

drives. Because of this inner condition, the living image of God cannot become active in them, or they suppress it. So, as earthly people, they have no way of recognizing the Christ.

They begin their judicial work by asking Jesus: "If you are the Christ, tell us!" But Jesus makes it clear that there is no judicial authority here. They are not competent in this matter since their inner constitution precludes the cognition required for judicial functions. "If I tell you," if Jesus identifies himself as the Christ, they will not believe it, for they have no organ for perceiving Christ. But "if I ask you," so if Jesus appeals to their own discernment, they will not answer. In this matter, neither believing knowledge, awakened from outside, nor their own judgment, coming from within, is possible for them. Jesus makes this clear in his answer, and in doing so, he makes it clear that they are incompetent. They cannot judge him – their understanding does not even reach the essence of the true self – but they themselves stand before the mirror of truth and are exposed by the truth in their limitations.

Son of Man and Son of God

After this clarification, Jesus describes the task of the Son of Man and the Son of God. He does not say outright that it is himself. That would be interpreted as arrogance. And the Messiah is not proud. If Jesus were to describe himself as the Messiah and say, I am the Son of God, according to the traditional view, he would thereby prove that he is not. But he shows them the nature of the Messiah. He puts the facts in front of them, even though as earthly people, they cannot see them. The facts must be stated; the truth must be revealed, even to incompetent, foolish people who presume to judge the truth, for this reveals the untruth and limitations of all religious leaders in world history who consider their dogmas to be the truth.

The fact is that there is a true self, the true human being, the Son of Man. The fact is that it can incarnate again and again and has incarnated perfectly in Jesus as the Anointed. The fact is that Jesus, as the Son of Man, completely dissolved the ego personality in the course of his life and replaced it with a spirit personality with which he will live and act consciously in the "kingdom of God," in the spiritual world, after discarding the material physical body. "From now on": from the time he lays aside his physical

body, the spirit personality and spirit body of the Son of Man will live in the spiritual world unaffected by matter just as his true self lived in the spiritual world during his lifetime. The fact is also that this resurrected image of God, as true self and spirit personality, will be “at the right hand of the power of God.” The Son of Man, consciously expressing himself in the kingdom of God, immediately receives the powers of the spirit, the “power of God,” and works with them into the earthly world.

It is also a fact that Jesus is the Son of God just as every human being in whom the image of God, begotten by the spirit, has become aware of itself and the spiritual world and lives out of them is a Son of God. Jesus was the human being who embodied this status in perfection and expressed the need to make this new humanity, this sonship of God, possible for all people. Only in this respect was he a special Son of God, the “Anointed One,” the Christ. As an earthly human being, he was born of Joseph and Mary; as a spiritual human being, he was the Son of Man and the Son of God, the image of God, born of the “Father” and the “Holy Spirit,” from the order and power of the spiritual world.

Jesus presents these facts to the religious leaders. But for them, they are just words to twist a rope around him. They ask again to hear confirmation from his own lips of what he said. And he confirms, again indirectly, that he is the Son of God: “You say that I am.” He reveals his essence to all religious leaders in human history. And in contrast to this, their essence is expressed. It is the essence of not understanding the spiritual world and the resulting behavior. From the outset, the religious leaders do not consider Jesus to be the Christ and Son of God but rather a deceiver or a person caught in self-deception. He does not meet the criteria for the Messiah as they conceive him.

Jesus as Heretic

“Why do we have need of further testimony?” Why add witnesses to the accusation that Jesus is a deceiver and blasphemer? Jesus himself confirms indirectly that he considers himself to be the Messiah and Son of God although according to the religious leaders he is not. He is a heretic who places himself outside the standards of ecclesiastical dogmatics; indeed, by claiming that other standards embodied in him are decisive, he pollutes these standards. He blasphemes the true Mosaic God. This is a crime

punishable by death.

This scene does not have to have taken place in real life. Is it really conceivable that such sentences were spoken by Jesus in public? Here, too, we are dealing with a dramatic concentration. The new humanity working into the earthly world as the power and pattern of the spiritual world stands in contrast to the old humanity, the persisting dogmatic forces and orders of earthly religion. The people – here Jesus, there the religious leaders – embody the living spirit and the rigid outer forms from which people hope for salvation. Inner religion stands opposite outer religion at all times. And the sentences exchanged between the characters declare the relationship between the living spirit and the dead letter. From its vantage point, the dead letter cannot understand the living spirit. In good faith, it must label a person embodying the spirit as a heretic and blasphemer.

Secretly, however, Jesus' words also touch the dormant true self of the religious leaders. Their disposition to the new humanity is touched. Their true self experiences the fact and the path of the new humanity. It learns that this humanity will continue to exist concretely in the form of the Anointed One in the spiritual world and from there will have an effect on human beings. Through the words of Jesus and his presence, the fact of true humanity is imprinted on them. Like a bolt of lightning, it leaves an indelible mark on them. Even if it is repressed by their ego in the next moment – it continues to have an effect on them as information. The true self will one day break through the selfishness and resulting misunderstanding of religious leaders.

On the same basis as Jesus, all pupils on the spiritual path will experience the misunderstandings and resistance of the rigid traditions in their own being and in the environment. On the basis of the true self, they will learn to remain true to the living spirit in themselves even in threatening situations – differently from Peter – and to recognize the nature of the outer religions of the world, what constitutes their power, and that out of misunderstanding, they always have to fight and exclude the inner religion. In this knowledge, they will learn to remain unmoved as Jesus was before the Jewish council.

The Temporal Leaders

Pilate

23:1 *And the whole assembly of them rose up and brought him before Pilate. ²And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying he himself is Christ, a king!" ³And Pilate asked him, saying, "Are you the king of the Jews?" And he answered him and said, "You say so." ⁴So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no basis for an accusation against this man." ⁵But they insisted, saying, "He incites the people, teaching throughout the whole of Judea and beginning from Galilee as far as here."* (LEB)

In all times of history, after the confrontation with the religious leaders, the true self also finds itself confronted with the secular leaders, for if the religious leaders do not have the physical power themselves, they will want to persuade the temporal power to carry out the sentence they have passed on the blasphemer. To this end, they must present arguments that the temporal power, here Pilate, understands. The fact that Jesus blasphemed the Mosaic God by falsely calling himself the Son of God – which is for the religious power, the representatives of the Mosaic God, the crime most worthy of death – does not count as an argument before Pilate. Worldly power as such has no god, and if it does, its god is the earthly self-centeredness on which it is based: "Caesar." It is not interested in theological disputes. For it, only facts are valid as they are now presented to Pilate by the religious leaders: Jesus stirs up the people and claims that he is the political king of the Jews. This would make him a pretender to political kingship and a revolutionary against the emperor. And as such, he would necessarily have to be sentenced to death by the worldly power.

But both allegations are unfounded. Jesus is not a revolutionary. Pilate recognizes this, be it in a detailed interrogation (Luke 23:14) about which the evangelist, who is only interested in the fundamentals, does not report, or be it that he has long since been informed about it by people he trusts. And Pilate further recognizes that Jesus sees himself as the spiritual king of the Jews. He recognizes it from the answer that Jesus gives to his question, again indirectly. If Pilate understood Jesus as the accusations of the Jews describe him, namely as the political king of the Jews, he

would have to find him guilty; he would have to have him condemned. But Pilate finds “no basis for an accusation against this man.” The worldly power can certainly recognize when a person lives in dimensions other than those of politics. Even if it does not have access to these dimensions itself, it is aware that the spiritual human being does not belong to the political sphere as such and poses no danger to it. The kingdom of God is not of this – political – world. Therefore, the worldly power need not fear Jesus as spiritual king. This is confirmed by the interrogation of which verse 14 speaks. In fact, Jesus did not behave as a pretender to political kingship and did not agitate the people.

Spiritual King

Thus, Jesus, the true self, declares himself before the worldly power. He declares himself as a spiritual king. Before all Pilates in world history, the true self declares itself in this way. And all Pilates in world history will find no guilt in the true self. Spiritual kingship has nothing to do with violence, rebellion, ambition, and striving for power. It cannot endanger worldly power as long as the latter is nothing but worldly power. The worldly power only has the task of organizing and administering earthly conditions fairly. If this happens, the development of the spiritual human being can take place on this basis. Only when political power usurps functions of spiritual power and thus becomes ideology or secularized religion does it enter the field of spiritual power. Then the encounter with it would correspond to Jesus’ encounter with the religious leaders.

Although Pilate, as representative of earthly power, cannot understand the spiritual character of the true self that confronts him in perfection and imperturbable calm, he too has a true self, dormant beneath his earthly interests and allegiances. By confronting the true self of humanity, his own true self is touched without him needing to be aware of it. This impression will continue to have an effect on him as information and in the long run will also bring about a change in the nature of this person.

As Jesus did, on the basis of the true self, all pupils on the spiritual path will encounter earthly, worldly justice as embodied in Pilate. They will recognize the function of earthly power for the organization and administration of society and will experience that this sphere of earthly power is alien to that of the spirit. Earthly

power as such cannot threaten them – it can only do so as a tool of religious power, for the earthly power does not feel challenged by the true self, which is totally alien to it.

Herod

23:6 *Now when Pilate heard this, he asked if the man was a Galilean. ⁷And when he found out that he was from the jurisdiction of Herod, he sent him over to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem in those days. ⁸And when Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see some miracle performed by him. ⁹So he questioned him at considerable length, but he answered nothing to him. ¹⁰And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there vehemently accusing him. ¹¹And Herod with his soldiers also treated him with contempt, and after mocking him and dressing him in glistening clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. ¹²And both Herod and Pilate became friends with one another on that same day, for they had previously been enemies of one another. (LEB)*

In contrast to the other evangelists, Luke presents two varieties of worldly power, embodied by Pilate and by Herod. Pilate represents the serious and just variety, Herod the frivolous and arbitrary, that which delights in spectacle and display of splendor. Pilate is a Gentile, Herod a Jew. As such, he still has a share in the tradition of the Old Testament and counts on the appearance of a Messiah, an “Anointed One,” even if his ideas fall far short of the nature of the Messiah. To him, the Messiah would be a great magician, and so he hopes in a confrontation with Jesus to see a “sign,” a feat of magic, to entertain him.

There have always been such rulers in world history. They surround themselves with astrologers, soothsayers, and magicians to satisfy their curiosity and thirst for sensation, perhaps also to establish a privileged relationship with the spiritual world as they understand it. When they meet a person who has the reputation of being an “Anointed One,” they urge him “at considerable length” to produce some “miracles.” The true self, Jesus, does not honor this expectation with a word. Explanations would make no sense here.

Unlike Pilate, Herod does not care about the truth. He does not

examine the accusations against Jesus at all. He does not want to get to the bottom of the matter even with the means he has, which are limited to the earthly world. This corresponds to this variety of worldly power, which is primarily concerned with entertainment and pleasure. Herod evades his duty of examination and thus his responsibility. He leaves that to Pilate. The only thing he does in his disappointment at not having seen a magic trick is to mock Jesus, as the members of the Jewish temple guard had done before. If Jesus does not have magical abilities, he cannot be the Messiah. Ironically, Herod has him dressed in a ceremonial robe befitting the Messiah, king of the Jews.

Pilate and Herod had been enemies: two varieties of power, the earthly justice of Rome and an entertainment-focused, superstitious, and degenerate Judaism – bread and circuses. There are worlds in between, which is why both varieties – sobriety and frivolousness – are mutually unsympathetic. But now both varieties share the same interest. They must ward off the accusations of the religious leaders who, as they clearly see, want to lure them into a trap. The religious leaders want to get them to judge an innocent man. Both Pilate and Herod are convinced that the spiritual principle is not politically dangerous; both feel pressured by the religious leaders and resist. They do not want to be used as a tool for the interests of others. This same constellation of interests makes them friends. Both aspects of temporal power, different as they may be relative to each other, ally in the face of the corrupted religious power, which is the greater enemy. But Herod, in accordance with his mentality, cleverly evades the decision and leaves it to Pilate.

Even with Herod's variety of worldly power, the true self of humanity is confronted at all times in history and in every pupil on the spiritual path. There is only silent recognition and acceptance of this need for power to use the spirit for amusement purposes. A declaration as a spiritual king, which makes sense before Pilate, the earthly power concerned with truth and justice, would here not only meet someone who did not understand but also someone who was unworthy.

It is anyone's guess whether Pilate's transfer of Jesus to Herod and the justification for Jesus' Galilean origin are historical. It is rather unlikely that Pilate could have behaved in this way. But the evangelist wants to show that both varieties of power confront the king of the spirit, each in its own special way, and that both play

into each other's hands, whether in a collective or in an individual pupil. Because the true self is incarnated in an earthly body that in the case of Jesus comes under the dominion of Pilate in Jerusalem and because of Jesus' Galilean origin, under the dominion of Herod, it must necessarily come in touch with all aspects of the earthly dimension, with bread and circuses. Luke's narratives give expression to this state of affairs even though they are really not meant to be historical.

Struggle between Spiritual and Temporal Leaders

23:13 *So Pilate called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people ¹⁴ and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people, and behold, when I examined him before you, I found nothing in this man as basis for the accusation which you are making against him. ¹⁵ But neither did Herod, because he sent him back to us. And behold, nothing deserving death has been done by him. ¹⁶ Therefore I will punish him and release him." ¹⁸ But they all cried out in unison, saying, "Take this man away, and release for us Barabbas!" ¹⁹ (who had been thrown in prison because of a certain insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder). ²⁰ And Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, ²¹ but they kept crying out, saying, "Crucify! Crucify him!" ²² So he said to them a third time, "Why? What wrong has this man done? I found no basis for an accusation deserving death in him. Therefore I will punish him and release him." ²³ But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he be crucified. And their cries prevailed. ²⁴ And Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. ²⁵ And he released the one who had been thrown into prison because of insurrection and murder, whom they were asking for, but Jesus he handed over to their will. (LEB)*

The religious power has pronounced the death sentence on Jesus, the embodiment of the living spirit. It embodies dead, frozen religious dogmatism and ideology, which is fed from otherworldly, demonic sources of self-centeredness, and under whose cloak it lives out its striving for power, possessions, and recognition. From its point of view, Jesus, the true self, is a heretic who blasphemes their God. It now needs the worldly power to

carry out the sentence. With the fanaticism and hatred of hell, the religious leaders supported by the people passionately disappointed by the Messiah urge Pilate, the representative of temporal power.

Pilate, convinced of Jesus' innocence, defends himself but is not up to the pressure of the religious power. He tries to assert himself three times in a dramatic fight and is defeated. First, he explains to the accusers of Jesus again that neither he nor Herod found anything worthy of death in Jesus. To appease their thirst for blood, he offers them the scourging of the prisoner. But that only excites them more. "Take this man away!"

Now Pilate brings Barabbas into play. There is traditionally an opportunity to amnesty a wrongdoer on the occasion of Passover. Pilate gives the leaders and people a choice between Barabbas, an insurrectionist and murderer, and the nonviolent and innocent Jesus. The religious leaders and the people choose Barabbas. Pilate tried to defend himself a second time, again in vain. The religious leaders and the agitated people cry out, "Crucify him!"

Pilate appeals to them for the third time, now to their instincts. He hopes that by scourging Jesus he will throw them a bone to appease their insatiable cruelty and hopes that their hatred of the violent criminal Barabbas must be stronger than their incomprehensible hatred of Jesus. But they assail him "with loud shouts," and "their voices prevailed." Pilate resigns, releases the violent criminal, and hands Jesus over "as they wished."

The scene is a lesson in the constellation of forces between corrupt religious power, secular power, and the people, which is constantly being formed in the face of the activity of the spirit in humanity.

The worldly power represents the earthly world on this side of the veil. It is concerned with justice and ordered earthly conditions even if it is for its own egocentric interests. But it is neutral, even indifferent towards the spiritual world. The corrupt religious power that embodies the afterlife of the earthly world, however, harbors deadly enmity towards the spiritual world. The demons of the world beyond are expressed in the corrupt religious power and the people ruled by it. Hence the tremendous energy with which the religious leaders and the people oppose the inherent purpose of humanity, the unfolding of the true self, for the fulfillment of this purpose would mean disempowering the demonic self-centeredness that keeps people captive in dogmatic and ideological

systems.

The sphere of the beyond makes the “people,” the earthly soul forces of humanity, subservient and plays with them. The people have no clear discernment and no steadfastness. They had followed Jesus in the foreboding that something new and promising lived in him but had not understood the difference between spiritual and political kingship and were disappointed. The religious power could easily make them compliant in this state.

The otherworldly sphere also succeeds in making the worldly power compliant. Pilate does not understand the actual motives of the corrupt religious power, and as a representative of the earthly world on this side of the veil, he cannot understand them. The world on the other side is inaccessible to him, as is the spiritual world, and thus also the conflict between the world on the other side and the spiritual world, which takes place before his eyes. He only recognizes the political innocence of the representative of the spiritual world. He has nothing to oppose the demons of the afterlife except his sense of justice, his sobriety, his appeals to reason, and his attempts at appeasement. And that is why he gets the short straw. The earthly power on this side is not strong enough in itself. It depends either on the otherworldly or on the spiritual. The ego can try to assert itself but is fundamentally inferior to the id of the instincts and to the otherworldly forces working through the superego. It would only be able to cope with the id and the superego if it could get in touch with the spiritual world and be guided by it, for the spiritual world is stronger than the demonic. But since Pilate, representative of the ego on this side, cannot gain access to the spiritual world, he has to submit to the onslaught of the passions and of the sphere of the beyond – the id and the superego, the people and the religious leaders.

Rationality Defeated by Irrationality

This law of life is presented by the evangelist. The ego on its own is no match for the demonic in the form of unleashed passions and fanatical ideologies. Enlightenment, reason, liberality, a rational and just order of affairs may be able to guide the individual or society for a while. But if they are not rooted in the spiritual world, the fanatically demonic, ideology, dogmatism, and passions, in short: the irrational, will prove stronger in crisis situations.

Therefore, Luke does not detail Pilate's possible considerations and motives. All he cares about is showing that the clamor against reason gets through, that the power of the agitated id and the fevered superego is greater than the sobriety of the rational ego. Pilate fears that the leaders and the crowd will slip out of his control and become dangerous to him. However, given the feverish heat of passions and ideological fanaticism, his proposals are completely inadequate. He is helpless and in this way demonstrates the above law of life.

This law of life is relevant at all times. Again and again, irrational currents assert themselves in societies, be they dogmatically-religious oriented, be they ideologies in the form of a belief in progress and science. On the other hand, rational, well-intentioned, sober, and sensible people try to assert themselves. But, as Pilate shows, in the long run, they are no match for the irrational energies. Why do they have to experience their failures over and over again? Because they do not know the great law that underlies the development of humanity. Because they believe that rationality, justice, and common sense will prevail in the long run. They believe them to be the key values. But there are higher values.

In humanity works the true self of humanity, a spiritual identity that transcends and encompasses the ego identity. It pushes people towards their inherent purpose. Their inherent purpose is to unfold their true self, their spiritual identity. The true self should and could make the passions and energies of the beyond, the "demons," the irrational, and also the rational ego serve it. Only when a society or an individual is oriented towards this goal will there be harmony and a balance between the forces in the long term, for then people and all their energies are embedded in the spiritual flow of powers that directs the development of humanity. Then they feel in tune with their inner being. Then they have the feeling of helping their true identity to unfold. If they limited themselves to rationally structuring their earthly existence, they would always be dissatisfied, would always feel an unsatisfied, perhaps unacknowledged, longing. And this longing could always be abused and exploited by the irrational, demonic forces.

The irrational energies of the beyond and their representatives know the balance of power. They know that the spiritual realm is stronger than they are and that in the long run, it will put an end to their claims to power, prestige, and possessions. They rightly

fear that as soon as people find their true identity, their actual independence, they will slip away from the influence of the irrational energies of the beyond and their representatives. Therefore, the latter do everything they can to destroy the representatives of the true self. They always tap into people's longing to develop their true self and redirect this longing to their own ideological ends, thus rendering the people harmless.

The Gospel and the whole of human development is not so much about a power struggle between religious and secular power. That too has always existed in human history, and there was bitter fighting on both sides. It is not so much about the distribution of earthly power between religious and secular leaders. Rather, it is about the question of whether people slip away from the influence of self-centered religious or ideological leaders and find their true identity. It is about the danger for self-centered religious or ideological leaders that humanity recognizes its inherent purpose and realizes it – and thus evades the rule of the beyond. The struggle over the distribution of power between spiritual and secular leaders essentially has this background.

The ideological leaders will always be victorious as long as they can get the “people,” the dependent temporal human soul forces, on their side and as long as rationality, benevolent reason, only wants to rely on itself.

The rationally oriented people, represented by Pilate as a representative of the worldly power, would have to gain insight into the laws of human development and the balance of power of the factors involved. They would have to recognize that their goal, the organization of society according to aspects of justice and freedom, does not in itself correspond to the inherent purpose of humanity. Only then could things change. The representatives of the rational would have to recognize what the actual goal of human development is and commit themselves to this goal. The rational ego would have to devote itself to spiritual humanity. Pilate would have to make common cause with Jesus. This is the only way to tame the irrational energies and gradually integrate them into the overall development.

As long as this does not happen, the rational forces will always lose out against the irrational forces. They will not be strong enough on their own because they are not rooted in spirituality and, without that spirituality, will not be able to truly discern the character of the irrational and its motives. And those who are

committed to rationality will always be dissatisfied with their lives because they feel that something greater in them is urging to unfold.

True humanity, the spiritual in human beings, their true self, is completely isolated in this situation of the struggle between worldly and religious power and both powers against the image of God in the human being. The whole world stands against Jesus. The forces of perseverance in dogmatics and ideology are in any case hostile to him, and the forces of earthly reason and justice, which are neutral in themselves, can be made the tools of these ideologies. The supremacy of the demonic, the impotence of earthly reason and justice, the violence of the lower passions: The true self recognizes all of this in this phase of the spiritual path and endures it.

The Barabbas episode sheds further light on the basic attitude of corrupt religious power towards the spiritual life of the true self. Religious power, under normal circumstances, will always maintain the appearance of justice and lenient rule. But when push comes to shove, when not only its external position of power but also its inner basis of legitimacy is endangered – when there is a possibility that humanity will be brought a step closer to its inherent purpose by people connected to the spirit: Then the self-centered religious power deems any means to prevent this step appropriate.

Then Barabbas, violent criminal and scum of humanity, is preferred to the real self. The religious leaders, the secular leaders, and the people with their self-centeredness belong to the earthly world, which influences them from this side and the beyond. Brute violence also belongs to the earthly world while the true self belongs to a completely different dimension. Therefore, the religious leaders and the people opt for brute violence. They are familiar with its nature and can rely on it without going beyond the earthly framework. But that is what the spiritual dimension does. It is to be expelled and “killed.”

Jesus is crucified. The chief priests, elders, and scribes may have thought that the matter was settled. They have removed a threat to their vested interests and position. The people have received satisfaction insofar as they had hoped Jesus was a political Messiah and were disappointed. They took revenge on the “false” Messiah who had raised such expectations and disappointed them. Disappointment and indignation, anger and contempt prevail

among the zealots, as the case may be. The Christ Messiah has failed. For them, he was politically incompetent and had allowed himself to be betrayed by his own disciples. God could not have been with him. However, insofar as the people had been connected to Jesus in love but also had unreflected messianic hopes – and this also includes Jesus’ closest disciples – they fall into sadness and lethargy. The bringer of living soul-spiritual powers is dead. The hope for further development of their own inner life, for entry into the kingdom of God, is gone. And if there had been any additional hopes for a political kingdom of David, they too have been dashed.

Crucifixion, Death, and Resurrection

In the fifth phase of the spiritual path, the true self conquers not only the world but also death. This process is described in the last chapter of the gospel.

It is an inner soul process that has an impact on the physical body. Jesus, and later the disciples following him, denied himself, took up his cross, and thereby rose from the dead. He “denies himself”: He consciously dissolves all his striving for power, status, and possessions and finally also the drive for self-maintenance of the physical body. And he “takes up his cross”: The spiritual path provokes the enmity of the powers of this world and the beyond. It can manifest itself in subtle ways or in the form of brute physical violence. It is the “cross” that Jesus takes up and promises to his disciples. It is an inevitable concomitant of the spiritual path. “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23, NRSV).

When selfishness and the drive for self-maintenance “die” and the “cross” is accepted, the true self is given space to unfold. This is the resurrection. The true self, prevented from becoming conscious and active by the selfishness and the drive for self-maintenance of the earthly human being, becomes aware of its existence in the spiritual world when these obstacles are removed and can become active in it. “Those who lose *their* life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 10:39, NRSV). In other words: Those who want to lose the life of selfishness and self-maintenance for the sake of the true self and in the powers of the true self, in them the life of the true self will be resurrected. It arises from the “death” of latency. It becomes aware of itself and the spiritual world but

gradually also becomes active through new thoughts, feelings, will impulses, and actions. Over time, a new spirit personality develops, which eventually even possesses a subtle material aspect, a “spirit body.”

The earthly ego personality and its body are based on the transitory world. They are therefore impermanent. But the true self, its spirit personality, and its spirit body are based on the imperishable world and are therefore imperishable. Those who “arise,” whose true self becomes conscious and also active through the new spirit personality, are immortal. They have overcome the cause of death, self-centeredness and self-maintenance, and thereby have overcome death.

These processes are events within the soul although they have effects as far as the physical. They must and can be accomplished and experienced while the human being is still physically alive. But when they do occur, such a person will go through physical death differently than an ordinary person.

In the case of people who do not walk the spiritual path, what could arise at death or after death? After the death of the physical body, the earthly thoughts, feelings, and will impulses remain with them for a while. However, since they are not in harmony with the laws of the spiritual world, they will also gradually dissolve, and nothing will remain of these people except their latent true self that has not become conscious and active. After some time, it will have to look for a new embodiment in order to try with its help to awaken from latency and become aware of itself.

On the other hand, in people who are walking the spiritual path, even if they are making little progress on it, at physical death, the true self has become conscious and active to some degree. It will also remain conscious and active to a certain extent after death, as it is an expression of the spiritual world. Connected with it will also be a new, at least rudimentary spirit personality that lives in harmony with the laws of the spiritual world and is therefore also not subject to dissolution. Its “spirit body,” its subtle material aspect, cannot be attacked by death.

So the earthly personality of the pupils does not arise. This has “died” on the spiritual path as regards its self-centeredness and drive for self-maintenance. It is only an outer shell in which the pupils expressed themselves in the ephemeral world during physical life, without self-centeredness and self-maintenance. Within this shell, however, the new spirit personality had formed

like a butterfly in a chrysalis. It arises at and after death and the dissolution of the earthly personality, together with the true self.

What is told about Jesus in the Gospel of Luke is exemplary for every person who walks the spiritual path as Jesus did. Jesus carries out the processes described as self-denial, crucifixion, and resurrection in his special connection with the spiritual world and thereby in the powers of the spiritual world. But in doing so, he makes the same possible for anyone else who wants to do the same. Jesus experiences in an exemplary way what each of his followers can also experience. And what he experiences is the unfolding of the true human identity through the demolition of the false identity. It is a dimensional shift of consciousness and being. The basis of human consciousness and being is then no longer the earthly but the spiritual world. In this way, Jesus fulfills the purpose, the developmental goal, that is inherent in every human being and in humanity. His experience is not anything abnormal. It is something “normal” in the course of human evolution, something that corresponds to the inherent purpose of every human being. Only when people basically experience the same thing as Jesus do they fulfill their inherent purpose. They then realize the possibility of the new humanity, which Jesus realized in an exemplary manner.

Good Friday and Easter are therefore festivals that all people can and must celebrate in their own being and as their own experience if they want to fulfill their actual goal in life. These festivals are usually celebrated in commemoration of someone else’s suffering, death, and resurrection. One reveres this other person because of his suffering, death, and resurrection. And this kind of reverence is justified because without this exemplary execution of the spiritual path, the followers would not be able to do so. But it is crucial that people celebrate these festivals concretely within themselves. They themselves must experience suffering, death, and resurrection. Not by thinking their way into the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus but by going through the same processes as Jesus did. Do not worship someone else’s suffering, death, and victory but suffer, die, and conquer yourself. Only that would be the right worship. Only this would correspond to the will and desire of the person who has exemplified these processes.

The Gospel does not ask people to identify with the physical suffering and death and some imagined physical resurrection of another. It challenges them to understand processes within the

soul that have their effects on the physical. What is the point of identifying with and suffering vicariously the physical pain and death of another? To identify with and triumph in some imagined resurrection of the physical body? This does not fundamentally change people. Walking the spiritual path that Jesus exemplified means experiencing the process of an inner dying of self-centeredness and of the drive for self-maintenance (with effects reaching into the physical) accompanied by external difficulties, the enmity of a non-understanding environment, the “cross.” But this process of inner death and inner crucifixion is always connected with the experience of resurrection, with experiencing another dimension, the spiritual world. Against the background of the spiritual world, the pupils experience that what “dies” in them is only something inadequate, something that hinders their own inherent purpose, something that creates suffering and death. What creates suffering and death dies in them, and thereby real, lasting happiness comes about, the happiness of life in the spiritual world. From the perspective of the true self, Good Friday is meaningful and necessary since only the dying of the old leads to the resurrection of the new. In the dying of the senseless old, the meaningful new is already experienced. Why should such people experience Good Friday as a mourning festival? They experience Easter and with it the necessarily preceding Good Friday as celebrations.

The countless artistic depictions of the suffering Jesus on the cross, which are intended to arouse compassion and gratitude for this sacrifice of a Son of God, lead on the wrong track. They are based on the misconception that what matters is the suffering and death of the physical body and that Jesus thereby redeemed humanity. Such representations are perhaps suitable to tame the wildness of the viewers a little. They put pressure on the viewers: You are to blame for this suffering. They may also frighten the viewers: What injustice and misery there is in the world! But they paralyze the viewers and keep them from their actual task: to recognize and walk the path of dying of self-centeredness and of the drive for self-maintenance and the resurrection of the true self as a path within the soul with effects reaching into the physical.

If they do that, they will also recognize how speculative and alien to their actual experience are ideas that over the centuries have been linked to the physical suffering and death of Jesus and to his resurrection. They are constructions: People are guilty before God.

That is why God is angry with them. They would have deserved eternal death. But since God is also love, God sends the Son and lets him, the innocent, suffer death as a substitute for the guilty. God also lets him overcome death. Thereby God's wrath is satisfied, but God's love has also come to the fore, for through God's actions, people are saved from God's wrath, yes, they are even raised to eternal life by grace by Jesus, the Risen One, on the last day – provided they accept his sacrifice and his grace with faith.

On the other hand, those who follow the spiritual path as Jesus did will recognize that people are separated from God through self-centeredness and the drive for self-maintenance. A being from the spiritual world, living in unity with God, renounces the happiness of this state, clothes himself with an earthly personality, the “form of a slave” (Philippians 2:7, LEB), and accepts all the separation from God associated with it. He takes upon himself the consequences of self-centeredness and the drive for self-maintenance from which earthly people suffer: diseases, tragedies, and death. These consequences are the “wrath” of God: the painful correction of this self-centeredness and the drive for self-maintenance by the laws of the spiritual world. What is not in accordance with it will be corrected. And Jesus, as this being from the spiritual world is called in his earthly incarnation, walks the spiritual path as “Christ,” as the one who has been anointed with spiritual powers and filled in a special way, until the regained unity with God, until the resurrection of the true self.

Jesus, Yehoshua, means “God redeems.” The redemption is that Jesus, in taking upon himself the “wrath” of God and resurrecting in the powers of God, makes it possible for others to do so as well. They themselves must – and now can – also take upon themselves the “wrath” of God and find their way back to oneness with God. They do so when they voluntarily dissolve selfishness and the drive for self-maintenance, take upon themselves the enmity of the world, the “cross,” resurrect as true selves, and live forever. They realize the new humanity by abandoning the old. This is the only way to live up to the inherent purpose of human beings to be the image of God. With everything else, earthly people remain as they are, get stuck in the old ways, and also misunderstand what the Redeemer has done for them.

The spiritual world urges humanity to realize the image of God, the true self. By painfully correcting undesirable developments, it

acts as the “wrath” of God. By working in beings such as Jesus and causing them to be active in mortal humanity and thereby enabling human beings to fulfill their inherent purpose, it is the “love” of God directly promoting the development of human beings into the image of God. The indirect promotion through the correction of undesirable developments also arises from the “love” of God. Therefore God’s wrath is also love.

Crucifixion, death, and resurrection are processes within the soul that have effects as far as the physical. Anyone who completes these processes within the soul in life will go through physical death differently than someone who does not complete them. In the following, Luke describes these processes within Jesus but at the same time also their manifestation in the physical crucifixion and in physical death.

He does this by presenting all processes as historical, externally visible events. But the many allusions to the Psalms and the passages that are historically impossible in the visible world prove that these are not exclusively visible events. Luke proceeds here as before in the whole gospel. Sometimes he actually brings historical, externally visible events in which inner soul experiences are expressed. They can thus become images for timeless laws and experiences within the soul as, for example, the event of Caesar crossing the Rubicon becomes an image for every situation in which a person makes an irreversible, risky decision. In part, however, Luke also recounts events that are only apparently historical and impossible in the visible world as if they were taking place in the externally visible world. These impossibilities in the visible world serve him to express facts within the soul that have an effect as far as the physical but would be difficult to represent in any other way than in this pictorial way.

In the “transfiguration,” the fourth phase of the spiritual path, it became apparent that Jesus had already overcome the self-centeredness of the earthly personality in thinking, feeling, and willing. In principle, his true self was already resurrected and had a spirit personality – a new way of thinking, feeling, and willing. But it was still attached to an earthly physical body with its brain and could only express itself and become conscious through this body. What remains now as the task of the fifth phase of the spiritual path is the dissolution of the drive for self-maintenance, which determines the earthly body and the ego identity associated with it. Only in this way is the true self free to build up a spirit

body as an appropriate instrument of perception and action. Thus, the spirit personality becomes complete. In addition to thinking, feeling, and willing, it then also has a fine-material aspect as an organ of perception and action.

The events described below by Luke relate to the total dissolution of the earthly being and the resurrection of a spiritual being. They therefore also apply to the dissolution of self-centeredness and the development of a spirit personality, as Jesus had already accomplished in the fourth phase of his journey. However, they apply in particular to the dissolution of the drive for self-maintenance, whereby the construction and resurrection of a spirit body also become possible and the process of transfiguration of the entire personality is completed. They can be divided into seven stations: carrying the cross, crucifixion, death, descent from the cross, burial, rest in the tomb, and resurrection.

Carrying the Cross

All people on the spiritual path deny themselves and carry their “cross.” In the true self, selfishness and the drive for self-maintenance gradually dissolve. This is self-denial, better “ego-denial” or denial of self-centeredness. At the same time, these people experience the enmity of other people who cannot understand the goal of the new humanity or fear it because it would run counter to their ego interests. Yet they endure this enmity unmoved, remaining in the soul state that is the true self. This is carrying the cross.

Jesus’ way to the crucifixion is therefore a situation that every human being experiences on the spiritual path and which also manifests itself externally in a variety of ways: as ridicule, harassment, emphasized indifference, malice – as enmity and hatred. Ultimately, this enmity can go as far as physical crucifixion as experienced by Jesus as a historical event. Hence, the outer cross can become a picture of this enmity and the outer cross-bearing a picture of the unmoved carrying of the cross by the true self. In doing so, the pupil has many meaningful experiences. Luke presents three of them below.

Simon of Cyrene: Physical Vitality

23:26 *And as they led him away, they seized Simon, a certain man of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and placed the cross on him, to carry it behind Jesus. (LEB)*

Simon of Cyrene, “who was coming from the country,” is forced by the soldiers to carry Jesus’ cross. The true self is the target of the persecutions and “murderous intentions” that always appear on the spiritual path. But the physical human being in which the true self unfolds is directly affected by this. The physical human being is the outwardly visible opponent, the only thing physical violence can attack, and it vicariously attracts the physical violence that is actually aimed at the true self. Therefore Simon, image for the physical human being, carries the cross for Jesus.

He is forced to carry it. He is not acting independently in what is happening. The physical human being in agreeing to this forced role helps the true self on its way to the crucifixion. If it does not cooperate with the true self, if the loyalty, devotion, perseverance, and sense of duty of the earthly human being do not support the pupil on the way, the true self must also fail.

When entering Jerusalem, Jesus was able to lean on the enthusiasm and devotion – the powers of feeling in the heart – of the earthly human being: A “colt” or foal of a donkey was made available to him by the inhabitants of a village. Mental forces in the head of the earthly human being, embodied by the “owner of the house” in the city, had assisted him in celebrating the Passover meal. And now, when he is under the greatest strain, including on his nerves, through the persecution of his opponents, the biological forces of the earthly human being help him carry the “cross.” This physical vigor and endurance is embodied by “Simon of Cyrene,” “who was coming from the country.” In contrast to the “mountain,” which symbolizes the spiritual sphere, and the “sea,” which represents the soul level, “country” or field is an image for the physique, the biological vitality.

In the apocryphal literature of early Christianity, there are passages where it is reported that Simon not only carried the cross for Jesus but was even crucified in Jesus’ place. This expresses even more clearly that physical violence can only affect and destroy the physical shell of the true self not the true self itself. But physical violence is an expression of psychic hatred that wants to affect something psychic, the true self. Thus the physical shell,

Simon, becomes the vicarious target of psychic hatred and as such is persecuted and killed. This is what a pupil experiences in extreme situations on the spiritual path.

The Branches on the Green Wood

23:27 *And a great crowd of the people were following him, and of women who were mourning and lamenting him. ²⁸ But turning to them, Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children! ²⁹ For behold, days are coming in which they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that did not give birth, and the breasts that did not nurse!’ ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’ ³¹ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?” (LEB)*

Many women follow Jesus as he goes to the place of execution. The soldiers embody brute violence, the women the opposite: compassion and empathy. Since Luke as an evangelist emphasizes the feeling perspective on the spiritual path, he also allows women to play an important role in the crucifixion event, for the pupils or master on the spiritual path to the final overcoming and directly confronted with the “cross” meet not only enmity but also sympathy. Respect and compassion for the struggling true self develop in their own being or are shown to them by those around them.

But Jesus makes it clear: The compassion should not be for him, the true self, but for the enemies of the true self and those left alone after his departure from the earthly world. Does the true self not go its way in harmony with its innermost purpose and with the order of the spiritual world, its “Father”? Does that not mean supreme happiness and security, concordance with oneself and with God? Cannot all persecutions and hostilities be endured on this basis? Instead, those to be pitied are those who do not attach importance to the connection with the “Father,” indeed persecute the one who shows them the “Father.” They do not act in accordance with their innermost being and the order of the spirit and will have to bear the consequences: unhappiness and insecurity.

These consequences will be all the worse as it is the branches on the “green wood” that act in this way. The branches on the “green

wood” are the residents of “Jerusalem,” the city that has received all the possibilities of connection to God and yet does not recognize and use them. Judgment will come upon these branches on the green wood. The divine order will correct anything that deviates from it. The stubborn willfulness that shuts itself off from God will be broken open with pain precisely because in its enmity, it has approached the true self so closely and thereby exposed itself to its influences. In “killing” the true self, the inhabitants of “Jerusalem” will inevitably confront truth and the divine order and will experience them as an ever more painful thorn in the flesh. Therefore people will say, “Blessed are the barren,” for the barren have borne no children of wrath over whose destruction they would have to weep, and, “Blessed are the breasts that did not nurse,” for these breasts have nurtured no children of wrath over whose destruction they would have to mourn. And the branches on the green wood will say, “Mountains, fall on us and cover us,” for the pain of correction by the divine order will be unbearable.

“Jerusalem” not only symbolizes the Jews who are hostile to Jesus but all people who are branches of “green wood”: all people who have knowledge of the prerequisites and possibilities of spiritual development but do not realize them. They persist in their belief in dogma and persecute and kill the “blasphemers.” Yes, this judgment occurs in every single pupil on the spiritual path because every pupil “kills” the true self again and again. But what will happen to the branches “on the dry wood,” the people in whom the currents of power of the spiritual world do not yet have an effect or no longer have an effect like the sap in a tree? They are much less to be expected to recognize their potential for unfolding the true self and to spare an embodiment of the true self. But their ignorance will surely count against them. Here again, on the way to the crucifixion, Jesus is a sign set up “for the falling and the rising of many in Israel.” Opinions differ on him. Those who walk with their true self within experience the happiness of fulfilling their inherent purpose. Those who oppose it and pursue it are subject to degeneration and judgment.

Two Evildoers: Aspects of the Earthly Being

23:32 *And two other criminals were also led away to be executed with him. (LEB)*

Two criminals are led away with Jesus, who are to be crucified on his right and left. “Right” in this context means “turned towards matter,” “left” “turned towards the world of ideas.” The criminal on the right (verse 33) thus embodies rebellious violence in the service of material interests, the one on the left rebellious violence in the service of ideal interests. All three of those scheduled for execution, Jesus and the two criminals, stand outside the norms of the earthly order. The criminal on the right attacks them for motives of a personal nature. He will not or cannot subordinate his desires to earthly authority. The criminal on the left attacks them for ideological reasons. The earthly order does not correspond to his basic ideas of freedom, justice, and prosperity. Both criminals thus move in the dimension of the earthly world, of this world and the hereafter, although they rebel within this dimension. However, Jesus is outside of this dimension. He stands in the dimension of the spirit. That he is on the way to crucifixion in the company of the two criminals indicates that, like them, he is outside of earthly laws. However, he is not a rebel against them but the actual spiritual standard to which the earthly laws are also subject. But it makes no difference to his enemies. For them, the representative of the divine order is just as dangerous a criminal as the rebels against the earthly order who nonetheless still belong to it.

All of this is experienced by all pupils on the spiritual path, especially as they approach the fifth stage. They experience how the cross of persecution, abuse, and resistance is imposed on them and how their physical body – “Simon of Cyrene” – becomes the target of physical violence but helps them to carry this cross. Under these circumstances, the pupils also experience the compassion of the earthly being embodied in the “women.” And they know that their true self is not to be pitied. The cross is only a byproduct of a path that leads to the resurrection of the true self and oneness with God. Rather, those who kill the true self are to be pitied, the tendencies in one’s own being or the people in one’s environment that could experience the connection with God but in ignorance and blindness do not recognize the way thereto. They repress and “kill” the very powers that could remove delusion. And finally, the pupils learn that they are put on the same level with the outsiders and rebels of society although their being outsiders is only because they are rooted in a different sphere than society: in the spiritual sphere.

Crucifixion

23:33 *And when they came to the place that is called "The Skull," there they crucified him, and the criminals, the one on his right and the other on his left. ³⁴ But Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothes. ³⁵ And the people stood there watching, but the rulers also ridiculed him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if this man is the Christ of God, the Chosen One!" ³⁶ And the soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine ³⁷ and saying, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁸ And there was also an inscription over him, "This is the king of the Jews."*

³⁹ And one of the criminals who were hanged there reviled him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself—and us!" ⁴⁰ But the other answered and rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, because you are undergoing the same condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for what we have done. But this man has done nothing wrong!" ⁴² And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!" ⁴³ And he said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise." (LEB)

Outside the places of vibrant earthly life, in the "place that is called The Skull," the place of death, the religious leaders and their helpers kill the body of the true self with the intention of thereby killing the true self and finally removing the danger from the powers of the spirit that threatens the self-asserting ego. The forces at work in the soul of the earthly human being are expressed in the external process. In the head, at the "place called The Skull," the self-asserting forces "kill" the powers of the true self: They completely oust them from the consciousness.

Any people on the spiritual path who deny themselves and carry their cross will experience a crisis. The enemy's violence reaches its climax. The self-asserting ego forces inside and outside of the human being rear up against the true self for the last time and with tremendous intensity. In this crisis, the true self is immobilized. All possibilities for action through the personality are blocked.

With Jesus, this situation comes to a head in such a way that he is actually physically immobilized and crucified. Therefore, the physical crucifixion can become an image for people's crisis situation on the spiritual path in general. A hostile world enters

the final battle against them. They experience this as a paralysis and bondage of all their spiritual powers, even when they are not hanging on a wooden cross. As spiritual beings, they can no longer move and feel as if they are chained to the material world.

The fact that this experience is timeless is proven by the 22nd Psalm in which it says in verse 16, “they pierced my hands and my feet” (KJV). The psalmist also had this experience several hundred years before Jesus: The “hands,” the freedom to act, are pierced, and the “feet,” the freedom of movement, are pierced. In general, almost all events on the cross that Luke describes are prefigured in the Psalms, especially Psalm 22. They are images for the experiences of every human being who is hanging on a psychological or physical cross. Jesus’ experiences on the cross are exemplary for the experiences of every pupil in a similar situation, only that with Jesus there are additional details that result from his special connection with the spiritual world.

Denying Oneself

In the crisis situation on the “cross,” it must be shown whether the person in this phase of the spiritual path really denies self-centeredness, dissolved the drive for self-maintenance, and thus has lost the old life and is still losing it. With Jesus, it turns out that the new spirit personality living from the true self knows no more vengefulness. The self-centeredness and the drive for self-maintenance, which were repeatedly “denied” on the spiritual path, that is, recognized in the powers of the true self and thus uprooted, are now finally “killed.” The old ego dies.

The historical event of the crucifixion can also become an image for this spiritual fact, for example in Paul’s letters. He writes, “And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24, NRSV). So two events take place simultaneously during Jesus’ crucifixion. On the one hand, the possibility of action of the true self is violently blocked and “killed.” On the other hand, the one hanging on the cross, even under these terrible conditions, *voluntarily* “kills” the last remnants of his selfishness and his drive for self-maintenance. Correspondingly, the physical crucifixion can serve as an image for both soul processes.

In fact, Jesus finally accomplished the “denial” of self-centeredness and of the drive for self-maintenance in the powers

of the spirit. Instead of aggression and self-assertion, he has the clarity and calm of the world of the spirit, which enables him to see the nature of what is happening at the moment and to understand why the opponents of the true self act the way they do: “They do not know what they are doing.” Jesus, as does every human being at this stage of the spiritual path, realizes that the enemies of the spirit are doing so in utter delusion. And from this knowledge, he can forgive them and ask the “Father,” the spirit, to forgive them. In fact, they do what they do with a clear conscience, believing they are doing their god a service by killing the “heretic.” If they were touched by influences from the spiritual world and knew what they were doing and yet acted against its laws, they could not be forgiven. Then they would consciously cut themselves off from the spiritual world. However, as soon as their delusion is lifted, the deluded can be reconnected with the spiritual world, although they remain unconscious of it.

Psalm 22:18 (LEB) says, “They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.” Luke tells the same thing, for this too is a timeless experience of the true self, which is to be finally silenced and incapable of action, whether it is hanging on a wooden cross or not. The legacy of such a person – his teaching, the organization he built, his belongings used in his work in the public eye – is now being smashed and falling to his enemies, just as chance would have it. The enemies enrich themselves and are united in their greed.

Temptations

Psalm 22:6–8 (LEB) says, “But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by humankind and despised by people. All who see me mock me. They open wide their lips; they shake the head, saying: ‘He trusts Yahweh. Let him rescue him. Let him deliver him because he delights in him.’” Likewise, in Luke, the people and the religious leaders mock Jesus; the soldiers mock him; the criminals mock him, each in their own way. This mockery and these challenges are also part of the “cross” that every person experiences at this stage of the spiritual path. Again, Jesus does not respond in an earthly way because his old self, which would get angry in this situation and sneer back, is already “crucified.”

He also no longer succumbs to the temptations contained in scorn and mockery. People connected to the divine powers could use these powers for their salvation, even their eventual triumph

over all enemies. These temptations approach Jesus for the last time precisely in the situation of extreme earthly powerlessness. “Let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” the religious leaders call out to him. How natural it would be for a man with spiritual powers to demonstrate his abilities as “God’s Anointed” in a situation of extreme humiliation, thereby proving his competence and greatness and triumphantly rising above his opponents! If there were still a remnant of the drive for recognition, he could succumb to this temptation. But Jesus is silent since his drive for recognition has expired in the powers of the spirit, and he does nothing more than carry out the laws of the spiritual world. These “forbid” him to save himself.

His own salvation would mean that he prevents the salvation of other human beings, which is the aim and content of his existence, for only by losing his ego in the greatest of challenges in order to save the true self does he enable others to lose their ego in order to save their true self. In Gethsemane, he had agreed to renounce his own salvation since only in this way could the will of the “Father” be accomplished, the salvation of humanity. Now this Gethsemane decision is also manifesting externally.

On the other hand, the soldiers, executive organs of power, appeal to the drive for power: “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!” The spiritual powers give to the people who wield them the power to save themselves and power over others. If Jesus’ earthly drive for power had not completely died out, the temptation to use his spiritual power to rule over others and to save himself could irritate him. However, he does not succumb to the temptation that approaches all spiritual people in a situation of extreme powerlessness – even if they are not hanging on a wooden cross.

And also the third temptation, that of striving for possessions in the form of love for life, is not spared to people who become outsiders and outlaws because of their spiritual path. It is found in the words of the one criminal who is filled with love for earthly life and calls on Jesus to save himself and them, the criminals. The Anointed One, possessed of divine powers, could. But he does not do so because his love for earthly life has expired and he fulfills the divine law.

It may be that the religious leaders, the soldiers, and the evildoers really scoffed like that although it is unlikely that the religious leaders were personally present at the crucifixion. But the

logic of their thinking was that mockery, and that is why they appear in this scene. However, whether historical or not, whether mockery through audible words or inaudible thoughts, when they ask Jesus to perform a “miracle,” to descend from the wooden cross, this request expresses an experience of all people on the spiritual path who have gotten into extreme distress because of their inner condition and its spiritual effectiveness. Jesus would have the opportunity to escape this distress because of his special powers. He could impress with the help of his skills and convince his opponents. He could strive for earthly power and win followers. In this way, he could save his earthly life and also that of the evildoers who might join him. But he does not use his spiritual potential for earthly goals because he remains true to divine law. Despite the extreme danger to life and limb and not even when he is in agony does he succumb to the three temptations that approach him for the last time. The crucifixion thus becomes the image of an existential experience in which these temptations approach all followers of Jesus as a challenge to give in to their drive for self-maintenance and self-centeredness.

Why do the enemies of the spirit taunt such a person? Should it not be enough for them to have rendered him harmless? The mockery comes from the relief after victory, the relief that they were not wrong after all. According to Jesus’ opponents, if he had been the Anointed One or king of the Jews, he would have had the power to destroy his opponents. They take that he does not destroy them as proof that he cannot be the Anointed One and king of the Jews. Now they are holding themselves accountable for the secret fear. Maybe it still has not completely disappeared. That is why mockery has its appeal because of the risk it entails. All of this hits the person on the “cross,” every person on the “cross.”

Psalm 69, verse 21 (NRSV), as in Luke, says that “for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” This, too, is an experience that all people on the “cross” have. They are cut off from all spiritual sources except those in their own heart. They long for people to give them spiritual water: understanding of their spiritual task, an answer to their call, spiritually strengthening encouragement in their isolation. But only curiosity and sensationalism, incomprehension, false pity, and false consolation are offered to them, all vinegar, a sour, undrinkable drink. Just as Psalm 22, Psalm 69 could be applied to the whole crucifixion event: “It is for your sake that I have borne reproach [...]. I have become a stranger

to my kindred [...]. I looked for pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none" (Psalm 69:7, 8, 20, NRSV).

Did the evangelist just take all these details from the Psalms to legitimize Jesus as the Anointed One prophesied by the prophet David? He would then have acted dishonestly and not reported according to the truth. Or were the later events on the cross actually foretold in the Psalms? The questions are wrong. Jesus experienced all these details; the psalmist experienced them; everyone who hangs on the "cross" experiences them. It is just that they are not necessarily external, visible events but images of experiences that every person who is hanging on the "cross" has. Luke was able to extract these images from the Psalms and insert them into his narrative because he knew they described real experiences shared by both the psalmist and Jesus. He is therefore an honest reporter even if an observer of the crucifixion event might not have seen that soldiers raffled off Jesus' clothes and gave him vinegar to drink.

"King of the Jews"

Above the cross was the inscription, "This is the King of the Jews." Pilate had it affixed. Was it really visible or is it just an image? If it was real, it served Pilate outwardly to justify the execution. Through it, he proclaims, Jesus was the political king of the Jews, the pretender to the throne who had declared war on the power of Rome. However, he himself knows that this justification of the judgment is wrong because he recognized Jesus' innocence. At the same time, the inscription shows what accusation the religious leaders had made against Jesus before Pilate: Jesus claimed to be king of the Jews. Pilate knows that they had vehemently denied Jesus' claim, which is why the inscription is also placed on the cross to mock them. He has their "king" put to death, and he irritates them all the more because they least of all begrudge Jesus this title. In this respect, this feature of the narrative is part of the lesson on the relationship between political and religious power.

However, all these false justifications and ironies thwart the objective truth: Jesus is "king of the Jews," spiritual king of all people in whom the true self unfolds, the true self of humanity. The inscription says objectively, Even though the experiences of the one hanging here are similar to all others in a similar situation, he is a special person, one in whom the qualities of the true human

being are expressed in a special way and power. Jesus as true self is the concentration of the spiritual powers of the “Jews,” the “chosen people” who are connected in a special way with the divine world as the most advanced branch on the tree of humanity. As is “Jerusalem,” the “Jews” are an ambivalent symbol. On the one hand, they symbolize the part of humanity connected to God, the “green wood,” on the other hand, the loss of this connection through self-righteous insistence on old traditions. In the objective meaning of the inscription, they are the representatives of humanity connected to God, and Jesus as their spiritual king is the heart of humanity, their true self connected to God. This statement stands above the whole crucifixion event, and that is what the inscription means even if it may not have been real.

Remorse of the Evildoer

On the way to the crucifixion, Jesus pronounced judgment on the religious leaders who were killing the true self: “Weep for yourselves and for your children,” for this judgment will be severe. Hanging on the cross, however, he says, “Father, forgive them.” The true self knows about the connections between deeds and the consequences of deeds and points them out. But it does not wallow in feelings of revenge and hostility towards the offenders but forgives them and also asks the Father Spirit to forgive them. It is free from all aggression in spite of being deprived of outer freedom of movement, and despite all scorn, it has the power to connect with other people who are also open to the spiritual world and thereby to help them. This is expressed in the words of Jesus to the repentant criminal, “Today you will be with me in paradise.” The outer activity of the person hanging on the “cross” is paralyzed; the inner activity, the inner connection to other people, continues.

The criminal “repents.” He realizes that he is a “sinner” and is getting what he deserves. This insight is a prerequisite for being open to the spiritual world, for “faith,” a prerequisite for recognizing that Jesus is the Anointed One and spiritual king, and a prerequisite for the request to be included in the order and power of the spiritual world.

Here, too, Luke takes up again the theme of the “sinner,” which is typical for him. The sinner, knowing that he is a sinner, turning aside from the earthly world, and turning to the spiritual world in this insight, is saved. Those who live in “sin,” that is, in separation

from God, but do not know it or do not want to know it in self-righteous trust in their moral achievements cannot be saved as long as this is the case. The other criminal represents this type of self-righteous and stubborn person. The first is the one who is hanging to Jesus' right. He belongs to this material world. He is free from the "demons" of the world beyond, the fixed ideas and ideologies, and is therefore more easily able to see his condition. But the one hanging to the left, the ideologically oriented criminal, is dominated by influences from the beyond. It is not possible for him to see his situation. He cannot repent and will be among those who need to be judged and realigned by the spiritual world.

The "kingdom" of the spirit does not just begin on the last day or just after physical death but, "Today you will be with me in paradise." By overcoming his drive for self-maintenance, Jesus opens the gates to paradise. As self-centeredness and the drive for self-maintenance die, the kingdom of God opens. This paves the way for all other people who meet the requirements to enter the kingdom of God. The "criminal on the right" fulfills them; he will enter paradise with Jesus. He will experience the resurrection with Jesus: the conscious life in paradise. The decisive factors for entering the kingdom of God are the encounter with the true self, the resulting "repentance," openness to the influences of the true self or "faith," the becoming conscious of the true self, and the willingness to lose the old life to save the true life in the kingdom of God.

The two "criminals" are also present in the nature of the individual pupil in the fifth phase of the path. It is the self-centeredness of the earthly person determined by the interests of this world – the criminal on the right – and the ideological stubbornness of the person determined by the beyond – the criminal on the left. The aspects of the earthly ego freed from self-centeredness can merge with the true self in the order of the spiritual world. On the other hand, the forces of the ego that persistently rebel against the spiritual world and are connected with the hereafter cannot enter the spiritual world.

All this is experienced by the pupil on the spiritual path before physical death. Death, the separation of the true self and the finer aspects of personality from the physical body, is not crucial. What matters is that the pattern of the true self of the human being opens the path for the pupils to enter the kingdom of God and that the pupils enter that path as soon as it opens before them.

Death

23:44 *And by this time it was about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour ⁴⁵ because the light of the sun failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn apart down the middle. ⁴⁶ And Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit!" And after he said this, he expired.*

⁴⁷ Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began to praise God, saying, "Certainly this man was righteous!" ⁴⁸ And all the crowds that had come together for this spectacle, when they saw the things that had happened, returned home beating their breasts. ⁴⁹ And all his acquaintances, and the women who had followed him from Galilee who saw these things, stood at a distance. (LEB)

Death of the Old Ego Identity

The crucial task of the pupils in the fifth phase of the spiritual path is that they let the drive for self-maintenance of the gross material body dissolve in the powers of the true self – let it “die.” It is the drive for self-maintenance, the “hunger for life,” that builds and sustains the physical body. It builds it up from the elements of matter. The sensory and motor organs of the physical body are made of matter and can therefore only perceive matter and act in matter. But the ego is the sum of these perceptions and experiences in matter. Therefore, the physical body determines the ego identity of earthly human beings, their perceptions and their way of acting.

Even the unlimited true self that has become awake and conscious, the true identity of the human being, is temporarily bound to this limited ego identity and the body as its basis. It does not yet have its own appropriate instrument of perception and action nor a spirit body. In order to perceive and express itself, it is tied to an instrument that is not suitable for it. When it manifests itself and expresses itself in the human being, it expresses itself through the brain and nervous system of the gross material body. The renewed thoughts, feelings, and volitional impulses, the higher aspects of the new spirit personality, are also imparted to the pupils through their brain and nervous system. They do not yet experience themselves immediately as an unlimited true self but still as a limited self. The material body is a necessary instrument

for the true self with the higher aspects of the spirit personality – it does not yet have its own appropriate instrument. But as an instrument that does not correspond to the true self, this body is also a fetter, a handicap, a “cross.” Permeated as it is by the drive for self-maintenance and due to the way it works, it is impossible for it to absorb impressions from the true self in a pure way.

When the pupils let the drive for self-maintenance die, they consciously dissolve the ego identity clinging to their body. They renounce the previous instrument for their true self. (The material body with its way of perceiving and acting continues to function without a drive for self-maintenance, as if mechanically, as long as life in the earthly world requires it. It is like with the pupa and caterpillar. The pupa corresponds to the coarse material shell of the body that continues to function in the earthly world. The caterpillar, however, dies within this pupa, which corresponds to the way of functioning permeated by the drive for self-maintenance.) As far as the possibilities of expression of the true self are concerned, the pupils refrain from letting the true self perceive and act through the physical body. In doing so, they free it from a fetter, from the “cross” of a way of perceiving and expressing that is not appropriate to it. They leave it free to build its own suitable instrument.

This is exactly what Jesus does in Gethsemane: He lets his drive for self-maintenance “die.” By letting it “die” in the powers of the spiritual world, Jesus also lets his physical ego identity “die” – “not my will be done.” In doing so, he leaves the true self free to live and express itself according to its laws – “your will be done.”

In this way, the true self frees itself from the “cross” of the instrument that is not appropriate for it. This is the prerequisite for it to experience itself directly and for the pupils to experience themselves directly as the true self. However, this experience does not occur immediately after the “death” of the previous ego identity. The true self still needs a new means of expression, a fine-material spirit body, the “butterfly,” through which it can manifest itself directly, independently of the gross material body and its brain. As long as this new instrument is not yet available, the pupils perceive the dissolution of the drive for self-maintenance and the associated ego identity as a loss, a real death. For the time being, there is complete emptiness in them, nothing to lean on, nothing in which to find security. The ego identity is dissolved and the true self, which has hitherto made itself felt through the body

and its ego identity, still has no new means of making itself felt. This gives the pupils the feeling that their true self has also “died.” Despite this, they know that a true self exists and lives within them. Mediated by a material brain and nervous system, they had experienced it again and again in images that arose in them and in its effects that changed them.

What all pupils experience as an inner soul process in the fifth phase of their journey, Jesus experienced in Gethsemane. When Jesus dies physically, only the gross material body and the brain, which have become free from the drive for self-maintenance, dissolve, that is, only the “pupa” that was still necessary for life in the earthly world.

In his soul, however, Jesus only seals once again in death what he had experienced in Gethsemane. The drive for self-maintenance that permeated the physical body and its brain dies. This also completes the dissolution of the ego identity bound to this body. His physical death is only the dissolution of the physical basis of what was already dissolved at a soul level.

However, since Jesus does not yet have a new instrument for directly perceiving the impressions from the true self, that is, no spirit body, there is complete emptiness in him. The old ego identity has expired; the true self cannot yet be perceived and act in a new way. Yet Jesus knows it lives within him.

He now entrusts the future development of the true self entirely to the spiritual world. For the time being, since he lacks the previous instrument of perception for the true self, he can no longer influence its development. When he cries, “Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit,” it is not mere prayer. It is a statement of fact. Jesus commits his true self, his “spirit,” consciously to the spiritual world, into the “hands” of the “Father,” and also commits the spirit personality built up from the true self into the “hands” of the “Father.” The true self with the spirit personality was always connected to the spiritual world during the life of Jesus, even received its power from it and lived from it. But it could only ever be perceived indirectly by the consciousness of the physical body and only work indirectly through the body. Now, with the final separation from the gross body and the sense-consciousness linked to it, it enters the spiritual world with the spirit personality that it had built up in the course of the life of Jesus. The true self of Jesus and his spirit personality now reside in the bosom of the spiritual world. There it builds a new

instrument of perception and action, a spirit body, through which it can express itself directly and which is no longer a fetter for the true self since it is in complete accordance with it.

Because Jesus also experiences and seals in the death of the physical body the inner-psychic processes of the death of the old ego identity and the surrender of the true self to the spiritual world, his physical death can become the image and example of the inner-psychic processes that all pupils experience and accomplish in the fifth phase of the spiritual path, even if they do not die a violent physical death. On the one hand, the “cross” is an image for the violent enmity of a non-understanding world, on the other hand, an image for the material body, which represents an oppressive handicap for the true self. The true self needs the material body temporarily as an instrument of expression but suffers from it as if hanging on a “cross,” for the material body’s limited way of perceiving and acting is not in accordance with the unlimited true self. However, if the drive for self-maintenance and the ego identity linked to it die on this “cross,” then the true self becomes free. To the pupils, however, it may appear at first as if it were also “dying” since they are now relinquishing the indirect way in which they have been experiencing it and are not yet experiencing it in a direct way. But they hand it over into the care of the spiritual world.

Two Ways of Dying

What usually happens during death?

The finer parts of the human being, thoughts, feelings, and aspirations, separate from the gross body, which then disintegrates over time. The ego identity previously bound to the body also expires in the course of time to the extent that the thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of the human being also dissolve. All that remains is the true self, which as a rule has not become conscious and therefore has remained inactive, connected with the experiences of this person in the former life. In order to have an instrument of expression and experience at all, it has to connect with a new earthly body – it has to reincarnate. The new earthly personality then perhaps initiates a process in the course of which the true self awakens and builds up an immortal instrument suited to it.

But when a person dies who in life has let the true self become conscious and active and whose thoughts, feelings, and aspirations

have become at least partially an expression of the imperishable true self – as a spirit personality – this true self and the spirit personality remain active. It is true that the material body and the part of thoughts, feelings, and aspirations attached to it dissolve over time. But the true self does not have to incarnate in a new earthly personality. It will build up a spirit body as an appropriate instrument of expression and live directly, consciously, in the spiritual world. That is its inherent purpose.

Walking the spiritual path thus means overcoming death and overriding the cause of death. Paradoxically, the cause of death is the very urge of earthly life to assert itself under all circumstances. This drive creates a body and an ego identity linked to it that are not in harmony with the laws of the spiritual world and are therefore sooner or later dissolved by these laws. A spirit personality and a spirit body, on the other hand, live from the powers of the true self, in harmony with spiritual laws, and without a drive for self-maintenance. They are no longer dissolved by the laws of the spiritual world.

Two special events are connected with the events of Jesus' death and his simultaneous overcoming of death: "the sun's light failed" and "the curtain of the temple was torn apart." They are consequences of the "dying" of the old egocentricity of each pupil on the spiritual path, when the true self is consciously handed over into the "hands of the Father," the spiritual world. But since Jesus embodies the pattern of the true self, these aspects also apply to the whole life of humanity in his case.

The Darkness: Suspension of the Influence of the True Self

As long as the true self communicated indirectly with the ego via the material brain, the pupils were only indirectly aware of the laws of the spiritual world. But at least they could live their life according to this light. The light of the true self shone in their ego consciousness – indirectly. But now they dissolve the drive for self-maintenance and with it the old ego. They therefore temporarily no longer have an organ in which the true self could at least indirectly shine and illuminate their life. The true self, the spiritual sun, loses its brilliancy.

When Jesus dies, the drive for self-maintenance is already gone. In addition, the body is violently destroyed. Now all the more,

there is no instrument for the true self with whose help it could shine and illuminate life.

Jesus is the perfect true self of the human being. With the death of his body and the ego bound to it, what is sometime going to be experienced by all of humanity is anticipated in principle. Until then, the true self shines indirectly into the world through the earthly ego consciousness. The influences from the spiritual world reach the earthly world indirectly in the form of philosophy, art, and religion and illuminate it. But the day will come when people will perceive this indirect path of light via the ego consciousness as a handicap. They will give it up to experience the light directly. Then the sun of the true self will temporarily lose its shine – as long as no new consciousness has been built up that directly perceives the spiritual sun.

The darkness lasts from the sixth to the ninth hour. The twelve hours of the day are segments of a cycle that also occurs everywhere else in nature. It shows the process from the growth of a seed to its final detachment from the mother plant. The first to third hour symbolize the formation, the fourth to sixth hour the maturation of the seed. From the seventh to the ninth hour, the finished seed is detached from the mother plant, whose vitality is gradually dying, and from the tenth to the twelfth it is made ready for new sowing. The maturation of the consciousness of the true self takes place in a like manner. The new consciousness, the new seed that develops in the old organism of the ego consciousness, gradually gains independence from the sixth hour, and the old ego consciousness, the mother plant, perishes. This process has three phases, from the “sixth to the ninth hour.” During this time, the new seed does not yet have its own means of expression, while the old means of expression in the mother plant gradually disappears. It must then create its own means of expression – from the tenth to the twelfth hour.

The darkness is therefore not a frightening phenomenon. It is due to the extinction of an old, no longer suitable means of expression of the spiritual sun and a necessary prerequisite for the emergence of a new, suitable means of expression.

Tearing of the Curtain in the Temple: Unmediated Divine Experience Becomes Possible

At the same time, “the curtain of the temple was torn apart.” This

is also a picture of an auspicious inner process, for what does the curtain in the temple in front of the Holy of Holies mean? It means that people cannot directly approach and become one with God, the Holy of Holies. As long as people are caught up exclusively in their ego consciousness directed towards the world of appearances, they have no possibility of directly experiencing God, the spirit. This direct experience, without mediation through a material brain, is only possible when the true self, the spirit in the human being, has built up its own organ of perception, a spirit body.

A curtain hangs in front of the Holy of Holies excluding people from the immediate experience of God. It is only through parables, pictures, and symbols that people who are exclusively determined by their ego consciousness can divine something of God and learn of God's presence. The ego consciousness is itself the curtain which makes it impossible for people to directly experience God in the real self.

But now, in Jesus, this curtain is torn in two. The ego consciousness dissolves. The consciousness of the true self, made possible by the spirit body, will take its place. It will be one with the spiritual world, with God. Through the death of the old ego consciousness, the true self gains life, life in God. Those who lose their life for the sake of the spirit will save it. What takes place in Jesus takes place in principle, even if not yet actually, in all of humanity. The true self of every human being is potentially connected directly with God by Jesus. However, the actual connection can only be made by every human being who, as Jesus did, takes the path of the extinction of the drive for self-maintenance.

In principle, the phase of the Old Testament has come to an end and the phase of the New Testament has begun. The power of the drive for self-maintenance and of the ego consciousness has been broken in principle: The curtain in the temple, in the human being, which is the temple of the true self, has been torn in two. When people no longer become aware of their true self through a physical brain but through a fine-material spirit body, they have immediate access to the Holy of Holies; they become one with God.

Observers of the Events

These events are observed by three parties: the Roman centurion, the crowds, and the women.

The Roman centurion “saw what had happened and praised God.” He represents the independent earthly mind, free from dogmatic and ideological influences. This unspoiled earthly mind, not obscured by fanaticism or hatred, can discern what happens at the death of a “righteous one” and in the final stages of the spiritual path: The true self enters the spiritual world and becomes one with God while the consciousness bound to the external sense organs either disappears completely – in death – or, on the spiritual path, loses control of the true self for good.

This earthly mind may belong to outsiders observing closely what is happening on the spiritual path of someone close to them. However, as long as the people on the spiritual path are still alive, it can also be their own mind that has become free of any drive for self-maintenance. This mind registers neutrally what is happening in the pupils’ nature without their doing: the dissolution of the drive for self-maintenance through the powers of the divine world and the liberation of the true self from the earthly body and its laws.

The crowds, on the other hand, “beat their breasts.” The passions stirred up by the religious leaders have subsided. Calmness sets in; the possibility is given to feel clearly again. The people register with dismay what has happened, also with their participation. They regret what they have done but cannot undo. The “crowds” are a picture of the earthly personality of a person walking the spiritual path. It has made common cause with influences hostile to the true self but returns to rest after the crucial process of dissolving the drive for self-maintenance has taken place.

And finally there are the women and acquaintances of Jesus, those emotional forces in the earthly human being that are consciously devoted to the true self and its development. They also perceive the events in the final phase of the spiritual path: the cessation of earthly consciousness, the connection of the spiritual consciousness with God. But they only perceive them from “a distance,” for they are not yet strong enough to take part in what is happening, as was shown by the behavior of Jesus’ disciples in Gethsemane and by the denial of Peter. They can only observe and register what is happening in the human being without their

intervention: the powers of the spirit withdraw from the sphere of the earthly world; at the same time, the old ego identity is extinguished.

Descent from the Cross

23:50 *And behold, a man named Joseph, who was a member of the council, a good and righteous man ⁵¹(this man was not consenting to their plan and deed), from Arimathea, a Judean town, who was looking forward to the kingdom of God. ⁵²This man approached Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³And he took it down ... (LEB)*

The pupils on the spiritual path have experienced that their drive for self-maintenance and their ego have “died.” The true self has thereby become free from the domination of the material body and from the need to express itself through it. Now the pupils experience how their true self, a state of infinity and being embedded in the spiritual world, actually frees itself from the last influences of the earthly world and the earthly body. This is a prerequisite for developing an instrument that suits it: a spirit body.

Jesus’ “descent from the cross” is an image for this inner soul process. The true self, the core of a new consciousness, detaches itself from the “cross.” On the one hand, it frees itself from the pain of the struggle with the hostile world and on the other hand, from the shackles of the way of perception and action predetermined by the earthly body. It was bound to the body and the ego determined by the body in five places: on the “forehead,” on both hands, and on both feet. The crown of thorns and the nails, known from the Gospel of John, symbolize these bonds. Thinking, doing (two hands), and willing (two feet) of the true self had been firmly “nailed” to the physical body and thus to the enmity and violence of the physical world. Now this nailing is loosened at the five points, and thinking, doing, and willing are given scope to unfold according to the laws of the spiritual world.

It is easy to imagine that Joseph of Arimathea was a historical figure and that his visit to Pilate was also historical. But he and his request are at the same time images of an inner soul process that always occurs on the spiritual path at the “descent from the cross.”

Just as the true self must be withdrawn from the hatred of its

enemies, so it must be consciously withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the physical world, that is, from the laws and needs of the physical body. It is subject to a different law than that of the earthly world. It has its new, spiritual law. The pupils in whom the true self begins to become independent experience this very clearly. Therefore, as Joseph of Arimathea, they consciously see to it that their true self is no longer disturbed by the earthly laws of perception, action, and organization embodied by Pilate. Because even after the extinction of the drive for self-maintenance, the pupils' earthly life must go on. Pilate, embodiment of the laws of earthly life, releases the true self and turns to his earthly duties. This ensures the further development of the true self.

Mediator in this process is Joseph of Arimathea: He too is a principle of earthly consciousness but turned towards the true self just as the "owner of the house" at the Passover meal was. He is a "good and righteous man who was looking forward to the kingdom of God." He embodies the pupils' insight that now, after suffering from earthly enemies, the true self must also be withdrawn from the jurisdiction of earthly conditions.

Placed in a Tomb

23:53 ... and wrapped it in a linen cloth and placed him in a tomb cut into the rock where no one had ever been placed. ⁵⁴ And it was the day of preparation, and the Sabbath was drawing near. ⁵⁵ And the women who had been accompanying him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was placed. ⁵⁶ And they returned and prepared fragrant spices and perfumes, ... (LEB)

The fifth phase of the spiritual path is the dissolution of the drive for self-maintenance with the associated ego identity on the one hand and the resurrection of the true self and the spirit body on the other. But between these two processes, there is a period of regeneration of the true self. The true self is finally separated from the earthly world on the "day of preparation," after the experience of the "crucifixion" and "death" – this is the "descent from the cross." Then it rests for a while, on the second day, in an intermediate sphere between the earthly world and the spiritual world. This day is the Sabbath. During this time – it is the time in the "tomb" – the true self and the as yet undeveloped spirit body

are infused with the powers of the spirit and enlivened until they are strong enough to be born on the third day, the first day of the new week, to resurrect consciously in the dimension of the spiritual world.

After the pupils have consciously separated their innermost being, their unfolding true self, from all old influences of the earthly world – the image for this is the “descent from the cross” – they shield it, again consciously, from all possible new influences of the earthly world. During its regeneration and revitalization, it should not be disturbed by impressions from the earthly world or from one’s own earthly body. This is the process within the soul at this stage of development. The image for this is the “burial” of Jesus.

Joseph of Arimathea, who had already ensured that the external duties of the pupil, embodied by Pilate, can go their regular course and no longer interfere with the processes of the true self, also embodies the power in the pupil at this stage of development that stands as a guard in front of the true self that has been detached from the “cross,” shields it from influences from the earthly world and the earthly body through suitable measures, and enables it to regenerate.

There is every indication that the tomb and burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea were historic. The body of Jesus is wrapped in linen, placed in a “tomb cut into the rock where no one had ever been placed,” a stone is rolled in front of this tomb, and later the body is to be embalmed. In the gospel, however, all of this is at the same time an image of service that friends of a deceased person who has walked the spiritual path can do for him or her, for death rituals, like all rituals, are external images for internal actions. A deceased person’s friends who remain behind can properly care for what has separated from the body but not the body.

In the case of Jesus, what has separated from the body is the unfolded true self with the still rudimentary spirit body. If those who are left behind are “good and righteous,” as is Joseph of Arimathea, that is, living from the order and power of the spirit, they can surround the true self of the deceased with protective thoughts and feelings. This is the “linen cloth” with which Joseph of Arimathea wrapped Jesus’ body. They can also form a “space” of thoughts and feelings, a sphere corresponding to the order of the spirit, and ward off any influences from the worlds of the beyond that might yet draw close to the true self of the deceased. In the

case of Jesus, this sphere is formed exclusively for this deceased person. That is why the evangelist says that no one had ever been laid in this “tomb.” And Joseph of Arimathea closes the tomb with a “stone.” The protective sphere of thoughts and feelings around the deceased is additionally sealed with a formula, an act of will, similar to how, for example, the effectiveness of a prayer is confirmed and sealed by the formula “Amen” – let it be so.

What happens in the case of Jesus for a really deceased person in whom the true self had unfolded can also be done by like-minded friends for pupils whose inner development has reached this stage. They can help the pupils with protective thoughts, feelings, and impulses of will and accompany their development. Yes, the individual pupil can create this protective sphere of the “tomb” within by surrounding the true self in the state of regeneration with protective thoughts and feelings and affirming the whole with an act of will.

This occurs on the “day of preparation.” It is important for the evangelist to show that these are events of preparation for rest, the “Sabbath,” that is, events that must take place on the “day of preparation” no matter how long they may last in spatiotemporal reality. The “day of preparation” is the phase in which the new seed that has detached itself from the old organism is in turn waiting to be sown.

Rest in the Tomb

23:56 ... and on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. (LEB)

In a protected sphere in which no disturbing and hostile influences can penetrate, in a “tomb,” the true self of the pupil regenerates and is penetrated by the forces of the spirit. This happens on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is the day of sanctification, of the permeation of all beings and things with the powers of the spirit. The women too, the powers of earthly people nurturing the true self, rest on the Sabbath, the seventh day. It is a symbol for the completion of creation and thus also a symbol for the completion of the creation of the true self and the spirit body now emerging from it.

The true self of the pupil, a state of merging into the infinite of the spiritual world, processes the experiences made in the earthly

world and on the “cross.” This is comparable to the process of the soul processing the sensory impressions and the hustle and bustle of the experiences of the day in a dream at night undisturbed by the rational mind. The true self is immersed once more in the hate, temptation, malice, and passion of the religious and political leaders and the people. It descends to the deepest depths of the experienced hostility, to the abysses of collective passions and delusions. That is why the early Christians said – Luke does not mention it in his gospel – that during this time in the tomb, Jesus descended into hell and saved those damned there who showed themselves receptive to his powers (1 Peter 3:19).

In this state of stillness, the true self of the pupil can also be permeated and strengthened by new powers, like the soul in sleep. It rests in the womb of the spiritual world whose powers heal its wounds.

Third, something crucial happens during this rest in the tomb. The true self had detached itself from the influence of the earthly body and the associated ego consciousness. As a result, it has lost its previous instrument of perception and action. But it is now free to build a new instrument that suits it, a “spirit body” that enables unlimited consciousness and an unlimited radius of action. While it rests in the “tomb” as in the stage of pupation, as in a chrysalis, the spirit body grows: an organ of expression of a true self with unlimited consciousness and radius of action in the spiritual world, a “butterfly,” which compared to the “caterpillar” is a completely different being. The ego with its consciousness limited in the earthly world, the “caterpillar,” will then have disappeared and a self with an unlimited “winged” consciousness and radius of action will emerge from the “tomb.”

All of this – processing, regeneration, and growth of a spirit body – happens while the pupils continue to live as earthly people in their everyday life. Like a mother in whom a child is maturing, they can fulfill all their duties in life, while their secret, joyful, hopeful attention is directed undividedly to the growing new possibility of existence.

With Jesus, these inner soul processes of processing, regeneration, and growth of a spirit body take place even after physical death in a protective sphere formed by his like-minded friends, the “tomb.” The real tomb in which his body lies can therefore become the image for this protective sphere. The real linen cloth with which his real corpse is wrapped and the real

stone with which the real tomb is closed are at the same time images for the protective thoughts and impulses that surround his real self, which continues to exist alive after the death of his physical body but is still in the stage of pupation. In this sphere shielded from all negative influences from this world and the afterlife, the true self and its spirit body are now waiting for their resurrection.

Resurrection

24:1 *Now on the first day of the week, at very early dawn, they came back to the tomb bringing the fragrant spices which they had prepared. ²And they found the stone had been rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in, they did not find the body. ⁴And it happened that while they were perplexed about this, behold, two men in gleaming clothing stood near them. ⁵And as they were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, they said to them, “Why are you looking for the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here, but has been raised!” (LEB)*

The resurrection occurs on the first day of the new week, on the eighth day. After the time of its regeneration on the Sabbath, after it has been imbued with the powers of the spirit, the true self becomes independent and capable of action. It arises. A new, unlimited consciousness that is no longer bound to the earthly body and its brain breaks through in the pupils. This can happen while they are still alive. There are numerous examples in world literature of such a breakthrough of a new being and consciousness. With Jesus, this breakthrough manifests in and after physical death. It could not have happened if it had not already occurred in life.

The apparently concrete situation apparently playing out in the visible world on this side, that the women find the stone from the “tomb” rolled away, the tomb empty, and two men in dazzling clothes inside, is an image of a situation in the soul-spiritual world. It is similar to when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain. The mountain was also not a concrete mountain visible in this world but an image for a sublime sphere of the spirit in which the inhabitants of the world of the spirit – Moses and Elijah – and Jesus in his capacity as a soul-spiritual being appeared to the disciples of Jesus, whose spiritual eyes were opened. The presence

of the men in dazzling clothes, inhabitants of the spiritual world, shows that the scene in the tomb is a soul-spiritual situation. In Mark (16:4, LEB), this situation was made clearer by the description that the women “looked up,” that is, raised their eyes to a higher, soul-spiritual dimension. This detail is missing in Luke’s story, but the two men show clearly enough that we are talking about processes in the soul-spiritual world.

How could a narrator express the fact that a consciousness and being previously bound to the laws of the world of appearances leaves these laws and enters the laws of another, spiritual world as a completely transformed consciousness and being other than by the dimension of the world of appearances suddenly being empty? The consciousness and being of Jesus, which now obeys new laws, has withdrawn from the laws of the earthly world. It is not in them anymore. The “tomb,” the protective sphere formed by the bereaved for the regeneration of the true self and its spiritual body, belongs to the dimension of the earthly world. But after the true self of Jesus and the spirit body were fully infused with the powers of the spirit during the Sabbath, the day of sanctification, they could enter the dimension of the spiritual world just as a newborn child enters the air and light of the world and begins to breathe and live in it independently. Like an embryo, the true self and the spirit body of Jesus had matured in the dark womb of the earthly world, in the “tomb,” and are now stepping out of this womb into the bright world of air and the light of the spirit in order to breathe and live in it independently.

The women see this fact with spiritual eyes. They see that the “stone” has been rolled away and that the “tomb,” the earthly dimension, is empty. The true self of Jesus and his spirit body are no longer there. The narrator focuses on this fact. The women look into the earthly world with spiritual eyes and see that the true self and spirit body of Jesus have disappeared from it. The “stone” is rolled away. The new being and consciousness, the true self and spirit body, have burst from within the protective sphere of the thoughts and feelings of the bereaved, which had been sealed by an act of will, symbolized by the stone. The true self and spirit body have broken open the chrysalis and left as the butterfly leaves its chrysalis.

With their spiritual eyes, the women also see two messengers from the spiritual world “in gleaming clothing.” The gleaming clothes are the spiritual bodies of these messengers, which have

organs of perception and activity for the spiritual world and are neither made up of the substance of the earthly world nor subject to its laws. And these messengers from the spiritual world once again explain to the women what they see with spiritual eyes without being able to explain it to themselves. The true self with the immortal spirit body is what is alive. Eternity, the spiritual world, is what is alive. The visible world and the beyond are what is dead, what is subject to death.

The “dead” that men talk about are not only the inhabitants of the beyond, the deceased in whom the true self has not yet awakened, but also the people living in this world who are subject to death and who do not live from the living spirit. But Jesus is no longer in this dimension of the dead, of this world and the beyond. He left them as a true self with an immortal spirit body and entered the dimension of the living. Hence the question of the messengers, “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” And their answer, “He is not here,” no longer in this dimension of the transitory world and the beyond. He is “risen.” The order and power of the spiritual world permeated his true self and his spirit body in such a way that they are now free from the laws of the world of the dead and can live independently and awake in the world of spirit. What had previously been latent, as if asleep, the true self and the spirit body, has been awakened through the spiritual path, on which the powers of the spirit could have an ever stronger effect.

It is not the old body or the old brain consciousness dominated by the drive for self-maintenance that has been resurrected through an act of God’s grace. That would have been the annihilation of everything for which Jesus fought throughout his life and what he repeatedly asked his disciples to do: lose your life for the sake of the spirit. What is the point of losing one’s life, the life of impermanence, only for it to be resurrected? No, Jesus’ true self and spirit body, the true life, were resurrected, and the prerequisites for this were the cross and self-denial, the conscious surrender of the mortal life. If the old life and body, which belong to the dimension of impermanence, were to be resurrected, then Jesus would still be “here,” in the world of appearances or in the beyond. He would still or again be “among the dead.” But the messengers from the spiritual world say expressly, The living is not among the dead. He is with the God of the living, in the imperishable spiritual world. He is not “here.”

The women look with spiritual eyes into the “tomb” of the phenomenal world and find it empty. The true self and spirit body of Jesus left the earthly dimension and entered the spiritual world. If the women were to look into the real tomb with earthly eyes, they would really see the body of Jesus, for the earthly body with its organs is made up of the forces and substances of the earthly world, remains intact for a while after death, and dissolves again into its earthly components. This also applies to the earthly body of a person such as Jesus, who had built up a spiritual body with rudimentary spiritual sense organs during his earthly life.

If one considers the tale of the empty tomb and the stone rolled away as a description of facts in the mortal world, the stone rolled away is a “miracle,” and the empty tomb is a “miracle.” But this scene is a description of facts in the spiritual world, and these facts are not miracles under the prevailing conditions in the spiritual world but comprehensible, understandable occurrences. The “stone” is rolled away: The protective sphere in which the true self with the spirit body had grown to independence is blown up. And the “tomb” is empty: The true self with the spirit body, a new spiritual consciousness, connects with the spiritual world and leaves the tomb of the world of appearances. This is Easter. Every person who reaches the fifth phase on the spiritual path can experience this. All such persons can experience their own Easter, for what the women “see” at the physical death of Jesus they would also “see” in people completing the fifth phase of the spiritual path while they are still alive. It need not coincide with physical death. In the still living people on the spiritual path, the “stone” is also rolled away from the “tomb.” And their true self with the spirit body comes into conscious connection with the spiritual world and leaves the “tomb” of the world of appearances. So this happens before death, while the physical body is still alive, and is only sealed in physical death.

Jesus also accomplished these inner soul processes already before physical death. They are only manifested once more in physical death and are represented by the evangelist on the basis of the physical events of the crucifixion, death, and the tomb. The evangelist shows how a person who has walked the spiritual path in life goes through physical death. In this way, the external processes also become images for the internal ones. Jesus also accomplishes in physical death the inner soul mystery of losing the old life for the sake of the spirit whereby the new true life is saved.

He shows that the inner processes do have physical effects and that physical death is overcome through the inner spiritual path. At the same time, the inner soul mystery becomes thereby visible and manifest.

The evangelist is very consistent also in the way he depicts events. Crucifixion, death, and the tomb are external realities and are also used as images for inner soul realities. But the resurrection does not correspond to any external reality. It can only be described by the image of the empty tomb. If the resurrection were a spatial event that could be photographed, the evangelist would have had the risen Christ appear in this scene. However, he can only depict the resurrection in such a way that the tomb is empty. It shows that the true self and spirit body enter a dimension other than the temporal dimension.

Resurrection is not only the resurrection of Jesus' teaching in his disciples. It is a reality for those who walk the spiritual path. It takes place in Jesus himself, as it does later in his disciples. It is a dimensional shift. The true self of people and their spirit body, which have grown within the physical body, leave the physical dimension imbued with spiritual powers and enter the dimension of the spiritual world. This change of dimensions is the goal of the spiritual path, the true inherent purpose of the human being and of humanity. It reverses the "fall" of humanity, which is leaving the dimension of the spiritual world and entering the dimension of the world of appearances. It is the central requirement and the central content of every original religion. In Christianity, this change of dimensions is presented as the death of the old, earthly human being and the resurrection of the "dead" image of God within using the example of Jesus as the embodiment of the true self of the human being.

In Christianity, the change of dimensions is carried out with all aspects of the personality, for in Jesus the true self not only overcomes the bonds to the thought, feeling, and will levels of the world of appearances but also to matter itself and builds not only a spirit personality with new thoughts, feelings, and energies but also a spirit body with spiritual organs of perception and activity that can perceive and act, that is, that are part of a transformed material world.

These events are not miracles. They are understandable facts and experiences. This is how religion becomes science. The resurrection is a decisive step in human evolution, the step out of

the previous evolution in the world of appearances into the spiritual world. The previous evolution of life and humanity took place in the world of appearances. The spiritual principle of form created the crystals in order to express itself in them. The principle of life created the plants in order to express itself in them. The principle of conscious perception created the animals in order to express itself in them. The principle of thinking ego consciousness created human beings in order to express itself in them. Now the earthly human being was there as an organism in which the principle of form, life, conscious perception, and thinking ego consciousness could express themselves. But that was only the entanglement of the spiritual human being in the dimension of the world of appearances, the “fall” of humanity into the world of appearances as described in Genesis. At the same time, however, it was preparation for the possibility of reversing the “fall,” for now, after an ego consciousness of themselves and the world in which they lived had arisen in earthly human beings, the spiritual world could make itself felt in them again. The “dead” image of God rendered latent by the “fall” could awaken again and proceed to evolution out of the phenomenal world. Linking to the true self, the spiritual world was able to build up a new consciousness and being within earthly people and their ego consciousness, a spirit body as an organ for perceiving and working in the spiritual world. The prerequisite was that people with their ego consciousness recognized the relativity of the earthly world and freed themselves from its dictates.

In this way, the people become conscious and able to act in the spiritual dimension. This is resurrection. This is Easter. They dissolve the root of the drive for self-maintenance, which binds them to the earthly dimension: That is the “dying” of the old human being. That is Good Friday. As spiritual beings with spirit bodies, they can and will then have an effect on the world of appearances and increasingly change it until a “new heaven” and a “new earth” have come into being. This is the end times.

Jesus’ Appearances

When Jesus appears to his disciples after the resurrection, these are happenings in the spiritual world. They could not have been photographed. Everything that is reported by the evangelist in this context, for example that Jesus “breaks bread” or “eats broiled

fish” or shows his wounds, is a process in the spiritual world but no less real than the temporal reality. Jesus has left the tomb of the earthly dimension and lives consciously with a spirit personality that thinks, feels, and wills and a perceiving and acting spirit body in the dimension of the spiritual world. Only people who have their eyes of consciousness open to the spiritual world can see him.

Neither the chief priests, elders, and scribes nor any of the people who are not disciples see the risen Jesus. They remain in the old earthly consciousness and being and are therefore not able to perceive the true self and the spirit body, phenomena from the spiritual world. But Jesus’ disciples experience apparitions, for they have walked the spiritual path, following the master, and their true self has become conscious, at least to a certain extent. With this new consciousness, they live in the dimension of the spiritual world and perceive events in this dimension.

Jesus appears to his disciples to explain what has happened. Three times already he had explained to them that the Son of Man would have to suffer much in order to finally rise from the dead. They had not understood and were “afraid to ask him.” Why? Because their earthly consciousness with its self-centeredness and its drive for self-maintenance stood in their way. With their drives for possessions, prestige, and power, they had expected that Jesus would establish the kingdom of God in the earthly world as a political and social kingdom of David that could be recognized with earthly consciousness. They had expected to rule this realm as his vassals. Some of Jesus’ followers today also expect that one day their dead earthly body will be resurrected and will live forever. The disciples of Jesus could not and cannot abandon these expectations as long as their self-centeredness and drive for self-maintenance are not abandoned. And these they could not give up as long as Jesus had not given them up in his greater spiritual powers. If people do not have a certain psychological make-up, they will not be able to understand the events that correspond to this make-up. Jesus had not yet paved the way with his spirit body for the resurrection of the true self. Now that the way has been created, the true self with the spirit body can in principle also arise in the disciples. Now, following Jesus, they can finally overcome their egocentricity and their drive for self-maintenance and take up their “cross.” This makes it possible for them to understand these processes.

They now understand that the kingdom of God is in a different dimension than the physical world. They understand that the true self and associated spirit body reside in this spiritual dimension and that resurrection is not the resurrection of the physical body but the realization and becoming active of the true self through a spirit personality. They also learn that the spiritual path in the earthly world means denial of all selfishness and of the drive for self-maintenance and that it also means the “cross.” Since the earthly dimension is fundamentally hostile to the spiritual dimension, a new, spiritual humanity will always attract enmity, hatred, and persecution from people who persist in the earthly. Therefore the “Son of Man,” embodiment of the true self and the new humanity, is humbled and finally crucified. It is therefore impossible that he together with earthly people and as their leader should establish a kingdom of God in the earthly world and triumph in this world.

The risen Jesus explains these laws to the disciples. But at the same time, they become clear to them from their own true self, which has opened up to the spiritual world, just as they could be recognized in their time by the prophets who had opened up to the spiritual world. Three times before the resurrection, the disciples had failed to understand. Jesus appears to them three times after the resurrection and explains the connections to them. And now they understand.

The Women

24:6 *“Remember how he spoke to you while he was still in Galilee, ⁷saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of men who are sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise?” ⁸And they remembered his words, ⁹and when they returned from the tomb, they reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰Now Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the others with them were telling these things to the apostles. ¹¹And these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they refused to believe them. (LEB)*

The women are the first to see these processes with spiritual eyes and to receive an explanation through spiritual powers. Women correspond to the earthly forces of human feelings that are closest to the true self. They do not see the resurrected one yet. But they see with spiritual eyes the dimensional change that has taken

place. The Son of Man and the spirit body belonging to him have left the “tomb” of the world of appearances and live in the “kingdom of God.” The “tomb” of the phenomenal world is empty. This impression that the women experience is explained to them by the messengers from the spiritual world, a new source of knowledge arising within themselves. They now understand what the task of the Son of Man and the true self in every human being is. It is the becoming conscious of this true self and the associated development of a spirit body. It is walking the spiritual path as Jesus walked it. But this is necessarily accompanied by the hatred and hostility of all those who do not want the true self in their own nature and its development, since they prefer to maintain their self-centered nature. It is “sinners” who take possession of the Son of Man and crucify him. The crucifixion is the ultimate consequence of their hate, which the true self takes upon itself without hating in turn. But they can only destroy the physical body. They cannot harm the true self and the spirit body. The true self and spirit body arise “on the third day.” On the first day, they separate from the hatred of the phenomenal world, from the “cross.” On the second day, a phase of rest and processing of the attacks experienced, they are infused with spiritual powers. And on the third day, they finally leave the tomb of the phenomenal world just as a butterfly leaves the chrysalis, and enter the light of the kingdom of God to breathe and live in it independently.

This whole process is necessary if people are to fulfill their inherent purpose. It must also be lived out by a person as an example if other, weaker people are to be able to follow it. Fulfilling these two needs was the task of Jesus, the Son of Man. Hence the “must” in the messengers’ explanation. The women now understand these necessities. And they rush to share their experience and knowledge with the disciples. The disciples correspond to the earthly forces of consciousness in close proximity to the true self. They experience the impression that the women have gained, but they are still not far enough to grasp the spiritual law of death and resurrection for themselves. The words of the women come across as “like an idle tale” to the disciples.

Some manuscripts of the gospel of Luke do not have the following verse:

24:12 *But Peter got up and ran to the tomb, and bending over to look, he saw only the strips of linen cloth, and he went away to his home wondering what had happened. (LEB)*

Simon Peter goes to see the empty tomb for himself and sees only the “linen cloths.” He also recognizes with spiritual eyes that the true self and the spirit body have left the “tomb” of the world of appearances. Only the remnants of the protective thought sphere that Joseph of Arimathea, a like-minded friend of the deceased, had set up for him are left behind. Peter sees these remnants, also with spiritual eyes.

Emmaus

24:13 *And behold, on that same day, two of them were traveling to a village named Emmaus that was sixty stadia distant from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and they were conversing with one another about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵And it happened that while they were conversing, and discussing, Jesus himself also approached and began to go along with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, “What are these matters that you are discussing with one another as you are walking along?” And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸And one of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to him, “Are you the only one living near Jerusalem and not knowing the things that have happened in it in these days?” ¹⁹And he said to them, “What things?” So they said to him, “The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, a man who was a prophet, powerful in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and rulers handed him over to a sentence of death, and crucified him. ²¹But we were hoping that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. But in addition to all these things, this is the third day since these things took place. ²²But also some women from among us astonished us, who were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³and when they did not find his body, they came back saying they had seen even a vision of angels, who said that he was alive! ²⁴And some of those with us went out to the tomb and found it like this, just as the women had also said, but him they did not see.” ²⁵And he said to them, “O foolish and slow in heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Christ suffer these things and enter into his glory?” ²⁷And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things concerning himself in all the scriptures. ²⁸And they drew near to the village where they were going, and he acted as though he was going farther. ²⁹And they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is getting*

toward evening, and by this time the day is far spent.” And he went in to stay with them. ³⁰And it happened that when he reclined at the table with them, he took the bread and gave thanks, and after breaking it, he gave it to them. ³¹And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he became invisible to them. ³²And they said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking with us on the road, while he was explaining the scriptures to us?” ³³And they got up that same hour and returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven and those with them assembled, ³⁴saying, “The Lord has really been raised, and has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵And they began describing what happened on the road, and how he was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread. (LEB)

For the second time, people come into relation with the processes of death and resurrection and recognize what it means. This time, two disciples of Jesus, not from his eleven, do not just see with spiritual eyes the empty tomb but the true self and its spirit body in the dimension of the spirit. The premise of this narration of the two disciples wandering to Emmaus who meet Jesus is clear: The true self of Jesus and his spirit body have entered the spiritual world. When the two disciples “see” Jesus, they see with spiritual eyes into the spiritual world. Their spiritual eyes have opened on their spiritual path. No ordinary person of the people and no Pharisee could have “seen” Jesus. They only see with their ordinary eyes.

The whole story of the two disciples going to Emmaus refers to the dimension of the spirit. One can imagine that their encounter and their conversation with Jesus take place in their “soul space.” However, it is not a matter of subjectively generated fantasies or dreams but of objective, soul-spiritual realities that occur in the disciples with full clarity of their consciousness, even with superclarity. This may well have happened on a real journey to Emmaus just as Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus. But the journey itself can also be seen as a symbol of the condition of the disciples because “Emmaus” means “warm spring”: The disciples leave Jerusalem, the scene of upsetting events – also in their own consciousness – that they have not yet been able to master, to cover 60 stadia (in the Greek original) – 60 is the number of doubt and despair – to the “warm source” of inner comfort. On this journey through desperation and depression, they encounter a new certainty in their soul space that arises from the true self in them,

only weakly at first, then becoming gradually clearer. At first, they do not realize that what is arising in them is the true self and the spirit body of Jesus, the spiritual source itself. At first, it is just a hunch, a possibility for new insight. They converse with this source within themselves.

This is reflected in the narrative. First they talked “with each other about all these things that had happened,” that is, they express their lack of understanding, their insecurity, their despair. But now, “Jesus himself also approached and began to go along with them”: A new possibility of knowledge opened up in them; a glimmer of hope was awakened. They did not yet realize that it was the spiritual source, the Son of Man himself, speaking from their own true self. But with this glimmer of hope in their own soul, with this opening source of knowledge, they talk to each other. In the light of this hope and knowledge, they only really become aware of their sadness and despair. They recapitulate what has happened to them since the crucifixion of Jesus. They describe their inner situation. They had hoped that Jesus would redeem Israel. But this hope had been cruelly crushed by the chief priests and superiors, for they had imagined this redemption outwardly, perhaps in such a way that Jesus would drive out the Romans, replace the chief priests, and establish a new social order in which justice reigned. They go on to say that they learned from other disciples and the women that the tomb of the one taken down from the cross was empty and that angels had told the women that Jesus was alive. But this is completely incomprehensible to them, and they are dismayed.

Their confusion is clarified in a dialogue with the spiritual power of knowledge working within them. They learn what the empty tomb means and what salvation means. The Anointed One, the Christ, can only enter into his glory by denying himself and taking up his cross. When he abandons all selfishness, he exposes himself to the tools of selfishness, the enemies of the true self, and must “suffer.” But only through this abandonment of self-centeredness, this “dying” of egocentric motives, and through enduring the enmity of the earthly world, the “cross,” does the true self become conscious and build up a spirit body. Only in this way do true self and spirit body enter into the glory of the kingdom of God. In this way, the Christ redeems his true self, the image of God, from the captivity of egocentric motives and physical sensory impressions. In doing so, he precedes all others who want to follow him on this

path and makes the powers of salvation available to them. Thus, he redeems Israel insofar as it is receptive to this path, and he redeems humanity insofar as it is receptive to it. Moses and the prophets already explained this in the scriptures (Isaiah 53), only the people at that time could not yet understand it. On the one hand, they were completely caught up in their earthly ideas about what salvation is, and on the other hand, the path for a real understanding of salvation had not yet been paved. But now that Jesus has lived exemplarily how death and resurrection occur on the spiritual path, new soul-spiritual actualities have been created that can be looked at with spiritual eyes. This also makes it possible to understand and reenact these actualities.

And finally, the spiritual eyes of the two disciples are opened, and they see the fact of the resurrection, the spirit body of Jesus, and understand. They realize that what “spoke” in them, gave them hope, and explained to them the need for death and resurrection was Jesus himself, the pattern of the true self of the human being, speaking to them through their own true self. The pattern of the true self and the associated spirit body had become independent and capable of action in the spiritual world and could communicate to the disciples’ spiritual eyes through their receptive true self. How do they recognize Jesus? By the way he explains the spiritual facts. Nothing else is the way he “broke the bread,” for the true self gratefully accepts the substance of the spiritual world, the “bread,” just as Jesus gratefully accepted the spiritual bread at the feeding of the 5000 and at the Passover meal. And the true self summarizes the impressions it has received from the spiritual world in symbols and concepts that are adapted to people’s comprehension: It breaks the bread; it “explains the spiritual impulses.” No one else “explains” as the true self embodied in Jesus does. In this explanation, which comes from the truth and leads to the truth, people recognize the truth, the image of God. And after the disciples have recognized Jesus, he disappears again from their spiritual sight. The moments of direct vision and associated explanations are over.

Only now does it become clear to them in what state they were during the dialogue with the source of the spirit. Their hearts “burned” within them. It was a state of intense perception involving all the powers of feeling and consciousness. An irresistible longing for the presence of the spiritual source had also been at work in them, a longing to completely embrace what was

beginning to speak within them. That is why Luke speaks of them “urging him to stay” when it seemed to them that the spiritual source of knowledge was about to withdraw again. They had realized that evening had come, not just on that day but for their whole life’s journey. The light of their intellect no longer wanted to shine on them; they had reached the end of their earthly possibilities of cognition. Therefore, they needed and wanted to have the source of spiritual knowledge with them and learn from it. And this source really went into them and stayed with them because they longed for it so deeply. In Emmaus, there really was a warm spring that comforted them, taught them, and gave them hope. It was the spiritual source within them, fed by the spiritual source of the Christ.

The two disciples return to Jerusalem and tell the eleven and their comrades what they have experienced. They learn that Jesus has already appeared to Simon Peter – an event that Luke does not report further, for it is only important to him to present the events that have happened and their explanation three times, corresponding to the three times Jesus announced the events and the three times the disciples did not understand them. The experience of the events that have happened to the disciples and the women becomes more and more intense, and understanding grows to the point of complete comprehension.

The Disciples

24:36 *And while they were saying these things, he himself stood there among them. ³⁷But they were startled and became terrified, and thought they had seen a ghost. ³⁸And he said to them, “Why are you frightened? And for what reason do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet, that I am I myself! Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have.” ⁴⁰And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹And while they were still disbelieving because of joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Do you have anything to eat here?” ⁴²So they gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate it in front of them. ⁴⁴And he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything that is written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶and said to*

them, “Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and would rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I am sending out what was promised by my Father upon you, but you stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” (LEB)

For the third time, people from the circle around Jesus encounter the facts of the resurrection and recognize how they are to be understood. The women had seen with spiritual eyes that the tomb of the physical world was empty and that Jesus’ true self and spirit body had passed into the spirit world. They had not seen him themselves yet. The disciples on the way to Emmaus had seen the true self and spirit body of Jesus directly with spiritual eyes within themselves, had not recognized him at first, but then identified him as the source of knowledge and power of the spirit known to them. He had also only approached them quietly; the apparition had penetrated their consciousness very gradually. But the eleven disciples see him immediately, and he suddenly “stood there among them.” The true self and spirit body of Jesus are shown to their spiritual eyes with great intensity. But even they do not recognize him immediately.

This scene is about the “reality status” of the person appearing. Is he a ghost, a spirit from the beyond, the realm of the dead? The disciples have this idea at first. But the point of the whole story is to correct this view and make it clear: Jesus, as true self and spirit body, is not a ghost from the realm of the dead. It is not the subtle body of an ordinary person, which after death, after separation from the physical body, continues to exist for a while and then dissolves in the subtle areas of the earth, just as the physical body dissolves in the physical areas. Rather, the spirit body of Jesus has “flesh and bones”: It consists of spiritual-material substance, just as the body of the earthly human being consists of earthly-material substance. One can imagine that earthly matter is energy of a certain vibration while spiritual “matter” is energy of higher, finer vibration so that it cannot be perceived with earthly eyes, which are also made of earthly matter. Yes, the spirit body of Jesus also contains the memories of everything experienced in life, not only in his thoughts and feelings, but also in the form of traces of the injuries that were inflicted on the earthly body. Since the spirit body was connected to the end with the physical body – this was

the imperfect tool of the true self with which it could express itself in the physical world – all experiences of the physical body left impressions in the spirit body by virtue of this connection.

In addition, the spirit body is a body that perceives and acts in the spiritual world. So it also has a “metabolism.” It absorbs impressions from the spiritual world and works into the spirit world. It absorbs substances from the spiritual world: thoughts, feelings, aspirations, and energies in order to give them back transformed. This is the difference to the spirit world of the deceased who can no longer act consciously and no longer metabolize. So they gradually dissolve. That the spirit body of Jesus possesses such a “metabolism” and absorbs spiritual substances is shown by Jesus eating the “broiled fish” that the disciples hand him. All of this happens in a state of consciousness and being of the disciples that corresponds to the spiritual world in these moments. They are in contact with Jesus on the level of the spiritual world, see him with spiritual eyes, and give him spiritual food. The “broiled fish” is, as is the fish at the feeding of the 5000, spiritual food, food for the soul. It consists in the gratitude, devotion, and joy with which the disciples respond to the appearance of Jesus, also in their understanding of what he is now explaining to them.

For now Jesus opens their minds to the meaning of the words that he had spoken to them three times and of the words in the scriptures that explain the processes on the spiritual path: that one’s own life of self-centered motives must be lost for the sake of the true self if the true life in harmony with the spiritual world is to be saved. The words of the scriptures further explain that the Son of Man, Jesus, walked this path in special powers to open this possibility to all receptive people. He voluntarily assumed an earthly body and took upon himself all the associated egocentric motives, fears, and debts in order to open up this possibility of salvation to all other people by losing this egocentric life and finding the true life. That is the point of Isaiah, chapter 53, one of the prophets to whose words Jesus’ explanations refer:

53:1 *Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ²For he [that is, the servant of the LORD] grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. ³He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and*

acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.

⁴Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.

⁵But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ⁸By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. ⁹They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. ¹¹Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (NRSV)

The true self of humanity has “borne our infirmities and carried our diseases.” By voluntarily assuming an earthly body, the “form of a servant,” Jesus took upon himself all the associated egocentric motives, fears, and guilt, as well as the resulting social ills, physical illnesses, and death – guiltlessly. By taking all this upon himself and as the Anointed One overcoming and dissolving it in the powers of the spiritual world, he created the possibility for all others to follow the same path.

“Yet we,” the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, “accounted” that he was a heretic, rightly “struck down and afflicted by God.” But he voluntarily allowed himself to be pierced on the cross “for our transgressions” and voluntarily let himself be crushed “for our iniquities.” He did it so that we would have the opportunity to

overcome through the spiritual path our transgressions and iniquities, our separation from God with all the associated evils. "Upon him was the punishment that made us whole": Through his crucifixion and resurrection, we are able to be crucified and resurrected as well. "By his bruises we are healed": Because he overcame the world and death, we are able to overcome the world and death as well.

Through Jesus' crucifixion, death, and resurrection, also our death is overcome in principle. The pattern of the true self of the human being has walked the spiritual path for the true self of all human beings. But those who want to overcome death now must walk the spiritual path themselves on the basis laid by the Son of Man and realize the "information" given by the Son of Man.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter." Isaiah also uses the image of the lamb to characterize the suffering of the Messiah. Two meanings are connected with the "sacrifice of the lamb." The "lamb" as the embodiment of the animal in the human being is killed so that the true self can be resurrected. This corresponds to self-denial, the killing of the drive for self-maintenance. On the other hand, the "lamb" as the embodiment of the true self is sacrificed. It allows itself to be killed by the enmity of earthly humanity in order to be resurrected and allow humanity to carry out the same process. The true self of Jesus is therefore sacrificed, and with him the power of God is sacrificed, the power with which Jesus is anointed, which makes him the "Christ." Isaiah alludes to this second symbolic meaning of the lamb.

Both symbolic meanings are identical to the two symbolic meanings of crucifixion alive in early Christianity. In Paul, for example, egocentricity, the animalistic in the human being, had to be crucified so that the spiritual in the human being could arise (Galatians 5:24). And also in Paul, Jesus as the Son of God was crucified by people hostile to him in order to rise again (1 Corinthians 2:8).

The disciples finally understand, for the spiritual path has been completed by *one* human being, whereby it is anchored as a soul-spiritual fact, as "information," in the organism of humanity. On this basis, the disciples can look, experience, and thus understand with open spiritual eyes. They are not convinced by a "miracle." They understand the lawfulness of a process that was carried out by Jesus and can therefore now also be carried out by them. "You

are witnesses of these things,” Jesus tells them. You have experienced how I walked the spiritual path. You can now walk it yourself and thereby testify to the lawfulness of this process. When people walk the spiritual path, they fulfill the inherent purpose of the human being.

The spiritual path begins with “repentance in the name of Jesus”: turning away from entanglements in the earthly world and turning to the “name” of Christ, to the spirit-filled true self, to the true, spiritual identity of the human being. It ends with the “forgiveness of sins,” with the abolition of the separation from God. At the end of the spiritual path, the image of God in the human being, previously cut off from the conscious experience of God by the egocentric nature of the earthly human being, is consciously one with God again. It has arisen from the dead and entered the kingdom of God.

Those who walk this path, as Jesus’ disciples did, already proclaim this path simply by walking it. They can also represent it in words to other people. They can “preach” among all peoples, indeed they are obliged to pass on the information about this possibility to all people, “beginning from Jerusalem.” The path of Jesus was walked among the people of the Jews, in “Jerusalem,” where at that time the pinnacle of human development lay. From there, this possibility can now be passed on to all other people, for what the top of the tree of humanity has reached can and must be bestowed on all other branches and twigs of the tree. “What my Father promised” is that all human beings can become aware of the image of God within and can be set free, thereby fulfilling their inherent purpose.

Before the disciples of Jesus, who have already walked a long distance on the spiritual path to the inherent purpose of the human being, there still lies the task of completing the fifth phase of the spiritual path, in which they have hitherto failed. Therefore they are asked to remain “in the city,” in Jerusalem, the symbol of the power of the spirit, until they are filled “with power from on high” which enables them to complete this phase of the path as well. What they have not yet been able to accomplish – the dissolution of the drive for self-maintenance – they can accomplish with the power from on high. Then they will be witnesses to the whole world of the path and of Jesus, who preceded them on the path and made it possible for his followers to go this path.

Jesus' Ascension and Pentecost

24:50 *And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹And it happened that while he was blessing them, he parted from them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵²And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³And they were continually in the temple courts praising God. (LEB)*

In the sixth phase of his journey, Jesus is “taken up into heaven.” “Heaven” is not to be understood spatially. It is a high sphere of the spiritual world that nonetheless penetrates the entire world of appearances. It is a sphere into which the spiritual eyes of the disciples cannot yet follow Jesus. Jesus enters this sphere – he “parted from them.” At the same time, he blessed the disciples again. He communicated to them his soul-spiritual powers and once again created an indissoluble bond between himself and them even though he was beyond their spiritual sight. And they recognized the power and level of his being and consciousness, far higher in comparison to their being and consciousness, and expressed this realization by prostrating themselves in worship.

They were filled with “great joy,” a feature again emphasized by the evangelist Luke. It is not joy at the fulfillment of some earthly desire for salvation or pride in the task ahead. On the contrary, they are filled with the powers of the spirit, which encourage them on their way and give them the certainty of overcoming the last great obstacle, the drive for self-maintenance. These powers of the spirit are a new vitality, an abundance of life, an inner state that has still other attributes, for the disciples are “always in the temple” praising God. One who is filled with the spiritual powers is always connected with all others who are in the same state and is “in the temple.” The temple represents the kingdom of God in the physical world. The kingdom of God protrudes into the earthly world through the temple. The temple is the alignment of people’s consciousness and life with the spiritual world through which it connects with them. And when life is led in alignment with the spiritual world, that is equivalent to “blessing God.” At the same time, the pupils can pursue their job and their social and family obligations. “Blessing God” and “being continually in the temple” are not enthusiastic moods that neglect everything else. They are a

basic attitude that runs through the entire practical everyday life, an inner connection with the powers of the spirit that gives life its character.

But the seventh phase of the path is that Jesus, the true self now residing in “heaven,” in the spiritual world, permeates and encompasses the entire world of appearances with his information and vibration. He works in the organism of humanity as this information and vibration. Some people react positively, others negatively. It is the phase of the “end times,” which was described in chapter 21, a phase in which the true self that has become conscious and that has a perceiving and capable spirit body has the most intense influence on people living in the earthly world.

Since the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, it has been the end times, and again and again, individuals or groups of people consciously experience the return of Christ. The “Son of Man” manifests himself again and again on earth – in all those people in whom the true self together with a spirit body resurrects. The Son of Man comes “on the clouds of heaven,” in the energetic spheres of the earth, and connects with the receptive self of countless people. In many, the new humanity pushes towards realization.

All people can start with it. When they read the events related in the Gospel of Luke, they will realize what the meaning of human life actually is: to recognize the great spiritual connections of the development of the individual, humanity, and the world, to integrate into them, and to help realize them. When they recognize this meaning, new perspectives for their life will arise. They will be able to let go of many meaningless goals, efforts, and feelings that have guided them up to now and have messed up their life. Their life will receive a new order and come to rest. They will be healed by “Jesus,” the bringer of the real meaning of life. And many unconscious fixed ideas and complexes generated from within themselves or taken over from without, which were breathing down their neck like demons, will lose their influence over them, being cast out by “Jesus,” the bringer of the meaning of life. They become calm and free, can think, feel, and want independently again, and can soberly withdraw from the countless influences from their own past and the social present that want to bring new disorder and lack of freedom into their life. They will be fed again and again with this meaning of life and the resulting new strength – like the “hungry people” in the gospel.

Above all, they will notice: The great spiritual connections go far

beyond them as an ego personality. Above all, they relate to their true self, a spiritual disposition in their own being of which they were not aware until then. It is their true, immortal self that needs redemption, not primarily their limited, mortal self. This ego can be healed and free when it recognizes the actual meaning of life. But that is only one prerequisite for people's actual task in life: to let the true self develop in such a way that it consciously enters the state called the "kingdom of God" in the Gospel and experiences unity with the kingdom of God. Only when people recognize this will the healing and liberation of the ego personality really succeed, for then they will no longer put their ego, themselves, first, no longer take themselves as so absolutely important. They will expect salvation from other, spiritual powers within, not from their own thinking, feeling, and willing, which only play a subservient, albeit indispensable, role in the process of self-realization. Only when they gain this attitude can the new perspective on life unfold its true power. Only then will the dignity of the human being as a spiritual being come into its own.

Readers of the Gospel of Luke will be able to follow how people consciously fulfill their inherent purpose as "pupils" of the true self – whether they are such pupils themselves or not. How the pupils open themselves to the impulses from the spiritual core in their own being – embodied by Jesus – and accept them: faith. How they allow these impulses to circulate within their being and communicate them to others by giving them the spiritual meaning of life and contributing to their healing and liberation from demons: inner soul work. How through this work, they gradually become aware of the spiritual world, of the true self within them, and at the same time become aware of the selfishness in their own being, which hinders the development of the true self. How they gain innumerable insights into what the "kingdom of God" actually is, what state of the human being, of the true self, is described by this symbol. The many parables and teachings of Jesus in the gospels describe this state of the true self. And those who empathize with it in its innumerable aspects are laying the seeds for experiencing it one day for themselves. The readers further learn how pupilship, the unfolding of the true self, leads to ever greater changes in the thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of the personality, which thus becomes a better and better instrument and expression of the true self. However, they also learn that under certain circumstances, a lack of understanding of the actual

requirements of the path of the pupil and the inability to fulfill them can lead to total failure – as a denial of the goal or even as a betrayal of the goal.

In particular, the readers will notice that the events described in the Gospel are actually a “path” in a school, an inner soul work that has to be done consciously and changes people – not a belief in dogmas by which the human being would be redeemed as an ego personality. It is about a “journey to Jerusalem” under the guidance of a master, about an ever more glorious development of the true self, while at the same time becoming conscious and thereby weakening self-centeredness, for only those who lose their life of self-centeredness for the sake of the true self will save the life in the kingdom of God, the spiritual life of the true self. It is a path that is described in every detail in the Gospel through the life stages and actions of the disciples and Jesus. This shows that Christianity, as is Buddhism, for example, is a religion of experience and a religion of inner soul work but tailored to Western people who are strongly anchored in matter. That is why in Christianity, the changes along this path take place right down to the physical, up to the point at which self-centeredness is also dissolved in the material body and a fine-material body is built up.

On this path, the disciples of Jesus experience that they lose their self-centeredness, their old nature, for their true identity, their actual self, not for an external instance or authority – not even for their master. Only then does it lead to true independence and freedom, to the realization of the lawful spiritual order laid down in people, which is the basis and structure of their true being. Nevertheless, they experience that it is not their own performance that is decisive but the devotion to the spiritual powers from within themselves – or to the master who guides them – through which their self-centeredness is dissolved and their personality can be transfigured in thinking, feeling, and willing into a spirit personality, which is the exact expression of the true self. They cannot redeem themselves, but they must do everything in their power to facilitate their salvation through the spiritual powers.

Finally, reading the Gospel of Luke will show the readers that the spiritual path of every human being does not stop with spiritual schooling but ultimately leads to spiritual mastery, however remote it may be. Jesus has a special position among spiritual masters since he was already filled with the Holy Spirit before

birth and voluntarily accepted a body that was not suitable for him. Nevertheless, his path clearly illustrates the path of every spiritual master. It begins with “enlightenment”: After the water baptism in the Jordan, Jesus is baptized with spiritual fire. His true self, his immortal soul, consciously experiences the order and powers of the spiritual world and is absorbed into them. It becomes a spirit-soul; the true self becomes a spirit-filled true self; the Son of Man becomes a Son of God. This enlightened one experiences the temptations of selfishness, passes them definitively, and begins his work of establishing a school and healing and liberating others. The “Transfiguration on the Mount” shows the consequences for himself of his work: His ego personality has become a spirit personality. According to thoughts, feelings, and aspirations, the instrument of his spirit-soul – the personality – has been permeated and transfigured by divine love. This divine love is now working for those who are open to it for a rise, for those who are closed to it for a fall. Nevertheless, in the long run, knowledge and thus openness to divine love can arise from this fall. People can learn from their mistakes. So out of evil comes good nevertheless. But that does not make evil good, and mistakes do not become the desired detour. Only when people become aware of evil as evil, of mistakes as mistakes, can they learn from them and can good come from them.

The most difficult task is still waiting for the master: to also dissolve the self-centeredness of the material body, the drive for self-maintenance, so that a new fine-material organ for the true self can arise. Death and resurrection describe these processes that all people will experience in the final phase of their spiritual development, even if they do not die a violent death. The drive for self-maintenance dies in them consciously and finally. With that, the egocentric functioning of their bodily apparatus for cognition and action dies, which until now could only serve the true self poorly and indirectly as an organ of expression and action. People experience this as total emptiness and darkness since they no longer even perceive indirect impressions from the spiritual world. They experience it as “death.”

The “crucifixion” is a side effect of this path: People who are hostile to the spirit (usually they are hostile due to a lack of understanding) will always fight and perhaps even kill the bringers of truth.

In the further course of the process, people detach from the

painful impressions of the “crucifixion” – that is the “descent from the cross” – and are laid in the “tomb”: They experience a period of regeneration and revitalization. In the end, a fine-material body arises, an organ of expression and action that corresponds to the true self. People enter the spiritual world fully consciously and with a complete spirit personality: spirit, spirit-soul, and spirit personality with spirit body. This is the fulfillment of their inherent purpose. From the spiritual world, they now work as spiritual order and power into the earthly world.

Masters do all this because it is their own inherent purpose but at the same time because by walking this path, they make it possible for others to do so. This is the work of every master: to release the divine love within in order to enable other people to release it in their turn. They, in turn, may experience the death of their self-centeredness and drive for self-maintenance in order to experience at the same time the resurrection of their true self and a new spirit personality. In this way, they in turn become masters and also work out of and with divine love. In this way, a new heaven and a new earth are created: through the cooperation of all people, whether immediately or only in the distant future.

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The author deliberately refrained from explicitly dealing with the literature on the Gospel of Luke and on Jesus in the text. That would have gone beyond the scope of the book. In the following, books are listed that can give an impression of the different perspectives that are usually used to approach the Gospel of Luke and the figure of Jesus.

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The text of the Gospel of Luke was quoted from the new Revised Standard Version (chapters 1 through 8) and the Lexham English Bible (chapters 9 through 24). The original Greek word for “disciples” means “students” or “pupils” and describes people who want to learn something, learn, and trustingly associate with a teacher or master in order to develop through their own work with the help of the teacher or master. When you think of “disciples,” you may think of people who are dependent and blindly devoted to their teachers or masters, worship them, and do not recognize them. But the “pupils” of the Gospels are not such “disciples.”

Since *The Spiritual Path of Christianity: The Gospel of Mark as a Model*, the author has developed further. This is particularly noticeable in the last part of *The Birth of the True Self in the Human Being* where the death and resurrection of Jesus are seen in a more differentiated way and some symbols are interpreted differently than in the previous book.

About the Author

- Dr. Konrad Dietzfelbinger (sociology and German studies) has been occupied for decades as a translator and author of religious and spiritual books. His scientific work has brought him in touch with manifold traditions of western humanity.
- Raised in an especially religious environment, he already noticed as a child that under the Christian faith as he encountered it there, there had to be hidden a much deeper spiritual Christianity. One of his main concerns is to make this original Christianity visible again.
- Those who go back to the roots of the gospels and thus free the path of Christianity from all leveling and encrustation will first recognize the place of this religion among the other world religions. They will experience that Christianity when rightly understood is especially for the Westerner the gate to the realization of the true self in the human being.

