

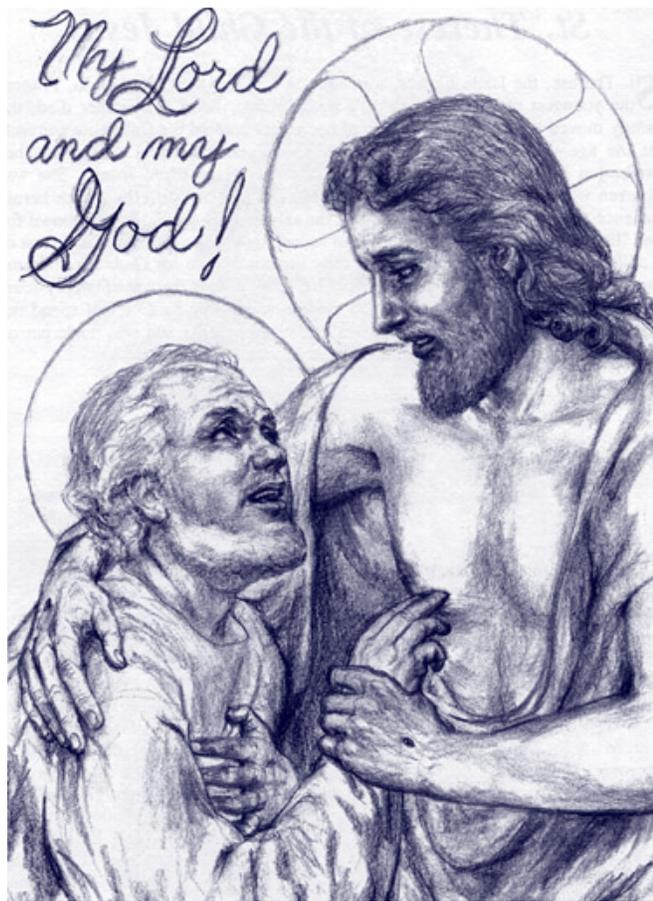
MYSTIC LIGHT

Meditations— I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; I am the Vine

WE SHALL SOMETIMES, as we practice our meditation, have the feeling as if within us there were pure joy of the resurrection. Everything is full of resurrection music, as if in us the angels themselves were singing over the open grave. Then we begin to have an idea of what Easter is and of how little men have allowed the resurrection Christianity, of which John's Gospel speaks, to become a reality. Perhaps what we have said may also help people to whom this world is still strange to feel and to find reality in their own way.

As we now pass over to the next saying of Christ, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 16:6), we are again standing before one of the mighty words of Christ, which alone might be matter for the meditation of a lifetime. The context in which this saying is spoken is especially interesting. Thomas says to Christ: "We know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Now it is remarkable how this Thomas, of whom the later legends record that he became the apostle of India, is, in the whole manner of his being, related to the spirit of India. He feels strongly the destiny of death (John 11:16). He is the melancholy brooder and doubter who longs for sight (John 20:25). And here at the place we are considering he asks for the "way," as the Indians for thousands of years have asked for the "path," as Sundar Singh and Ghandi

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St. Thomas

After Pentecost, Thomas preached the Gospel in southern India, where he was martyred for his faith in Christ. From its inception, St. Thomas Christianity has taught that the laws of consequence and rebirth are fundamental truths of human existence.

today, each in their own manner, ask for the way. The saying of Christ in reply to the question of Thomas contains a most remarkable indication of the "mission" to India, which is not yet fully understood. Buddha showed a path, but the saying, "We know not whither Thou goest," is true of him also. When he was asked what Nirvana is, he was silent." Concerning that, the lofty one revealed nothing," say the Indian texts.

The Indians were the people who did not wish to enter the earthly world, the world of the senses. Dr. Rudolf Steiner has given an illuminating demonstration of this. The Indian is afraid before outward

reality. This is expressed in the word itself upon which they meditate, “a-u-m.” In the sound “a” the sight is opened to reality. In “u” one is afraid before it. And in “m” one passes over into meditation, into inward humming and musing. In truth the Indian seeks his way back into Paradise. He seeks to perceive that which lies beneath all things, that which comes before them. And he seeks to unite himself with this all-inclusive being, which is there before the multiplicity of appearances. And so he seeks in his own way the tree of knowledge and the tree of life.

And now Christ says, if we put His saying in this way, as it might be spoken to such men: You seek the way back into Paradise? You seek the tree of knowledge, the tree of life? You cannot go back. But Paradise has opened and is seeking its lost children upon earth. I am the way. In my “I” you will find Paradise again. I am the truth. In my “I” you will regain the fruits of the tree of knowledge I am the life. In my “I” shall you also have the fruits of the tree of life. The two trees are no longer separated, but united in my “I.”

When we look at this saying from this historical point of view, we can easily derive from it that which sanctifies the past also, our own past, as well as the past of humanity. We here mean by the past, not that which passes away but that which stands. “Eternally still stands the past.” We mean that which is the divine background of existence for our being and our life. If we can rise to the contemplation of this, then the past is redeemed from the transitoriness under which men have always suffered so bitterly.

When we look back with such a glance upon our past, we clearly recognize that it divides itself into two parts. The one part is transitory and can by no means be recalled. That is the past which always brings to us the “sorrow for the past.” But from the friction of our experiences, the truths we have gained emerge—the victories we have gained in life. That is the eternal part of our past. We must bring this out of the dark mine of the past up into the daylight and make it fruitful. Christ can help us to do this. He gives us the right way of looking at it. He is “the way” to the Father. For in these truths, these victories we have won from life, the divine

being of the Father is looking at us.

And so this saying of Christ may be to us a word for the evening, as the saying about the resurrection is a word for the morning. The most fruitful review of our day is that which can be made under the guidance of this saying. Naturally the saying has many other meanings, and permits of many other different expositions of itself. But what we urgently require is inward work upon our past, daily if possible. It lies there like a great mound of rubbish from which we must recover grains of gold. If we have Christ in us, if we have the will to acquire the greater “I” which lives in peace and works in love, then our past begins to transmute itself into gold. We see the governance of the Father, and begin again to find our way back into the Paradise where we “walk with God.”

We therefore resolve that, led by the higher “I” of Christ, we shall go back at evening through our past day, and seek the truths that have revealed themselves to us during the past day, seek to bring home that harvest for our life which has been given to us during the past day.

“And the Lord walked in the garden in the cool of the day.” (Gen. 3:8) We can hold this meditation under the figure that we are walking in Paradise and are eating of the tree of knowledge and of the tree of life. This is sufficient to make the meditation take a quite personal form. We shall see how marvelously such an evening walk with Christ through the past day ennoble our life, even when we learn nothing at all that is individual or new. We receive ever new ideas of what a man may and ought to draw from his life, and what his backward look after death will be. All that is difficult and dark in our life will be redeemed, and will let its secret gold shine forth when it is raised into the bright realm of “truth” and “life.”

It would be a great step forward if in this way we also learned to walk in the garden of humanity’s historical past—I am the way—and there to see the divine truth—I am the truth—and to find the divine life—I am the life. This will be the last history book of humanity: that humanity will be shown how their history has been a way *to* Christ, and therefore, in a higher sense, also a way *with* Christ, in which He was ready to reveal Himself as the

truth, and to give Himself as the life. The gospel and all that which Christ reveals in it as truth and life are as a lamp to this path through the history of humanity.

The earth is the place...in which the ego develops towards freedom, so that it may end in love. "I am the way," says Christ concerning this "development." "And the truth," out of that grows "freedom." "And the life," therein lies "love."

Again, two kinds of Christianity are no longer possible. A Christianity is impossible which looks upon the personal past only as on that which must be forgiven; when all the time truth and life are waiting to be won from it. And a Christianity is impossible which looks only at the "story of salvation" in Palestine as a thing of the past; whereas Christ is the way which must *now* be gone towards truth and light. And in the same way we pass beyond a point of view which prevailed in the East, in which that which is passing in the world was too exclusively seen, and not that which is becoming and remaining; and we also pass beyond a view to which the West is inclined, in which the past is studied and honored as if it itself remained and were valuable to humanity, and as if it were not a way to truth and life.

And now there still remains the present for us to discuss. Often men say: "Holy is the present." This is said in all possible keys. But a practicable way to the inward consecrating of the present is seldom shown. In this sense, we can find no more fruitful saying than the last "I am" of John's Gospel: "I am the true vine and My Father is the husbandman, and ye are the branches." (John 15:1, 5)

This saying presupposes a quite different way of regarding the world from that which we usually have. The history of mankind does not proceed in such a way that from beginning to end there is a continuous development. That is the heathenish error which is fundamental to our age's consciousness of the world. But the earth was the field prepared beforehand; "my Father is the field laborer," says the Greek text of this sublime parable of the history of the world. But one day a seed of light



Fresco, Fra Angelico (ca. 1395-1455), Museo di San Marco, Florence

Sermon on the Mount

While He uttered profound truths in His Sermon on the Mount, Christ, the divine Logos, was the very embodiment of Truth in the man Jesus.

struck down into the field from above, and since then the duty of the earth has been to help this seed of light to unfold itself. And when it is unfolded, then the old dark earth may fall away. Its task is accomplished. In this image we see world history *in truth*. Christ is the seed of light who wills to become the tree of life upon this field of the world.

Thus we understand the saying: "Apart from me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). We become conscious that all we do when out of Christ and without Him is, in the deepest sense, "nothing." It does not come into consideration in respect of the true development of humanity. We become conscious that the real fruits for the development of humanity are only where his life-blood flows: "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be My disciples" (John 15:8).

We become aware that every branch must be purified if it is to bring forth more fruit—the meaning of our sorrows becomes apparent—and that all the branches that do not bring forth fruit must, somehow and sometime, be cast out of the true development of the world (John 15:2) We also become aware that the real life stream in the

vine—the life stream from Christ—is *joy* (John 15: 2) In this joy is strength to bring forth the right fruits. Nietzsche is right in saying that men have rejoiced too little, if one takes this saying of his Zarathustra in such a connection. It is truth—out of the depths of union with Christ there first flows true strength and joy into every moment of the present. And on the other hand, where this strength and joy is come valuable fruits, as if of themselves. The branch need do no more than become permeable by the sap of the vine. This sap will of itself ripen to fruit by the sun of life.

A branch is the most unpretending thing there is, but it is at the same time a precious workshop in which the sap of the vine changes into fruit. The fruit may be much greater and better than the branch, if this fruit is created entirely by the vine—that concerns the vine and the fruit. If one once lives earnestly in this Christlike feeling for life, then one will see how sound it is, how refreshing and how productive of life. That which has come forth out of the vine as fruit will one day become the real fruits of earth's development.

When a man in the course of his daily life remembers often his existence as a branch; when he sees his individual work in this connection with the world—the seed of light in the earth, which must grow to be the tree of life—and brings his life into the ordered scheme of this great connection with the world; when he, wherever he is, seeks to do his work and brings his fruit out of such a union with life; when he thinks thus in a living way of Christ—that he is there only for the sap of life which flows into him through Christ; when he can let the “I am” of Christ really flow through him as a new life sap; then will he be able to live rightly at *every* moment, and his *present* will become *holy*.

One day he will remember the promise of Christ: “I shall no more drink of the fruit of the vine till the day when I drink it new in my Father's kingdom.” And it will seem to him as if he had already entered into the fulfillment of this saying. His new method of work will place him in the beginnings of “the Father's kingdom” and his union with Christ will be a “drinking of the fruit of the vine.” The ego of Christ is a most subtle and a

most noble life sap—the life sap of a new world. And so man will acquire a new view of the present state of the world around him. He will believe that the fruits of Christ are not only there where His name is named, but also there where His life sap flows. And he will acquire the true perception of this sap of life. Therefore he will recognize much to be in connection with Christ which is not known to be such by men. But on the other hand he will have the terrible power of recognizing where fruits are growing which must inevitably go to destruction.

We propose that a man should not only sometimes have such thoughts, but that he should explicitly practice this meditation, at least now and then: that he feels himself as a humble branch of the new vine which the husbandman plants; that he drinks from the vine and thinks of the fruits into which he leads all which he can receive only from the vine, for whose sake he exists.

A false Christianity condemns the present and lives either in the past or in the future. From both we are free—from the Eastern way of living to which the present is nothing, and from the Western way to which it is all.

The future—a resurrection from the grave; the past—a walking in the garden of paradise; the present—a drinking of the fruit of the vine. Under such pictures we hallow time as we have before hallowed space. The darkly flowing river of time becomes a holy stream when we let this sun shine upon it. We can in a spiritual sense do that which the Indian does in outward cult, when he bathes in the holy river Ganges, and purifies himself. We shall have the experience that thus we *redeem time*.

But it will be good if one does not only go through the individual meditations according to one's need, and their character, but if at times one chooses a day, say an early Sunday morning, when one goes through them *all*. When one has previously been through the individual meditations, one need not remain so long over each single one. Then one will discover how entirely new a world is around one. We shall recognize that we are upon the way to a “Christian outlook upon the world,” in a much higher sense than we have understood the phrase before. We shall see that we are everywhere upon the track of high perception, on the path to

the development of the life of perception in the sense of John's Gospel: "This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent"; and on the path to a hallowing of the spiritual being in the sense of the first petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Hallowed be Thy Name." We shall bear this petition about in us differently, illuminated by the content of Christ's announcement: "I have manifested Thy Name unto them."

And at the same time we shall find that we ourselves now receive our real "I." When we pass through the revelation of the "I" of Christ, we see for the first time the full meaning of a holy "I." The present age is sick, simply with the sickness of the ego. We cannot go back to the time before the ego, and we cannot content ourselves with railing against the egoism of our race. We can only go forward to the true ego. The men of the present age must be brought to that which "healeth the self in the depths of the soul," as it says in the Easter prayer of the Act of Consecration of Man.*

Each "I am" contains a healing herb for one sickness of the ego: "I am the bread" gives help against self-love of the ego; "the light" against fear of the ego; "the good shepherd" against weakness of the ego; "the door" against cramping of the ego; "the resurrection" heals numbness of the ego; "the way, the truth and the life" heals impoverishment of the ego; "the true vine" heals self-seeking, self-willed hardening of the ego.

But beyond all these single sicknesses of the ego, concerning which a whole book might be written, when we are living positively in these seven sayings we receive our higher ego, which is entirely a part of Christ and is yet our own Self as we ought to be. Just there is the miracle.

One may also, when in the early hours of Sunday one goes through the seven "I ams," be justified in representing to oneself that one is

*The Act of the Consecration of Man is the Communion Service of the Christian Community, a movement for the renewal of religious life through a living experience of Christ.



Fresco (detail), ca. 1411, Fra Angelico, Museo di San Marco, cell 6, Florence

Transfiguration of Christ

Christ was transfigured by spiritual light on Mount Tabor as the figures of Elijah and Moses appeared on His right and left, respectively. Elijah, who was later reborn as John the Baptist, represents the Way; Moses represents the Truth; and Christ Jesus the Life that transfigures the Mosaic law with Love and reorients the ascetic, anchoritic way to service in community. The artist, a Dominican, also depicts Mary and his order's founder, St. Dominic.

receiving all the seven sacraments spiritually. "I am the way, the truth and the life," that is Baptism. "I am the true vine, ye are the branches," that is Confirmation; "I am the good shepherd," that is Confession; "I am the door," that is Marriage; "I am the bread," that is the Last Supper; "I am the light of the world," that is Consecration of Priests; "I am the resurrection and the life," that is the Last Sacrament.

When we think that the first "I am" speaks of *bread*, and the last of *wine*, we feel that there is a communion in these "I ams," a way of dedication, a sacred service of God, which must be found out, of which only a very little can be said.

"I in the Father and the Father in Me," that is the central proclamation of John's Gospel. It is continued in us when Christ in His high-priestly prayer says, "I in them" (John 17:21-26). "I in the Father," to that we are inwardly trained by the four first "I ams," through which we learn to live in the ego of the Father as in a new space. "The Father in Me—in the ego," that is formed in us by the three last "I ams," when with this new "I" we enter into the new time. One dives deep into the ground of

the world when on all sides, in all four spiritual directions, one meets the face of the Father's "ego," which is everywhere "love." "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1:18). And one "unites with the world's evolving," as it says in the Act of Consecration of Man, when one lets the three last "I ams" grow into reality, and so receives that which can be truly called "peace." And so the seven sayings are united to our basic meditation of peace and love.

When we spoke above of the Indians, we saw that their whole attitude to the world is expressed in the word on which they meditate "a-u-m." A totally different attitude to the world lies in the word "ani," which is the Hebrew for "I." Here also is reality felt, "a," but then it passes—we see the other direction clearly—into the "n," which contains the negation of the reality just given, the opposite negation to that of the Indians. It is no retreat, it is a breaking through. In "i," the sound which expresses the light of the inwardness of the ego, appears the new reality.

The Hebrew says, as it were, to the reality which surrounds him (and that was his difference from the "heathen" around him): "Thou art not that which I seek; I must tear myself away from thee: I must negate thee." In the ego comes a new reality from within. In the Hebrew race especially the "ego" in humanity had to be formed. Still more laboriously, more darkly and more stubbornly does the ego work itself through in the other Hebrew word for "I," "anoki"....

It would be a favorable sign of the reality of our meditation if we learned to say this word "I" with different feelings in everyday life. The evangelist John would not use the word "I" for himself after he had heard it in the mouth of Christ. He calls himself only by a circumlocution "the disciple whom Jesus loved." We live in the time of self-seeking, and of false dark perception. We must redeem this time, and redeem it first in ourselves. Then we learn to speak the word "I" in a new way, with our speech indeed, but above all, with our whole being; to speak it in such a way that Christ is in it with His peace and love. (Continued) □

Rosicrucian Song of the Light

O threefold radiance of the Sun,
O robe of Life divine,
Through whom, o'er all the Universe,
Our triune God doth shine.

O stars and planets and soft moon,
Who traverse heavenly ways,
And with a wide diversity
Reflect the solar rays.

From all the kingdoms of the Earth,
From man and beast and bird,
From tree and plant, from soil and stone,
Acclaiming praise be heard.



Jehovah's rays of red create
All forms that serve and die;
The whirling atoms take new shape,
Drawn by His energy.

Christ's golden rays in matter forge
New vistas for the Light;
Evolving Roses come to birth,
Unfolded through His might.

The Father's rays of blue, in form
The seed of Life bestow,
That, through in-dwelling, spirit may
In conscious wisdom grow.

Accept our worship, God of Light,
From spirit, body, soul;
May all Thy children rise and be
One praising, shining whole.

—Margaret Grant