

logion 24

His disciples said:

“Show us the place where you are. We must seek it.”

He said to them:

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

There is light within a man of light and he shines on the whole world.

If he does not shine, there is darkness.”

Commentary

The question about the place where the Son of Man is to be found corresponds to an essential attitude of Jesus' disciples, for every true disciple is a seeker after the *hidden* inner Messiah. A parallel question—“Rabbi, where do you live?”—is asked in Saint John's Gospel when Andrew and another of the Baptist's disciples become disciples of Jesus.¹ As the evangelist notes, they are *called* at around the tenth hour. In his answer Jesus does not name the place where the Son of Man lives but points to an active and genuine way of finding that dwelling place: *Come and see*.

It is the same with the logion. Faced with the disciples' question, Jesus does not name the place *where he is* but shows how to get there: *come* into yourselves and *you will see*. The Son of Man is a *man of light* that dwells within you. This perception can only be gained by means of an untransferable and inexpressible intuition, yet the light shines on the whole world; and if it does not shine, there is darkness: *If then, the light inside you is darkness, what darkness that will be!*²

Note that this explanation is preceded by a warning often repeated in the Gospel: *He who has ears to hear, let him hear*. This tells us that, folded into the answer, we may find half-

¹ John 1:38-39. Close to the *eleventh* hour, precisely the time when the last workers in the parable were called to the vineyard, those who would then be accounted the *first*. (Matt. 20:1-16)

² Matt. 6:22-23

revealed a deep truth, a whole truth, that had hitherto been wholly a part of the *hidden* heritage.

Jesus never leaves off proclaiming that he, as the Son of Man, is the light of the world, and many are the sayings in the Gospel that include this affirmation. Thus, *I, the light, have come into the world so that whoever believes in me need not stay in the dark any more.*³ In proclaiming this, he emphasizes that the Son of Man not only has the privilege of being light, but that his light spreads everywhere, shining on all those who believe in the inner light of the Son of Man. Jesus explains this over and over, for the very basis of his Good News consists in teaching that, like him and, given the universal nature of the Son of Man, every man shares this privilege of *being light*, even if few believe it. That is why he says *You are the light of the world,*⁴ and *Let your light shine in the sight of men.*⁵ The apostle, being a good follower of Jesus, confirms his word in regard to this capital doctrine: *You are all sons of light and sons of the day.*⁶

As for what that light is, apart from simply being light, the Son of Man: of that we know little, and perhaps little can be known before we ourselves have come to be transformed into light; that being the final accomplishment of the sign asked of this *generation*. Paul tells of the relation between light and knowledge: God, he proclaims, has said *Let there be light shining out of darkness, who has shone in our minds to radiate the light of the knowledge of God's glory.*⁷ By "minds" he means here the center, the very core of our Being, an indefinable *place* at the heart of every man, whence that light blazes. Once recognized, the illumination it gives is the knowledge of God's wisdom. John says something similar in his first epistle, through a very peculiar expression he uses there, one that, moreover, confirms the unifying work of the light in its quality as God's all-enfolding mantle: *if we live our lives in the*

³ John 12:46

⁴ Matt. 5:14

⁵ Matt. 5:16

⁶ 1 Thes 5:5

⁷ 2 Cor. 4-6

*light, as he [God] is in the light, we are in union with one another.*⁸

The evangelist Luke tells how Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, is filled with the Holy Spirit and, in the fine *Benedictus*, prophesies that, *our God will in his tender mercy give his people (the human community) knowledge of salvation, and from on high will bring the rising Sun to visit us.*⁹ The momentous coming of this Light had also been prophesied by Isaiah, for it is a light eternal, unborn, and proper to all times: *The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light.*¹⁰ It is not that the light does not come to the world in every man, for as Jesus, the Son of Man, proclaims: *As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world,*¹¹ but rather that, where a man does not believe in the light, the light that is in him and in every man of the *generation* will not manifest, and there will be only darkness.¹² That is why, in the *Benedictus*, the mercy of our God means that the ways of the Lord can be made straight for the knowledge *borne from on high by the rising Sun*, the true light that is always brought by one born *from above*.

Bear in mind that this *rising Sun*, *this Light from on high*, is none other than the *Anatolé*, the light-bearing star according to the mystical tradition of the Jewish people. We are told that *Anatolé* is one of the titles of the Messiah,¹³ and it takes no great effort of the imagination to identify that *Anatolé* with the star in the sky which, according to the account of the Epiphany in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, went before the mysterious Magi coming from the East *and halted over the place where the child was.*¹⁴

⁸ 1 John 1:7

⁹ Luke 1:77-78

¹⁰ Isai. 9:1

¹¹ John 9:5

¹² Matt.6:22-23

¹³ Luke 1:78

¹⁴ Matt. 2:9

The *child*—this we have already studied—is none other, in terms of the *hidden* aspect of birth in the spirit (which in no way affects the well-known parallel account of Jesus' *manifest* nativity) than recent fruit: awareness of the inner man of light. This star, *Anatolé*, is the light-bringing star that comes to stand above the *child* like a shining crown, fulfilling the messianic promise of the psalm: *you have put a crown of pure gold on his head*.¹⁵ It is the star that reveals to the disciples, and to the *Magi* who have followed it from afar in a more or less metaphorical sky, the sure *place* where the Son of Man is to be found.

All this is what the *full* meaning of the logion shows us: it is necessary to believe that there is light within every man, a pneumatic man of light endowed with the knowledge of God and eternal Life. He is, as John expresses it, the Word, *the true light that enlightens all men*.¹⁶ Nor is there any need to explain where that light dwells, for it will burst into fullness and manifest when a man awakens to faith in his inner seed. Jesus says: *while you still have the light, believe in the light, and you will become sons of light*.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ps. 21:3

¹⁶ John 1:9

¹⁷ John 12:36