

Introduction to



the Gospel of Mark

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GA 124

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These lectures constitute an important chapter in Steiner's commentary on Christianity. They stress the relationship of the Gospel of Mark to the "language of the macrocosm" and cover such topics as the two main streams of post-Atlantean civilization, the tasks of our epoch, the laws of rhythm in the domain of soul and spirit, and much more.

Table of Contents

Editor's Notes

1. A Retrospect
2. Some Practical Points of View
3. Lecture I
4. Lecture II
5. Lecture III
6. Lecture IV
7. Lecture V
8. Lecture VI
9. Lecture VII
10. The Path of Theosophy from Former Ages until Now

Q & A

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Editor's Notes

There are several lectures of Rudolf Steiner's that focus on the Gospel of Mark. After skimming through the lecture series on this subject, I chose this particular series as best suited to serve as an introduction to the Gospel.

The original title of this series is *Excurses on the Gospel of Mark*. The word 'excurses' is indicative of an appendix, which is supplemental to material that came before it. I found it curious, this designation, as these lectures were given in 1910 and 1911, whereas the more complete (formal?) lecture series on the Gospel (*The Gospel of Mark, GA 139*) were given in September of 1912.

-Anthony Kenneth



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A Retrospect

It seems well that on resuming our activities in the Berlin Group we should look back for a little at what has passed through our souls since our work began at this time last year.

You will remember that about a year ago on the occasion of the General Conference of the German Section, I lectured on the "Sphere of the Bodhisattvas." With this lecture we introduced to the world a subject that principally occupied us in our Group-meetings, throughout the following Winter our studies were associated with the Christ-problem, more especially in its connection with the Gospel of Matthew. We have carried these studies further in many ways, particularly in connection with the Gospels of John and of Luke, and when dealing with them we indicated that at some future date we hoped to go more deeply into this Christ-problem in a course of lectures to be associated mainly with the Gospel of Mark.

These studies of the Christ-problem did not consist merely in giving explanations of the Gospels. We spoke most fully, most radically, of what Spiritual Science had to say concerning the events that took place in Palestine. It has to be explained that there are no external, historical records dealing with these events. What is of the deepest importance in the accounts of the Event of Christ is not found in any book or record, but it stands in the eternal spiritual records, and can be deciphered by clairvoyant consciousness in the Akashic Chronicle. We have often made known to you what has been revealed to us there. Our position towards the Gospels is this: we make known what spiritual investigation tells us, and then we compare this with the events related in the Gospels or in other parts of the New Testament. In every case we found that we first learnt to read these documents aright, because before reading them we had penetrated to the secrets connected with the Events of Palestine; that it is precisely because we had investigated these events without having been prejudiced through having previously read any records concerning them, that our appreciation, I may say our reverence, for them was so greatly enhanced.

When we look not only to the nearest, the narrowest and most fleeting interests of our community, but when we recognise that the whole development of modern culture longs for a new understanding of the documents dealing with Christianity, we feel we are summoned by spiritual science not only to satisfy our own understanding regarding the Events of Palestine, but also to translate what we

have to say concerning them into present day language for the sake of all humanity. In order to do this it is not enough that we should confine ourselves to what the present century has contributed towards an understanding of the problem and the figure of Christ. If this satisfied present day demands for knowledge there would not be so many who are, incapable of harmonising their desire for truth with what is taught in Christian circles and has been accepted for centuries, but which contradicts in one way or another what has been imparted to us concerning the Events of Palestine. All this shows that a new understanding and new conclusions with regard to Christian truths are necessary to the education of to-day.

Now among many other means that aid us in deciphering Christian truths there is one that is specially fruitful in our field of research. It consists in our being able to extend our vision, and also our world of feeling and perception beyond the horizon which has limited man's view of the spiritual world in past centuries. How our horizon can be extended can be put before you very simply and intimately in a few words.

In Goethe, to take one of the greatest minds of western civilisation, we have, as we all know, the mind of a Titan; and many of our studies have shown us how deeply the spiritual view entered into his personality. These studies have led us to know how we can rise to spiritual heights by sharing in the composition of Goethe's soul. But however well we may know Goethe, however deeply we may enter into what he has to give us, there is one thing we do not find in him, and this we *must* have if our vision is to be widened in the right way and our horizon expanded to satisfy our most urgent spiritual needs. Nowhere do we find in Goethe any indication that the things we are able to know to-day, dawned in him. These things can become fruitful for us when we accept them. They are ideas concerning man's spiritual development, the reception of which first became possible in the nineteenth century through the liberation of certain spiritual documents containing the fruits (Errungenschaften) of oriental life. From these we receive many ideas that in no way prevent our understanding the problem of Christ, but may, if rightly received, actually lead us to a true and full appreciation of Christ Jesus. Therefore I believe that a study of the Christ-problem cannot be introduced better than by a careful explanation of the mission of those great spiritual individuals who, from time to time, have made a deep impression on evolution, and are described by the name "Bodhisattva," a name derived from oriental philosophy.

Ideas dealing with the Bodhisattvas have not existed for any length of time in the spiritual life of the West, and it is only when we realise what these beings are that we are able to rise to a true understanding of what the Christ has been, is, and can continue to be to mankind.

From this you see how wide is the circle of spiritual development that has to become fruitful to man before he really understands what it is so necessary he should understand concerning the education, culture, and spiritual life within which he lives. From another point of view it is important that we cast our spiritual eyes, when this is possible, over recent centuries and note the difference between a man at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and one of a century earlier; that we realise how very little was known in Europe a hundred years ago of Buddha and Buddhism. This last, if not actually the aim of our endeavours is the impulse and also the object of our present studies, and gives tone to the feeling that fills our souls when stirred by its great spiritual truths. The thing that matters most is not what one or another desires to know, but the warmth of feeling, the power of perception, the nobility of will that rises within our souls when the great truths of humanity strike these souls. More important in our Group than the words themselves is the tone and the waves of feeling that are present when certain words ring through space. These feelings and perceptions are of many kinds. The most important of them that should rise in our souls is that of reverence; such reverence as must needs develop in us towards the knowledge of great spiritual truths; the feeling that the nature of these great truths is such that we must approach them in humble reverence; that we cannot think to grasp such mighty facts with any hurriedly acquired ideas or with a few quickly won conceptions!

I have often made use of the example that we cannot depict a tree graphically by making a picture of it from one side only, but we must walk around it and draw it from various sides. Only by combining these different pictures do we gain a general impression of what the tree is like. This comparison should impress on our souls the way to approach great spiritual facts. We cannot make progress in any real or apparent knowledge of the highest things if we view them from one side only. Whether absolute truth regarding the appearance of anything can or cannot be reached, we should all the same never lose the humble feeling that all our ideas are acquired from one point of view only. When filled with this emotion we gladly and willingly take into ourselves feelings and perceptions from any side that enables us to illumine the great facts of existence from the most varied directions. The age in which we live makes this necessary, and in our time the need will grow ever greater for observing things from every possible side. Therefore we no longer shut ourselves off from other opinions, other paths leading to the highest things, that may differ from those of our own civilisation. Indeed we have endeavoured in recent years, within what Western cultural development had to offer, to uphold those principles that lead to true humility in respect of knowledge. I have never ventured (and indeed this is deeply impressed on my soul, for audacity was never possible in this connection) to present a system or a survey of those great events comprised within the term – the "Christ-Problem." I have always said: "We approach this event now from one point of view," and

again, "We approach it now from another point of view," and have always insisted that the problem is not thereby exhausted, but that our one desire is to carry on the work calmly and patiently.

The reason for studying the different Gospels is that it enables us to consider the Christ-problem from four points of view, and we find in fact that the four Gospels do present us with these four view points, and that in them the maxim is set before us: — Thou shalt not approach this — the mightiest problem — hurriedly, or view it from one side; it must be approached from the four spiritual directions of the heavens at least, and when thou hast approached it from these four heavenly directions which can be named after the four evangelists — Matthew, Mark, Luke and John — thou canst then hope it may gradually draw nearer and nearer to thee. And it will approach thee, so that thou needst never say of thyself, thou art cut off from the greatest of all truths without which the human soul, in its inmost depth, cannot live, neither shalt thou say that any one form of truth which thou hast been able to grasp is the whole truth.

Thus all our studies of the past Winter were intended gradually to arouse a feeling of intellectual modesty. In fact, without such a feeling we cannot advance in spiritual life. Incidentally, everything has been done in these studies to impress repeatedly on you the first requirements for progress in spiritual knowledge, and no one who has followed attentively the lectures given here week by week, can say that we have not constantly pointed out the basic condition of this advance in spiritual knowledge.

Advance in spiritual knowledge is one of the impulses lying at the foundation of our movement. What does advance in spiritual knowledge mean for our souls? It satisfies the deepest, most humanly-worthy longings of our souls, it gives that without which a man who is conscious of his human worth, cannot live. It also gives this knowledge in ways that correspond to the intellectual requirements of the present day. Advance in knowledge brings illumination to us concerning those things which a man cannot investigate with his ordinary senses, but only with those senses which belong to him as a spiritual being, not as a physical being.

The great questions concerning man's position in the physical world and what lies beyond it, the truths concerning life and death: all such questions spring from the deep needs of the human soul. Even if a man from various causes holds aloof from such questions, even if he is able to remain deaf to them for a time, so that he says: — "Science is unable to investigate such matters, the faculties for doing so are wanting in man;" yet the need of finding answers to these questions never leaves him permanently, neither does the true nature of his feelings towards such questions as the following: —

Whence comes that something in a child and in a growing youth, that is capable of education? Where does that go which is hidden within our souls when the bodily nature begins to fall and die? In short, the question as to man's connection with the spiritual world is *the* great question, and springs from the most human of desires. A man cannot live if these questions remain unanswered, unless he turns a deaf ear to them. But because they spring from so deep a need, because the soul cannot live in peace and contentment if it does not receive an answer to them, it is only natural that he should answer them in a somewhat trivial and comfortable manner. In spite of the fact that these questions (though denied by some) have to-day become burning questions for many, how numerous are the paths they point to us! One can say without exaggeration that of all the paths that open before man to-day when these great and puzzling questions arise within him, the way of spiritual science is the most difficult. Truly, we cannot say otherwise!

There may be many among you who consider some much discussed science difficult; who perhaps do not venture on it because they shrink from all that must be overcome if it is to be gone into thoroughly. It may seem that the path that we call the path of spiritual science is easier than the path leading to mathematics, to botany, or any other branch of natural science. All the same, if followed earnestly, this path is more difficult than that leading to any other science. We say this without any exaggeration. Why is it easier for you? Only because it stimulates the interest of every soul with tremendous force, and because it deals with what lies nearest to each. It is the most difficult of all the paths by which a man can enter the spiritual world to-day, yet one thing we must not forget: this path can lead us to what is highest in the life of the soul! Is it not natural that what leads to the highest should also be the most difficult? Yet: we must never allow ourselves to be frightened by the difficulties of the path, nor hide from our souls the necessity of these difficulties on the path of spiritual science.

Among the many necessities of this path, one is always specially mentioned here: that he who decides to follow this path must, in the first place, accept seriously what spiritual investigation has so far been able to offer concerning the secrets and facts of the spiritual world. We touch here on a very necessary chapter of our spiritual-scientific life. How many say light-heartedly: — "People speak here of a science that is unascertainable, of spiritual facts that one or another investigator, one or another initiate, has been able to elucidate or investigate. Would it not be much better if they simply showed us the way so that we might ourselves quickly enter that region from which one can see into the spiritual world? Why do they always say — 'This is how it looks, this is what one or another has seen!' Why do they not tell us how we can attain this quickly for ourselves?" It is for very good reasons that the facts investigated concerning the spiritual world are first communicated in a general way before entering into what one might call "the methods of soul-training" which can lead the soul into spiritual regions. For something quite definite is gained by our applying ourselves reverently to the

study of what the spiritual investigator has revealed from spiritual worlds. We have often said that the facts of the spiritual world must be sought and found by means of clairvoyant consciousness; but once these facts are discovered, once trained clairvoyance has observed them and communicated them to others, then these communications must be such that everyone, without having passed through any clairvoyant development, can test them, and can recognise the truth of them by his own unprejudiced logic and the feeling for truth that is in every soul. No true investigator of spiritual things, no man endowed with true clairvoyant consciousness, would communicate the facts of the spiritual world except in such a way that those who desired could test them without clairvoyance. But he would have to communicate these facts so that he conveyed the full value and importance of them to the human soul.

What value have the communications and presentations of spiritual facts to a human soul? The value is this; that the man who knows "how things are seen in the spiritual world" can order his life, his thoughts, feelings, and perceptions according to his relationship towards the spiritual world. In this sense every communication of spiritual facts is important – even if he to whom they are communicated, and who receives them, cannot himself investigate them clairvoyantly. Indeed, even for the investigator these facts first acquire "human worth" when he has brought them down into a sphere where he can express them in a form accessible to all. However much a clairvoyant may be able to investigate and see in the spiritual world, what he sees is of no value to him and to others so long as he is unable to bring it down into the ordinary sphere of men, and to express it in thought that can be grasped by sound logic and a natural feeling for truth. The clairvoyant must in fact first understand the matter himself if it is to be of any use to him. Its value begins where the possibility of logical proof begins.

We can prove what has just been said in a double way. Among the many valuable things connected with the spiritual truths and spiritual communications which a man can receive on the physical plane between birth and death, those without doubt are the most important which he can take with him through the gates of death. Or let us put it as a question in this way: – "How much remains to a man of all he has received here, and been able to make his own? What remains of all he has learnt concerning the spiritual world while leading an anthroposophical life?" Just as much remains to him as he has been able to understand, as he has been able to translate into the ordinary language of human consciousness.

Picture to yourselves a man who has perhaps made quite exceptional discoveries in the spiritual world through purely clairvoyant observation, but who has neglected to clothe these observations in language suited to the ordinary sense of truth of any age. Do you know what would happen to him? All his discoveries

would be wiped out after death! Just as much of value would remain as it was possible for him to translate or formulate into any language that corresponded to a sound sense for truth.

It is certainly of the greatest importance that there should be clairvoyants capable of bringing over communications from the spiritual world and handing them on to others. This brings blessing to our day, for our age has need of wisdom and cannot advance unless it gets it. Such communications are necessary to the culture of the present time. If not recognised to-day, in fifty or a hundred years it will be the universal conviction of all mankind that culture cannot advance but must perish unless convinced of spiritual wisdom.

One thing is necessary for man if evolution is to advance – this is the acceptance by him of spiritual truth. Even if all spheres were conquered and intercourse with them established, humanity would still be faced with the death of civilisation if no spiritual wisdom had been acquired. This is undoubtedly true. The possibility of looking into the spiritual world must exist.

The facts of spiritual wisdom mean more to the individual after death than human progress upon earth. We must therefore ask in order to form a right conception of this – What has the clairvoyant to tell of the things he has investigated and brought into line with truth and sound logic? What *more* in the way of fruits does a man possess after death through having been able to look into the spiritual world, than those have whose karma in this incarnation makes it impossible for them to do so, and who therefore have to hear the results of spiritual research from others? How do spiritual truths perceived by an Initiate differ from those heard by a man who has only heard them, and not himself looked into the spiritual world? Does the Initiate understand them better than those to whom they have only been imparted?

As regards mankind in general perception of the spiritual world is of higher worth than non-perception. For one who is able to look into the spiritual world has intercourse with that world, he can teach not only men, but others, spiritual beings, and so further their development. Clairvoyant consciousness has therefore a quite special value, but for individuals *knowledge* only has value; and in respect of individual worth the clairvoyant does not differ from anyone else who only receives communications, and is himself unable to look into the spiritual world in any particular incarnation. Whatever we have received of spiritual truth is fruitful after death, no matter if we have beheld these truths ourselves or not.

In stating this, one of the greatest moral laws of the spiritual world and one most worthy of reverence is placed before our souls. Our present day morality is perhaps not fine enough fully to understand the ethics of this. Individuals gain no advantage through their Karma having made it possible for them to look into

spiritual worlds, thereby gratifying their egoism, Everything we strive to gain for ourselves in our individual life must be gained on the physical plane, and in forms that accord with the physical plane. If a Buddha or a Bodhisattva stands higher among the hierarchies of the spiritual world than other human individuals this is because of his having passed through so many and varied incarnations on earth.

What I mean by the higher ethics, the higher moral teaching given out to us from the spiritual world is this: — No one should think for a moment that he gains an advantage over his fellow men through the development of clairvoyance. This is not at all the case. He gains no advantage in any egoistic sense. All that he gains is that he can be better than others. Anything that serves egoism is absolutely excluded from spiritual fields, it is held to be immoral. A man gains nothing for himself through spiritual illumination. What he gains is only as one who serves the world in general, not himself, and only in so far as he gains it also for others.

The position of the spiritual investigator with regard to his fellowmen is this: — If they wish to hear of the discoveries he has made and to accept them, they can make the same progress through these discoveries as he has made himself, they can advance individually as far as he has advanced, which means: — spiritual things are of value only in the Spirit of humanity as a whole, not in any egoistic spirit.

There is a realm where a man is not moral merely from preference, but because immorality or egoism would not help. In this case it is easy to see something else, namely, that it is dangerous to enter the spiritual realm unprepared. Nothing of an egoistic nature will ever be won for the life after death through leading a spiritual life, but a man might easily *desire* something egoistic for this life on the physical plane through spiritual development. Although nothing of an egoistic nature can be gained for the spiritual world things can be desired which are in a sense egoistic.

Most of those who pursue a certain higher development will probably say: — "It is self-understood that I should endeavor to overcome egoism before gaining entrance to the spiritual world." But I beg of you to believe, in no region of human development is deception so great as in that where men say — "I strive against egoism!" It is easy to say it, but whether one can do it, can really accomplish it, is quite another question. It is another question in the first place, because when we begin to practise certain soul activities that can lead us into the spiritual world, we meet ourselves in our true form. There are very few things which are experienced in true form in the outer world. We live interwoven in a net of ideas, will-impulses, moral perceptions, and customary actions that have their rise in the surrounding world, and we seldom ask: — "How would I act, how would I think regarding any matter if I did not feel constrained by my upbringing to think and act in such and such a way?"

If we answered these questions we would see that we are ordinarily very much worse than we suppose. Now, the result of carrying out those exercises that are intended to help us to rise to the spiritual world is that we outgrow all our surroundings, all that custom and education have woven round us. We become more sensitive, more soulful and spiritual, and ever more and more naked. The veils with which we have clothed ourselves, and to which we cling with our ordinary ideas and actions, fall from us. Hence we have the quite ordinary result of which I have often spoken: — Before beginning his spiritual development a man is perhaps a quite decently behaved person, who does not make any very stupid blunders in life. Then his spiritual development begins. While until now he was perhaps quite a modest man he now becomes arrogant, and does all sorts of stupid things. When spiritual development begins he loses his balance and his bearings. The reason for this is best seen by those who are familiar with the spiritual world. Two things are necessary in order to know where we are with regard to what approaches us from the spiritual world so that balance is maintained. We must not be made giddy by what comes to us from the spiritual world. In physical life our organism shields us from giddiness through the "sense of balance of which you have heard in anthroposophical lectures, the static-sense. And just as this gives to physical man power to hold himself upright (for if his organism does not function correctly a man becomes giddy and he falls down) there is something also in spiritual life by which he can regulate his position to the world. This he must be able to do. "Spiritual giddiness" results from the falling away from him of what formerly gave support, those acquired perceptions, all that is brought about in us by the inter-blending activities of the external world. We must now learn to depend on ourselves. It is easy for us to become arrogant when these outer supports fall away. Pride is situated in us naturally; only, till now it was not so apparent. How can we attain spiritual balance so that this giddiness does not occur? By devoting ourselves with patience and perseverance to what spiritual investigation has discovered and succeeded in putting into words that agree with the ordinary formula of logical veracity. It is not from choice that I emphasize again and again the need of studying what we call spiritual science or anthroposophy. I lay stress on it because it is not possible by any other means to acquire the solid supports necessary to a spiritual development. The diligent and earnest acceptance of the results of spiritual science is the antidote to spiritual giddiness and insecurity.

Many a one has fallen into spiritual insecurity through carrying out his development incorrectly; we know that though such a one may seem to have been very diligent, this is because he has failed to acquire certain things that flow from the well-head of spiritual science. This is why the facts of spiritual science should be studied from every side, and why all through last winter, while desiring ultimately to bring home to you the importance of the Event of Christ to man we

returned ever and again to deal with the fundamental conditions of spiritual progress. A balanced soul is necessary to a man's progress; but other things are also necessary.

While the soul acquires certainty through the study of spiritual science something else brings us what is equally necessary. This is a certain degree of spiritual strength and courage. The courage necessary to spiritual progress is not required of us in ordinary life for this reason, that in ordinary life our innermost being is embedded in our physical and etheric body from the time we waken until we fall asleep, and in the night we can do nothing, we cannot spoil anything. Supposing an unevolved man were able to be active during sleep he could do a great deal of harm. But the forces active on our physical and etheric bodies, making us conscious — that is thinking and feeling men — are not the only forces at work in us. Other forces are also active there, forces on which divine spiritual Beings have worked all through the Saturn, Sun and Moon periods, and on into our own Earthly period. Here forces from higher realms are continually at work maintaining us. When we waken and draw within the physical and etheric bodies we give ourselves over immediately to these Divine spiritual forces which, for our welfare and blessing, guide and control our physical and etheric bodies from morning till evening. Thus the whole spiritual universe works within us. We can injure it in many ways, but can do very little to improve it.

Now you must realise that all spiritual development depends on our inner being — our astral body and ego — becoming free, that we become able to see, that is learn to become consciously clairvoyant of that which lives unconsciously within us from the time we fall asleep till we waken; and because it lives there unconsciously, can cause no harm. All the strength, all the power that is ours, through our being taken in hand on waking by what is securely bound to our physical and etheric bodies, falls away from us when we become independent of these bodies and begin to be clairvoyantly aware. All the strength and power of the world remains outside us. We have withdrawn from the powers which make us strong and provide us with a shield against the influences of the outer world. We have withdrawn from these supporting powers. The world, however, remains as it is, and because this is so we are faced with the whole power, the whole impact of the surrounding world. The strength we otherwise received directly from our physical body and etheric body must now be within us, so that we can endure and withstand the impact of the world. We must develop this power in our ego and astral body. This is done by following the rules you have received, and which are found in my book, "Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and how to attain it." These rules are calculated to give that inner strength which formerly was imparted to us by higher Beings, and which fails when the external supports which enabled us to withstand the impact of the world fail, when we have ourselves discarded the support provided by our physical and etheric bodies.

Those who have not made themselves inwardly strong enough to be able to replace the supports laid aside with their physical and etheric bodies, by carrying out a true and serious soul-training, those, who above all, have not purified themselves from the qualities of the outer world we describe as "immoral," may certainly acquire faculties which enable them to some extent to see into the spiritual world. But what is the result? They become what is called "hypersensitives," they become super-sensitive, as if attacked from every side; they cannot endure what approaches them on all hands. One of the most important facts we have to recognise when striving for progress in spiritual knowledge is that we must strengthen ourselves inwardly by developing the noblest qualities of the soul.

What are these qualities of which we have been speaking and towards which we must strive?

As it is impossible to live in the spiritual world under the brand of selfishness, it is only natural that the banishment of egoism — of everything of the nature of "self" that would find shelter behind what is spiritual — must form the preparation for spiritual life. The more earnestly this maxim is accepted, the better it is for spiritual progress. It cannot be accepted too earnestly.

Anyone concerned with such things often hears it said: — "I have not done this from egoism!" But when these words are about to pass a man's lips he should pause, he should not allow them to pass, he should rather say to himself: — Thou art really not in a position to say thou canst do something without a trace of egoism. This would be better, because more truthful, and truth in respect of self-knowledge is most important. In no domain does falsehood wreck such vengeance as in the domain of spiritual life. It were better for a man there to lay on himself the command to be truthful than speak in a vague way of "not being egoistic!" It would be better to be truthful and say: — "I acknowledge my egoism," thus showing his desire at least to overcome it.

I can best express what is connected with the idea of spiritual truth in the following way. One might easily be of the opinion: — "There are people who tell of all kinds of things they have seen and experienced in the higher worlds; this is then spread abroad and is known by others. If one realises that these things are not true, ought one not to use every possible means to contradict them?" Certainly, there are points of view from which such contradiction is necessary. But for those, who as spiritual men are only concerned with the truth, there is always another thought, namely this: — Of the things brought from the spiritual world, only those that are true flourish and bear fruits for the world; what is untrue is most certainly unfruitful.

Expressed more trivially we might say: — However much people lie with regard to spiritual matters these lies have very short legs. The people who spread these lies have to acknowledge that nothing really fruitful comes from them. Truth alone bears fruits in the spiritual realm. This is where our individual spiritual development begins, where we realise and acknowledge our true position. That truth alone is fruitful — that it alone has power to affect anything, must dwell as vital impulse in all spiritual, in all occult movements. Truth is proved by its fruitfulness and by the blessings it brings to man. Untruths and lies are unfruitful. They have but one result which I only hint at, but cannot deal further with to-day — they react most powerfully upon those who originate them. We shall deal with the meaning of this important statement some other time.

As I said, I wished to-day to glance backwards over the work done during the past year; to recall the tone which as feeling-content filled and resounded in our souls.

In speaking of the work carried on outside our own group during the past year I may perhaps mention my own share which reached its culmination in the Rosicrucian Mystery Play we produced in Munich, "Die Pforte der Einwerhung," the "The Portal of Initiation." We shall speak at our next group-meeting of what was then attempted, at present I only wish to say that it was then possible to express in a more artistic, more individual form, what had otherwise been said in a more general way. When speaking here or elsewhere of the conditions of spiritual life we speak of these as they are right for every soul. But in doing so it is necessary to keep in view that each man is an independent Being, and each soul must be considered individually. This is why we were obliged to depict one soul in "The Portal of Initiation." Therefore you must look on this Rosicrucian Mystery not as a hook of instruction, but as an artistic presentation of the preparation for initiation of one man.

We are not concerned here with the way this or that man progresses, but with the progress of him who in the play is called "Johannes Thomasius," that is with the very individual form the preparation for initiation took in a particular man.

Thus, by approaching nearer to truth, we have arrived at two distinct points of view. First, where we described the whole course of progress, and then that where we penetrated to the very core of an individual soul. All the time we were inspired by the thought that we must draw near, and patiently await the truth from many sides, until these different aspects of the truth were linked together into a single perception. This attitude of reserve in respect of knowledge we desire most especially to acquire. Never let it be said that man cannot experience truth. He can experience it! Only he cannot know the whole truth all at once, but only one side of it. This makes one humble. True humility is a feeling that must be

developed here within our group, so that from here it may pass out into the general culture of our day, and there make its influence felt. Our age has need of great modesty in all its activities.

In the spirit of this impulse we shall continue the work of explaining the Christ-problem so that here also we may experience how modesty in respect of knowledge (*Erkenntnisbescheidenheit*) [Erkenntnis is better understood as cognition. Knowledge in and of itself is useless unless understood i.e. by conscious intellectual activity. -ed.] can be attained, and may thereby progress ever further in the experiencing of truth.



Some Practical Points of View

In the last lecture we tried to present a retrospect not only of the content of our studies during the past year, but also of the true meaning – the inner spirit of these studies. In doing so we showed that the spirit which fills our souls when considering the Christ-problem from all possible sides must permeate our whole movement, all our spiritual efforts. We realise that we have been able to grasp one subject from so many different aspects because, in striving after knowledge, we have ever cultivated true modesty with regard to this knowledge. We should like for a moment to speak somewhat more exactly about humility in respect of knowledge.

I have often said that we can only arrive at a true conception of any object when this is viewed from different aspects, that only when these different views are placed side by side is a true picture of the object obtained. Even in ordinary observation we must go all round an object in order to form a comprehensive conception of it. If anyone said that it was possible to grasp an object at a single glance, from one point of view in the spiritual world, he would be much mistaken. Many human errors spring from failing to recognise this. In the accounts given by us of the Event of Palestine great care has been taken that thoroughness in this respect should not be relaxed. We have four accounts of this event, the accounts of the four Evangelists. Those who do not know that in spiritual life an object, being, or event, must be observed from different sides (for people approach such things without much thought) see nothing more in this fact than the possibility of apparent contradictions between the Evangelists. We have repeatedly pointed out that the accounts of the four Evangelists have to be regarded as giving four different aspects of the one mighty Event of Christ, and that they must be compared one with another as we compare four pictures of the same object taken from different sides. If we proceed carefully in this way as we have already tried to do in respect of the Gospels of Matthew, of John, and Luke, and as we hope later to do in respect of the Gospel of Mark, it is seen that the four accounts of the event of Palestine agree in the most perfect way. Thus, in the very fact that there are four Gospels, a great lesson is given showing the necessity of a many sided view if the truth is to be reached.

I have often spoken of the possibility of there being different opinions held by different individuals concerning truth. You will recall how at our general meeting last year I supplemented what is generally called "Theosophy" by another view which I described as the "Anthroposophical view," and explained how this was

related to Theosophy. I showed that there is an ordinary science built on facts and the intelligent comprehensions of facts as revealed to the senses, this when it deals with mankind is called "Anthropology." It contains everything that can be discovered and investigated by means of the senses. It therefore studies the human organisms as revealed by the instruments and methods of natural science. It studies, for instance, the relics of an earlier humanity, the utensils and instruments of civilisations that have remained hidden within the earth, and seeks from these to form some idea of how the human race has developed. It studies further those stages of development found in savage or uncivilised peoples; and from the conclusions arrived at traces the stages civilised peoples have passed through in former ages. In this way Anthropology forms its conceptions of what man has experienced up to the present stage of development. Much more could be said regarding the nature of Anthropology. I have compared it with a man who learns of a country by walking about on the level, observing the features of the land, its towns, forests, fields, etc., and describing these as seen from this standpoint.

Now mankind can be observed from a different standpoint — theosophical. All Theosophy begins by defining man, by speaking of his being or nature. If you study my "Outline of Occult Science" you will see that everything is summed up and reaches its climax in the description of the being of man himself. If Anthropology can be compared with a man who gathers facts and tries to understand them by walking about on the level, Theosophy can be compared with the observer who climbs a mountain in order to observe the surrounding country from its summit. Much that is spread out on the plain will then fade and only certain features remain. So it is with spiritual observation, with Theosophy. The point of view it takes regarding spiritual matters is a higher one. It follows that many things seen from this standpoint, and many of the ordinary human activities met with in daily life fade away, just as villages and towns vanish when seen from a mountain top.

What I have just said may perhaps not seem very obvious to a beginner in Theosophy. For what such a beginner first learns concerning the nature of man, concerning the different principles of his being, physical body, etheric body, astral body, etc., he tries to understand and form a conception of, but at first he is far from the greater difficulties which face him when he advances further in the acquisition of Theosophical truths. The further one advances the more one realises how infinitely difficult it is to find a connection between what has been gained above, on the spiritual mountain top of Theosophy, and what emerges in daily life as characteristic human feelings, ideas, etc.

We might ask: — Why do Theosophical truths seem obvious and right to many in spite of their not being able to prove what is told them from the spiritual mountain tops, or by what they have themselves seen? This is because the human soul is really designed for truth, not for untruth; it is so organised that it feels it

natural when anything true is said. There is a feeling for truth in man; and he should realise the infinite value of this feeling. This is especially the case in our day, for the very reason that the spiritual heights from which the necessary truth can alone be seen are so infinitely high. If people had first to climb these heights they would have to travel a long way in spiritual experience, and those unable to do so would know nothing of the value of these truths for human life. But every soul, are these truths are imparted, can realise them and make them its own.

What is the position of a soul that receives these truths compared with one able to discover them for itself? This can be shown by a quite trivial example, but however trivial it means more than at first appears. Everyone can pull on a boot, but not everyone can make a boot; for this a bootmaker is necessary. What a man receives through the boot does not depend on whether he can himself make it or not, but on whether he makes use of it in the right way. This can be compared exactly with the spiritual truths given to us by spiritual science. We are summoned to make use of them, even though we are not able to discover them for ourselves. And when through our own natural sense of truth we accept and make use of them, they serve us for the directing of our whole lives; through them we know that we are not confined to life between birth and death, that we bear within us a spiritual man, that we pass through repeated earthly lives, and so on. We can make use of these truths. They serve us. Just as a boot protects us from cold, so these truths shield us from spiritual cold, from spiritual poverty. For it is a fact that we are chilled and impoverished spiritually when we only think and feel those things that have reference to the external world of the senses. We must allow that the truths presented to us by those who can bring them down from a higher standpoint can be of service to all, though there may perhaps be only a few who can travel the spiritual path described in recent lectures.

Now every glance into the ordinary world around us — and which when it deals with man is also the concern of Anthropology — shows us how this world is itself the revealer of a world lying behind it, a world that can be seen from the spiritually higher standpoint of Theosophy. Thus even the world of the senses can reveal another world to us when we pass on to its interpretation, when we not only receive the facts it presents to us with our understanding, but begin to interpret these facts. If we cannot see as far over the fields of the sense world as Theosophy can, yet we can stand on the mountain side where the various objects are not absolutely indistinct and some prospect is possible. This standpoint in respect to spiritual things we have called Anthroposophy, and in doing so have shown that there are three ways of considering man — the anthropological, the anthroposophical, and the theosophical.

We hope this year, in connection with the General Assembly, to give lectures on "Psychosophy," these are important in other ways from those given on "Anthroposophy"; I will then show how the human soul can interpret things for

itself from its own impressions and experiences, and can participate in spiritual life in a similar way as in Anthroposophy. And in a future course of lectures on "Pneumatosophy" I will bring these lectures to a conclusion so that those dealing with Anthroposophy and with Psychosophy will flow again into Theosophy. All this is for the purpose of evoking in you a sense of the manifold nature of truth. The experiences of one who seeks earnestly for truth is this: — The further he goes the humbler he becomes, and also the more cautious in translating the truths gained at a higher level into words suited to ordinary life. Although, as was stated in the last lecture, these truths are really only valuable when so translated, it must be realised that the task of recalling and translating what has been seen is one of the most difficult in the work of spiritual science. To make what is seen on spiritual heights so clear to the understanding, that sound logic and a healthy sense of truth can accept and understand them presents the very greatest difficulties.

I must lay stress again and again on the fact that in the activities of our group we are especially concerned with the creation of this feeling for, and understanding of, truth. We do not concern ourselves only with the comprehension of what is communicated to us from the spiritual world, it is far more important that we should experience it sympathetically through feeling, and by this means acquire those qualities that should be possessed by all who strive earnestly in the theosophical sense.

Looking at the world that surrounds us we acknowledge that on every side it presents to us the external expressions of an inner spiritual world. For us to-day this is a worn out saying. Just as the human countenance expresses what is passing in a man's soul, so the changing face of the external world can be likened to the play of expressions on the countenance of a living, spiritual world behind the sense world; and we first understand physical events aright when we see in them the expressions of a spiritual world. If a man has not yet been able to reach those heights whence spiritual vision is possible by following his own path of knowledge, he has at least the physical world before him, and can ask himself: — Is not confirmation given me through the evidences of my own senses of what is imparted to me as the result of spiritual vision?

This search for evidence is always possible, but it must be carried out not lightheartedly but with precision. — If you have followed different lectures given by me on spiritual science and have read my "Outline of Occult Science" you will realise that at one period of the earth's development the earth was united with the sun, that these formed one globe; the earth only separated from the sun later. If you remember all you have heard or read you must allow that the animal and plant forms found on the earth to-day are the further development of those that existed at the time when the earth and sun were one. But just as the animal forms of to-day are suited to the present conditions of the earth, so the animal forms of

that far off time must have been suited to the planetary body which was then both sun and earth. It follows from this that the animal forms that have remained over from these times have not only remained over, but are the continuation of creatures that existed formerly. There are, for example, animals that still have no eyes, for eyes only have meaning when there is light, such light as streams to earth from the sun when it is outside. Thus among the various creatures of the animal kingdom we find those that have formed eyes after the sun separated from the earth, and also those that are relics of the time when the earth was still united with the sun — that is animals without eyes. Such animals would naturally belong to the lowest types, and so they do. We find it stated in popular books that the possession of eyes began at a certain stage of development. This bears out what spiritual science tells us.

We are able in this way to picture the world around us, in which we ourselves are placed, as the facial expression of the living, weaving life of the spirit. If we merely, considered the physical world, without it revealing to us how it points to a spiritual world, we would never feel the urge, the longing to develop towards that world. Some day a longing for what is spiritual will be aroused in us by the surrounding world itself, some day the spirit must stream down from the spiritual realms as though a door or window that has opened into our everyday world. When will this take place? When does spiritual illumination stream directly into us? It takes place — and you have heard this in many lectures from me and others — when we are in the position to experience our ego.

The moment we experience our ego, we experience something which is directly related to the spiritual world. But what we experience is at the same time infinitely feeble; it is but a single point amid all the phenomena of nature, the single point which we express by the little word "I." This word certainly describes something that was originally spiritual, but a spirituality that has dwindled to a single point. All the same what does this shrunken spiritual spark teach us? We cannot learn more of the spiritual world through the experience of our own ego than this ego-point contains, unless we progress to interpretation. But this point possesses what is still more important, namely, through it we are told *how* we are to know, when we seek to know the spiritual world.

What is the difference between the experiences of the ego and all other experiences? The difference is that we are ourselves within the ego-experiences. All other experiences approach us from outside; we are not ourselves within them. Someone might say here: — "But my thoughts, my will and desires, my preceptions, do these not live within me?" A man can convince himself, through very slight awareness of self, how little he is able to accomplish in respect of dwelling within his will. We imagine that the will can be recognised as that which urges us, as if we were not ourselves within it, but as if in our actions we were compelled by someone or something. This is the case also as regards our

perceptions, and as regards the greater part of what people think in daily life. We are not really within these. How little we are within our thoughts in ordinary life is seen when we carefully investigate how much ordinary thought is dependent on education, and on what we have acquired at one time or another, and on surrounding conditions. This is why the ordinary content of human thinking; feeling and will varies so much in different nations and at different epochs. One thing only is the same. — One thing exists everywhere among men, and must be the same in every nation in all parts of the earth and in every human association — this is the experiencing of the single point, the ego.

We may now ask: — What does the experiencing of the ego-point mean? This is not such a simple matter as you might suppose. One might easily think, for example, that one experiences the ego itself. But this is not the case at all. Man does not really experience his ego. What then does he experience? He really experiences a *concept* of the ego, a *percept* of it. If the experiencing of the ego was clearly understood by us, it would present something that reached to infinity, that spread out on all sides. If the ego were unable to confront itself, to see itself as an image is seen in a mirror — though this image is only experienced for a moment — man could not experience his own ego, he could form no conception of it. This is man's first experience of the ego, it has to suffice him, for it is precisely this conception that differs from all other conceptions. It differs from them in this, that other conceptions resemble their original, they cannot differ from their original; but when the ego forms a conception of itself it is concerned with itself alone, and the conception is but what remains behind of the ego-experience. It is like a checking or blocking of it, as if we would check it in order to turn it back on itself, and in this checking the ego is confronted by the reflected image of itself which resembles the original. This is what occurs at the experiencing of the ego.

We can therefore say: — We recognise the ego in the conception of it (*Ich-vorstellung*). But this ego conception differs considerably from all other conceptions, from all other experiences. It differs from them profoundly. For all other conceptions and all other experiences we require something of the nature of an organ. This is clearly seen in respect of sense-perception. In order to have the conception colour we require eyes and so on; it is clear to anyone that in the ordinary perception of the senses an organ is necessary. You might think that no organ was required to perceive what is intimate to your own inner Being, but even in this you can convince yourselves by simple means that organs are necessary. This is dealt with more particularly in my book "Anthroposophy"; here opportunity is given to approach by theosophical methods what there is stated in a manner more suited to the generality. Let us suppose the following — at some period of your lives you grasp a thought or idea. You understand the idea that comes to you. By what means do you understand it? Only through other ideas that you have previously accepted. You realise this because you observe that one man comprehends a new idea that comes to him in one way, another in another

way. This is because one man has within him a greater, another a smaller sum of ideas which he has assimilated. The material of old ideas is within us and confronts the new as the eye confronts the light. Out of our own old ideas a kind of "idea-organ" is constructed, and what we have not constructed of this in our present incarnation must be sought in some former one. There it was built up, and we are able to confront the new ideas that come to us with an "organ of ideas." We require an organ for all the experiences that come to us from the outer world, especially if these are of a spiritual nature. We never stand spiritually naked as it were before what comes to us from the outer world; but are ever dependant on what we have become. Only in a single case do we confront the outer world directly, namely, when we attain ego perception (Ich-wahrnehmung). The ego is present, even when we sleep, but perception of it must always be aroused anew, it must be roused anew each morning when we wake. Even supposing We journeyed in the night to Mars, where our surroundings would be quite different from what they are on earth, yet ego-perception would remain the same! This latter under all conditions take place in the same way because no external organ is required for it — not even an "organ of ideas." What confronts us here is a direct conception (Vorstellung) of the ego; a conception or perception (Wahrnehmung) certainly, but in its true form. Everything else comes before as a picture seen in a mirror, and is restricted by the form of the mirror. Ego-perceptions come before us absolutely in their true form.

Put in another way one might say: — When realising things with the ego, we are ourselves within them; they cannot possibly be outside of us. We now ask ourselves: — How do individual ego-conceptions or ego-perceptions differ from all other perceptions by the ego? They are distinguished by the direct impression they make on the ego, no other perceptions make this direct impression. But we receive pictures of all that surrounds us; and these in a certain sense can be compared with ego-perceptions. Everything is changed by the ego into an inner experience. The outer world must become our conception if it is to have any meaning or value for us. We form true pictures of the surrounding world, which then continue to live in the ego no matter through which of the sense-organs they have come to us. We smell a substance when we pass it by, and though we do not come in direct contact with it we bear an image of it within us. In the same way we bear within us the image of colours we have seen, and retain pictures of them. The ego preserves such experiences. But if we wish to describe the characteristic feature of these images we must say — it is that they come to us from outside. All the pictures we have been able to unite with our ego, so long as we are in the world of the senses, are the relics of impressions we have received by means of the senses.

One thing the sense-world cannot give us — Ego-perception! This arises in us spontaneously. Thus in ego-perception we have a picture that rises of itself, however closely it may be confined to one point.

Think now of other pictures being added to these, pictures that do not rise through stimulation of the senses, but that rise freely in the ego (as ego-conceptions do), and are therefore formed in the same manner as the ego-conception. These arise in what we call the "Astral world." There are picture-concepts which arise in the ego without our having received any impression from the outer world.

How do these inner experiences differ from those other pictures we received from the sense-world? We receive pictures of the sense-world by having come in contact with that world; these then become inner impressions, but impressions which have been stimulated from outside.

What are those experiences of the ego which are not directly stimulated by the outer world? We have these in our feelings, our wishes, impulses, instincts and the like. These are not stimulated by the outer world. Even if we do not stand within our feelings, wishes and impulses etc., by means of the senses as already described, yet we must allow an element does enter into our inner feelings, impulses, and desires. In what way do these differ from the sense-pictures we bear within us as a result of what our senses have perceived? You can feel this difference. Pictures received through the senses quietly rest within us, and we try to retain faithful reproductions of them once we have realised our connection with the outer world. But our impulses, desires and instincts are active in us, they represent a force. Though the outer world has no part in the rise of astral pictures, yet the fact of their appearing denotes a certain force. For what is not set going [driven] (getrieben) is not there, it cannot arise.

In sense-pictures the "initial force" is the impression received from the outer world. In astral-pictures this force is what lies at the root of desires, impulses, feelings, etc. Only, in life as it is to-day, man is shielded from developing a force in his feelings and desires sufficiently strong to evoke pictures — pictures that would be experienced in the same way as those of the "I" itself.

The most marked feature of the human soul to-day is this powerlessness of its instincts and desires to attain to forming pictures of what the ego places before it. When the ego is confronted with the strong forces of the outer world it is moved to form pictures. When it lives within itself, it has, in the normal man, but one opportunity of perceiving an emerging picture; that is when this picture is the picture of the "I" itself.

Instincts and desires do not work with sufficient strength to form pictures similar to this single ego-experience. If they did they would have to acquire a quality which every external sense-perception has. This quality is of great moment. All sense-perceptions do not grant us the pleasure of doing as we wish. If, for instance, someone lives in a room where there is an unpleasant smell, he cannot

dispel it through his impulses and desires. He cannot change the colour of a flower from yellow to red, because he prefers red, merely through his wish to do so. It is characteristic of the sense-world that it remains entirely independent of us. Our wishes and impulses affect it in no way. They are directed altogether to our personal life. What then must happen to them in order that they may be so greatly enhanced that we can experience through them a world of pictures [Visual Presence] (Bilddasein)? They must become like the external world, which in its construction and in the pictures it calls forth in us does not follow our wishes, but con-strains us to form pictures of the sense-world in accordance with the world around us. If the pictures a man receives of the astral world are to shape themselves aright, he must become as detached from himself, from his own personal sympathies and antipathies, as he is from the presentations of the outer world which come to him through his senses. What he wishes or does not wish must not carry weight with him in any way.

I mentioned in the last lectures that this demand can be formulated as follows — "One must not be egoistic." This endeavour should not be undertaken lightly, for it is by no means easy to be unegoistic.

There is another fact I would like you to notice. The great difference between the interest we feel in what comes to us from outside compared with what meets us from within. The interest a man takes in his inner life is infinitely greater than in anything the outer world brings him. We certainly know that for many people the outer world when it has been changed into pictures does occasionally have an effect on our subjective feelings; we know people frequently "reckon something to be the blue of heaven," that they are even not lying but believe what they say. Sympathy and antipathy always enter into such things, people deceive themselves as to what actually comes from outside, allowing it to be changed later into pictures. But these are exceptional cases; for little progress would be made if men allowed themselves to be deceived in daily life. Something in that case would be out of harmony with external life. This would not help them, truth has to be acknowledged as regards the external world; reality is the corrective. It is the same with ordinary sense impressions; external reality is here a good regulator. But when we begin to have inner experiences reality is apt to fail us. It is not then so easy to permit outer reality to make the necessary corrections, and we permit ourselves to be ruled by sympathy and antipathy.

The thing of greatest importance when we begin to approach the spiritual world is that we learn to regard *ourselves* absolutely with the same indifference with which we regard the outer world.

These truths were formulated in a very strict way in the ancient Pythagorean schools, as were also the truths regarding a most important part of man's knowledge, that concerning immortality. How few there are to-day who take any

interest in the question of immortality! The ordinary things of life are what men long for in the life beyond birth and death. But this is a personal interest, a personal longing. The breaking of a tumbler is a matter of small interest to you, but if you had a personal interest in the continued existence of the tumbler, even though broken, the same interest as you have in the immortality of the human soul, you may be sure most people would believe also in the immortality of the tumbler.

Therefore in the schools of Pythagoras teaching concerning immortality was formulated as follows: —

"Only that man is ripe for understanding the truth concerning immortality, who could also endure it if the opposite were true; if he could bear that the question regarding immortality was answered with a 'no.' If a man is himself to bring down (selber ausmachen will) anything from the spiritual world regarding immortality," so said the Pythagoreans, "he must not long for immortality; for while there is longing, what he says regarding it is not objective. Opinions regarding the life beyond birth and death if they are to have any value can only come from those who could lie down peacefully in the grave even if there was no immortality." This was taught in the olden times in the Pythagorean schools when the teacher wished to make his pupils realise how difficult it was to be sufficiently ripe to accept any truth. To be ripe enough to receive a truth and to state it from oneself requires a very special preparation, and must consist in the person being entirely without interest in the said truth. Now, it might well be said regarding immortality: — "It is quite impossible that there should be many people who are not interested in this, there cannot be many such." People not interested in immortality are those who are told of it and of the eternal nature of human existence, and in spite of this remain uninterested. To accept and make use of the statement concerning reincarnation and human immortality so as to have something for life, can be done by anyone who also accepts the truth without any self-conviction. The fact that one is not sufficiently ripe to accept a truth is no reason for rejecting it. On the contrary, it is being ripe for what life requires of us, when we accept a truth and devote our life to its service. What is the necessary counterpart to the acceptance of truths? One may accept truths calmly even when one is not ripe. But the necessary counter-part to the acceptance of them is — that in the same measure as we long for truth that we may have peace, contentment, and security in life, in the same measure we make ourselves ripe for these truths, such truths as can only be perfected in the spiritual world. An important precept for spiritual life can be drawn from this — that we should accept everything, making what use we can of it in life, but should be as distrustful as possible regarding our presentments of truths, more especially of our own astral experience. This establishes the fact that we must specially guard against those astral experiences that come when we reach the point where we are bound to feel interest, namely, when our own life is under consideration.

Let us suppose that someone through his astral experiences has become ripe enough to carry out some-thing he destined to do next day, to experience next day. It is a personal experience. He guards himself from investigating the record of his personal life; for here he is bound to be interested. People might for instance ask lightly: — "Why does the clairvoyant not investigate the precise moment of his own death?" He does not do so because this can never be without interest to him, and he must hold himself aloof from anything connected with his own personality. Only what is in no way, connected with his own person may be investigated in the spiritual world. Nothing whatever of objective value is transmitted where the investigator is personally interested. He must be willing to confine himself to what is of objective value only, he must never speak of anything that concerns himself in his investigation, or in the impressions he receives from the higher world. When matters arise that concern himself he must be very certain that these are not introduced through his own interest in them. It is exceedingly difficult to investigate anything where the investigator's own interests are concerned.

Thus at the beginning of all endeavours to enter the spiritual world the following rule must be laid to heart: — Nothing that affects oneself must be sought for or considered valuable. The personality must be absolutely excluded. I may add that the "exclusion of everything personal" is exceedingly difficult, for frequently one thinks one has done so, yet is mistaken! For this reason most of the astral pictures seen by one or another are nothing more than a kind of reflection of their own wishes and desires. So long as we are strong enough in our spiritual self to say: — "You must distrust your own spiritual experiences," these do little harm. But the moment the strength to do so fails and a man declares his experiences to be of value to his life he begins to be unbalanced. It is just as though a person wishing to enter a room finds no door and runs his head against the wall. So the investigator must keep ever before him the maxim: — Be very careful to test your own spiritual experiences. This carefulness consists in setting no more value on such experiences than on any piece of imparted knowledge or enlightenment. We must not apply such knowledge to our own personal life, but merely allow it to enlighten us. It is well if we feel in regard to such experiences: — "You are only being given enlightenment!" For in that case we are in a position as soon as some contradictory idea enters, to correct it.

What I have said to-day is but a part of the many things we shall be considering during the coming winter, and can serve as an introduction to lectures on the life of the human soul, entitled "Psychosophy," which are to follow at a later date.



03

Lecture I

We have often spoken of that period of human evolution that has passed since the Atlantean catastrophe. We have dealt with the various epochs of this evolution — the original Indian, original Persian, Egypto-Chaldean and Greco-Latin — and then with our own, the fifth epoch of post-Atlantean civilisation. We have also shown that two further epochs will pass, before the coming of another great catastrophe, so that we have to reckon in all seven such epochs of earthly humanity.

It is comprehensible that these epochs should be described differently. For as men of the present day we desire to find how we stand as regards our own mission, we can only gain some idea of what lies before us in the future when we know how far we have participated in these different epochs in the past.

I have often explained how we can distinguish between the separate human being, the little world, or microcosm, and the great world, or macrocosm; I have shown how man, the little cosmos, is a copy of the great world or macrocosm. Though this is a truth, yet it is a very abstract truth, and as generally stated does not mean very much. You will therefore find it helpful if we go into particulars regarding this, and show how certain things met with in mankind have really to be accepted as a little world, and can be compared with another, a greater world.

The man of the present day really belongs to all seven ages of the post-Atlantean epoch. We have passed through all the earlier ages in former incarnations, and will pass through all the later ages in later ones. In each incarnation we receive what the age in question has to give. Because we receive this we bear within us, in a certain sense, the fruits of former evolutions, and the most intimate things within us are really those we have acquired during the ages mentioned. What each of us has acquired in the course of these ages is more or less within human consciousness to-day; while what we acquired generally in our Atlantean incarnations, when the state of consciousness was very different, has sunk more or less into our sub-consciousness, and no longer reverberates within us as that does which we have acquired in post-Atlantean times. In Atlantean times man was more shielded from having his evolution injured in one way or another, because his consciousness was not then so awake as it was in post-Atlantean times. For this reason all we bear within us as the fruits of our Atlantean evolution is more in accordance with the ordering of the world than is that which had its origin in an age when we were already capable of bringing certain things in us into

disorder. Ahrimanic and Luciferic Beings certainly influenced man in Atlantean times, but they then worked quite differently, for man was not then capable of shielding himself from them.

That men grew ever more and more conscious is the most important fact of post-Atlantean culture. In this respect human evolution from the Atlantean catastrophe until the next great catastrophe is macrocosmic. Humanity evolves like one great man throughout the seven post-Atlantean periods; and the most important things that were to arise in human consciousness during these seven periods resemble what a single individual experiences in the seven periods of his individual life.

The different ages in the life of a man have been described as follows: — The first seven years, from birth to the change of teeth, is described as the first age. In it man's physical body receives its form, is endowed with it as a gift. With the coming of the second teeth this form, in all its essentials, is fixed. The man then continues to grow within this form, which has received its essential direction. What is accomplished during the first seven years is the construction of the *form*. This period has to be understood from all sides. We must, for instance, distinguish the first teeth which the child develops early and which fall out, from the second teeth which replace them. These two kinds of teeth, with respect to the laws of the body, are quite different — the first are inherited, they appear as the fruits of the organisms of the man's ancestors, but the second teeth appear as the outcome of the laws of the man's own physical Being! This has to be realised. It is only when we go into such particulars that we observe this difference. We receive our first teeth, because our ancestors pass them on to us with our organism, we acquire our second teeth because our own physical organism is so constituted that we acquire them through it. In the first period the teeth are directly bequeathed, in the second the physical organism is bequeathed, and it produces the second teeth.

After this we distinguish a second period of life, that from the change of teeth until puberty, to about the 14th or 15th year. What is significant in it is the development of the etheric body. The third period, to about the 21st year, represents the development of the astral body. Then follows the development of the ego, and this progresses from the development of the sentient soul to that of the rational soul and on to the consciousness soul. It is thus we distinguish the different ages in the life of a man. In this life, as you know well, only that period is really ordered and regulated, which falls within the first seven years. This is, and must be so, as regards the man of the present day. Such regular differentiations as we find in the first three periods of a man's life do not occur later; neither is the time they last so clearly defined. If we enquire into the causes of this we have to understand that in the evolution of the world a middle period always comes after the first three of any seven periods.

We are living at present in the post-Atlantean age, we have already within us the fruits of the first three periods, and of the fourth, for we are now in the fifth post-Atlantean age, and are living on towards the sixth.

We are entirely justified in finding a resemblance between the evolution of the various post-Atlantean periods and that of the ages in the life of separate individuals, so that here also it is possible to distinguish between what is macrocosmic and what is microcosmic.

Let us take that which is most characteristic of the first post-Atlantean period, the one we call the Old-Indian; for in this the character of the post-Atlantean evolution was most strongly expressed. In this first period an exalted and most clearly differentiated wisdom existed, a primeval wisdom. What was taught in India by the Seven Holy Rishis was in principle the same as was actually beheld in the spiritual world by natural seers, and also by a large part of the people at that time. This ancient wisdom was present in the first Indian period as an inheritance. It was experienced clairvoyantly in Atlantean times, but now it had become more of an inherited primeval wisdom, preserved and given out again by those who, like the Rishis, had risen to spiritual worlds by initiation. What had entered thus into human consciousness was essentially and absolutely an inheritance. It was therefore entirely different in character from present day wisdom. People make a great mistake when they try to express the important matters given out by the Holy Rishis in the first post-Atlantean period in forms similar to those employed by the science of to-day. This is hardly possible. The scientific forms in use to-day appeared first in the course of post-Atlantean culture. The knowledge of the Ancient Rishis was of a very different kind. Those who communicated it, felt how it worked in them, how it rose within them on the instant. If we are to understand what knowledge was at that time, we must realise that its most marked characteristic was that it did not spring in any way from memory. Memory played no part as yet in knowledge. I pray you to keep this in mind. To-day memory plays a main part in the passing on of knowledge. When a university professor mounts the platform, or a public speaker addresses an audience, he must be careful to consider beforehand what he is to speak about, and retain it in his memory. Certainly, there are people who say they do not require to do this, they follow their genius; but this does not take them very far. At the present day the passing on of knowledge depends really very largely on memory.

We gain a correct perception of how knowledge was communicated in the ancient Indian epoch if we grant that knowledge first rose in the head of him who communicated it at the moment he passed it on to others. In former times knowledge was not prepared before-hand as it is to-day. The Rishis did not prepare what they had to say, so that their memory might retain it. They prepared themselves by attuning themselves to what they were about to communicate. They said: — "This knowledge (Wissen) is not built on memory in any way.

Memory has no part in it, my soul must first enter into a holy atmosphere, it must be attuned to piety!" They prepared this atmosphere, this feeling, but not what they were to say. At the moment of communication it resembled rather a reading aloud from an invisible script. Listeners who took down in writing what was said would have been unthinkable at that time. This would have been an impossibility, anything preserved by such means would have been regarded at that time as worthless. Only those things were considered of value which a man preserved within his soul, and which his soul then moved him to reproduce and impart to others in the same way as he had received them. It would have been regarded as desecration to write down these communications. Why? Because in the opinion of that day it was thought that what was written on paper could not be the same as what was communicated by word of mouth.

This tradition endured for a long time, for such things are retained far longer in the feelings than in the understanding of men, and when in the middle ages the art of printing was added to that of writing many people regarded it for long as a black art. The old feeling survived, that what passed in a living way from one soul to another should not be preserved in such a grotesquely profane way as was the case when black printer's ink traced spoken words on a white page, thus changing them into something lifeless, in order that later they might be revived in a way perhaps that was far from edifying. We must therefore regard the direct outpouring (Strömung) from soul to soul as a characteristic feature of the time we are considering. This was an outstanding tendency of the first post-Atlantean epoch, and must be realised if we are to understand, for instance, the old Grecian and Germanic rhapsodists, who moved from place to place reciting their very long poems. If they had employed memory they could never have recited these poems again and again in the same way. It was a soul-force, a soul-attribute far more living than memory, that lay behind these long recitations. To-day if anyone recites a poem he must have learnt it beforehand, but these people experienced what they recited, it was as if newly created at the moment. This was strengthened by the fact that in quite other ways than is the case to-day, the soul-element was then more in evidence. In our day, with some justification, everything of a soul nature is more suppressed. When recitations or lectures are given to-day what matters is the meaning; care is taken as to the meaning of the words. This was not the case when in the middle ages a minstrel recited the Nibelungenlied for example. He had still a certain feeling for the inner rhythm, he even stamped with his foot as he marked its rise and fall. These things were but the echoes of what existed in more ancient times. But you would form no true picture of the Rishis of India and their pupils if you thought they did not communicate the ancient knowledge of Atlantis faithfully. The high school pupil of to-day, even if he wrote out the whole lecture, would not have reproduced what had been said as faithfully as the Indian Rishis reproduced the ancient knowledge in their day.

The characteristic feature of the ages that followed is that Atlantean knowledge had ceased to affect them. Up to the decline of the first period, that of ancient Indian culture, the legacy of knowledge man had received continued. Knowledge continued to increase. This came to an end, however, with the first post-Atlantean period, and afterwards hardly anything new came forth from human nature. Increase in knowledge was therefore only possible in the first period, the early Indian, after that it ceased. In the Persian period among those who were influenced by the teaching of Zarathustra, what we can compare with the second age of development in the life of a man began, and it is best understood when so compared. The first period of Indian culture can well be likened to the first part of the life of a man – that from birth to the seventh year – when everything of the nature of form receives its shape, later there is only growth within the established form. Thus it was with the spirit in the first post-Atlantean epoch. What follows later, how man develops the teaching that comes to him in the second part of his life, can be likened to the first period of ancient Persian development and with the instruction then received, only we must be clear as to who the scholars were and who the teachers. I would like to point out something here. Does it not strike you as strange how very differently Zarathustra, the leader of the second post-Atlantean epoch, comes before us to the way, for instance, the Indian Rishis do? While the Rishis appear like holy initiated persons of a far distant age, into whom all the knowledge of ancient Atlantis had poured, Zarathustra comes before us as the first initiate of post-Atlantean times. Something new enters with him. Zarathustra is actually the first historical personality of post-Atlantean times to be initiated into that form of Mystery-knowledge (truly post-Atlantean) in which knowledge was presented in such a way that it was actually comprehensible to the rational understanding of man. What pupils received in those early days in the schools of Zarathustra was pre-eminently a super-sensible knowledge, but it dawned in them so that for the first time it took the form of human conceptions. While it is not possible to reproduce the knowledge of the ancient Rishis in the forms of modern science, this is possible with the knowledge of Zarathustra. Certainly this is a purely super-sensible knowledge, dealing as it does with the super-sensible worlds, but it is clothed in conceptions similar to the conceptions and ideas of post-Atlantean times. Among the followers of Zarathustra a teaching arose of which we can say: – "It was constructed systematically in accordance with the rational conceptions of man." This means it sprang from the ancient holy treasures of wisdom which evolved up to the end of the Indian period, and continued from generation to generation; no new thing was later added to this, but the old was elaborated further. The mission of the mysteries of the second post-Atlantean period can be realised through a comparison; we can compare it with the publishing of some occult book. Any book that is the result of investigations into higher world can be clothed in a logical arrangement, thus bringing it down to the physical plane. It is possible to do this. But if my "Outline of Occult Science" had been treated in this way a book of fifty volumes would have resulted, each as large as the book itself. If this had been done, each section

would have been presented in strictly logical form, this is in the book, and it might have been treated in this way. But it is also possible to proceed otherwise. One can, for instance, leave something to the reader; leave him to think matters out for himself. People must try to do this to-day otherwise the work of occultism could not progress.

Now, in the fifth post-Atlantean period, with his acquired powers of forming conceptions, it is possible for man to approach occult knowledge and to increase it, but at the time of Zarathustra, thoughts had first to be discovered capable of dealing with these facts. At that time knowledge such as we have to-day did not exist. Something there was that had remained over like an echo from the time of the Rishis, and to this was added what was capable of being clothed in human thoughts. But human conceptions had first to be found, and into them super-sensible facts had to be poured. Different degrees in power to grasp what was super-sensible then first made its appearance. We may say: — The Rishis still spoke absolutely in the way men had always spoken, in a pictorial language, an imaginative language. They passed on the knowledge they possessed from soul to soul when speaking in this vital picture-language which came whenever they had any kind of super-sensible knowledge to transmit. With "cause and effect" and the other ideas we have to-day with logic in any form — men did not concern themselves in the least. All that arose later. Then in the second post-Atlantean period they began to be interested in super-sensible knowledge. They then felt for the first time the opposition, as it were, of the physical plane; they felt the necessity of giving expression to what was super-sensible so that it might assume forms that thought could grasp on the physical plane. This was the essential mission of the first period of Persian civilisation.

Then followed the third period, the period of Egyptian culture. People now had super-sensible ideas. This is difficult for the men of to-day. Try and picture conditions as they were at that time; there was as yet no physical science, but people had ideas that had been gained concerning super-sensible worlds, and they could speak of them in the thought-forms of the physical plane.

In the third epoch people began to direct what they had learnt from super-sensible worlds to the physical world. This can again be compared with the third life-period of a man. While in the second life-period he learns; he then goes on to employ what he has learnt. In the third period of their lives most people feel constrained to direct their learning to the physical plane.

The pupils of the heavenly knowledge were those who, in the second epoch, had been pupils of Zarathustra, but they now began to direct what they had learnt to the physical plane. Put into modern language we can say — men now learnt that all they beheld through super-sensible vision could only be understood if expressed by a triangle; if they used the triangle as an image to express the super-

sensible, they learnt that the super-sensible part of human nature which permeates the physical part can be grasped as a triad. Other conceptions had come to man so that he now applied physical things to what was non-physical. Geometry, for example, was first learnt so that it was accepted as symbolic of ideas. Men had this and made use of it – the Egyptians in the art of surveying and agriculture, the Chaldeans in the study of the stars and the founding of astrology and astronomy. What formerly was held to be only super-sensible was now applied to things seen physically. People began to use what had been born in them as super-sensible wisdom on the physical plane. This was first done in the third cultural period.

In the fourth period, the Greco-Latin, this became a fact of outstanding importance. Up to that time men possessed super-sensible knowledge, but did not use it as described. It was not necessary for the Holy Rishis to use it in this way, for knowledge flowed into them directly from the spiritual world. In the time of Zarathustra people had only to ponder over spiritual knowledge, and they knew exactly the form this knowledge would take.

In the Egypto-Chaldean age they clothed conceptions from spiritual worlds in what they had gained in physical existence, and in the fourth period they said: – Is it right that what is acquired from the spiritual world should be applied to physical things? Are the things gained in this way really suited to physical conditions?

These questions were only put by man to himself in the fourth period after he had used this knowledge innocently, and applied it to his physical requirements for a long time. He then became more self-conscious and asked: – "What right have I to apply spiritual knowledge to physical uses?"

Now it always happens that, in an age when any important task has to be carried out, some person appears who can fulfil this task. It was such a person to whom it first occurred to ask the question: – "Have I the right to apply my super-sensible ideas to physical facts?" You can see how what I am trying to indicate developed. You can see, for example, how vital Plato's link still was with the ancient world, how he still used ideas in the ancient form, applying them to physical conditions. It was his pupil, Aristotle, who asked the question – "Ought one to do this?" For this reason he is regarded as the founder of logic.

Those who do not concern themselves in any way with spiritual science might ask: – Why did logic arise first in the fourth epoch? Was there not some reason, seeing that evolution had gone on indefinitely, for man to ask himself this question at a specified time?

When conditions are really studied, important turning points in evolution are seen to occur at certain times. One such important turning point in evolution occurred between the time of Plato and Aristotle. In this age there was still, in a certain sense, something of the old connection with the spiritual world, as this existed in Atlantean times. Living knowledge certainly died in the Indian epoch; but it was replaced by something new that came from above. Man now became critical and asked: — How can I apply what is super-sensible to physical things? This means: he was then first aware that he could himself accomplish something; observing the world around him he realised that he could bring something down into this world. This was a most important age.

We divine (spüren) that conceptions and ideas are super-sensible things when from their nature we begin to perceive in them a guarantee for the super-sensible world. But very few people do perceive this. For most people the fabric of conceptions and ideas is worn very thin and threadbare. Although they may divine that something lives in these which can give them proof of human immortality, conviction is not reached, because the conceptions and ideas concerning the solid reality for which man craves are of such a thin-spun consistency. For most people the fabric they have spun from conceptions and ideas is very thin and worn; though something lives in it which can give them consciousness of immortality, they are incapable of full conviction. But at a time when humanity had sunk to the final — hardly any longer believed in — shreds of that fabric of ideas which it had spun from higher worlds, a mighty new impulse came from the spiritual world and entered into it — this was the *Christ-Impulse*. The greatest spiritual Reality entered humanity in our post-Atlantean age at a time when man was least spiritually gifted, when all that remained to him was the spiritual gift of ideas.

For anyone who studies human development in a wide sense, it is a most interesting consideration, apart from the fact that it affects the soul so overwhelmingly, it is most interesting (even scientifically), to compare the infinite spirituality of that essence which entered human evolution with the Christ Principle, with that which, like a last thin-spun thread from spiritual realms, caused man to ask shortly before: in what way this thread connected him with spirituality. In other words: when we place Aristotelean logic, this weaving of abstract conceptions to which mankind had at last attained, along-side that great Spiritual Outpouring. We can think of no greater disparity than between the spirituality that came down to the physical plane in the Being of Christ, and that which man had preserved for himself. You can therefore understand that in the early Christian centuries it was quite impossible for men to grasp the spiritual nature of Christ with the thin thread of ideas spun from Aristotelean philosophy. Gradually the endeavour arose to grasp the facts of human and world-events in a way conformable to Aristotelean logic. This was the task that faced the philosophy of the middle ages.

It is important for us now to compare the fourth post-Atlantean epoch with the fourth period in the life of a man — that period in which the ego develops — to see how the "I am" of all humanity entered human evolution at a time when humanity as a whole was really furthest withdrawn from the spiritual world. This is why man was at first quite incapable of comprehending Christ except through faith; why Christianity had at first to be a matter of faith; only later, and by degrees, was it to become a matter of knowledge. It will become a matter of knowledge; but we have only now begun to enter with understanding into the study of the Gospels. For hundreds and hundreds of years Christianity was only a matter of faith, and had to be so, because man had descended furthest from the spiritual world.

As this was man's position in the fourth post-Atlantean period, it was necessary after so deep a descent that he should begin to rise once more. The fourth period brought him furthest on the downward path, but also gave him the first great impulse upwards. Naturally this spiritual impulse could not be understood at first, only in the periods that follow will it be possible for him to understand it. But now we can at least recognise the task before us: — *We have to refill our ideas with spirit from within.*

The evolution of the world is not simple. When, for instance, a ball starts rolling in one direction its momentum tends to make it continue rolling in the same direction. If this is to be changed another impulse must come to give the thrust necessary to a change of direction.

Pre-Christian culture had the tendency to continue the downward plunge into the physical world, and has continued to do so to our day. The upward tendency is only beginning, hence the need of a constant incentive to this upward direction. We can see this downward tendency more especially in men's thoughts. The greater part of what is called philosophy to-day is nothing more than the continued downward roll of the ball. Aristotle divined something of this; he grasped the fact that there was a spiritual reality in the fabric of human thoughts. But a couple of centuries after his day, men were no longer capable of realising that the content of the human head was connected with reality. The driest, most desiccated ideas of the old philosophy are those of Kant and everything associated with Kantism. Kant's philosophy puts the main question in such a way that he cuts every link between what man evolves as ideas, between perceptions as an inner life, and that which ideas really are. All this is old and dead, and is therefore not fitted to give any vital uplift for the future. You will now no longer wonder that the conclusion of my lectures on psychology had a theosophical background. I explained that in all we strive for, more especially as regards knowledge of the soul, our task must be to allow ourselves to be so stimulated by this knowledge, given to us formerly by the Gods and brought down by us to earth, that we can offer it up again on the altars of the Gods.: We have only to make the ideas that come to us from the spiritual world, once more our own.

It is not from any want of modesty that I say: — Teaching regarding the soul must of necessity be a scientific teaching, that it must rise again from the frozen state into which it has fallen. There have been many psychologists in the past and there are many still to-day, but the ideas they use are void of spiritual life. It is a significant sign that a man like Franz Brentano be allowed the first volume of his book on Psychology to appear in 1874. Though much it contains is distorted, it is on the whole correct. The second volume was ready, and was to have been published that year, but he was unable to complete it, he stuck in it. He still could give an outline of his teaching, but the spiritual impulse necessary if the work was to be brought to a conclusion was wanting.

Such psychologists as we have to-day, Von Wundt and Lipps for example, are not really psychologists for they work only with preconceived ideas; from the first they were incapable of producing anything. Brentano's psychology was fitted to do this, but it remained incomplete. This is the fate of all knowledge that is dying. Death does not enter the domain of natural science so quickly. Here people can work with ideas, for the facts they have accumulated speak for themselves. In the Science of Spirit this does not happen so easily. The whole substratum is immediately lost if people employ ordinary ideas. The muscles of the heart do not immediately cease to beat even if analysed like a mineral product without any recognition of their true nature; but the soul cannot be analysed in this way.

Thus science dies from above downwards, and men will gradually reach a point where they will certainly be able to appreciate natural laws, but in a way entirely independent of science. The construction of machines, instruments, telephones and the like, is something very different from understanding science in the right way or carrying it a step further. Anyone can make use of an electric apparatus without necessarily understanding it. True science is gradually dying. We have now reached a point where external science must receive new life from spiritual science. Our fifth period of culture is that in which the ball of science rolls slowly downhill.

When it can roll no further its activity will cease, as in the case of Brentano. At the same time the upward progress of humanity must receive ever more life. And it will receive it. This can only happen when efforts are made by which knowledge, even if this has been gained outwardly, becomes fruitful through what occult investigation has to give. Our age, the fifth period, will increasingly assume a character which will show that the ancient Egypto-Chaldean epoch is repeated in it; as yet we have not gone very far with this repetition, it is only beginning. That this is the case can be gathered from what occurred at our annual general meeting. On that occasion Herr Seiler spoke about "Astrology" showing, that as spiritual scientists you were in a position to connect certain conceptions with astrological ideas, whereas this was not possible with the ideas of modern astronomy. Modern astronomy would consider these ideas to be nonsense. This is

not because of what astronomical science is in itself, for this science has a better opportunity than any other of being led back to what is spiritual; but because men's thoughts are far removed from any return to spirituality. There is a means, through what astronomy has to offer, by which such a return might easily be made to the fundamental truths of Astrology so undervalued to-day. But some time must elapse before a bridge can be formed between these two. During this time all kinds of theories will be devised, theories by which the movements of the planets, for instance, will be explained in a purely materialistic way. Things will be still more difficult in the domain of chemistry, and in everything connected with life. Here it will be still more difficult to build the bridge. It will be done most easily in the domain of soul-knowledge. To do so it is necessary that people should understand what was stated at the conclusion of my lecture on "Psychology." There I showed that the stream of soul-life does not only flow from the past towards the future, but also from the future into the past; that we have two time-streams — the etheric part of the life of the soul goes towards the future, the astral part of us on the other hand flows back towards the past. (There is probably no one on the earth to-day who is conscious of this unless he has an impulse towards what is spiritual.) We are first able to form a conception of the life of the soul, when we realise that something comes continually to meet us out of the future. Otherwise this is quite impossible. We must be able to form such a conception, and for this, when speaking of cause and effect, we must break with those ordinary methods of thought which deal mainly with the past. We must not only reckon with the past in such connections, but must speak of the future as something real; something that comes towards us in just as real a way as the past slips from us. But it will be a long time yet before such ideas become prevalent, and till they do there will be no psychology.

The nineteenth century produced a smart idea — "Psychology without souls." People were very proud of this idea, and with it they declared: — "We simply study the revelations of the human soul, but do not concern ourselves with the soul that is the cause of these!"

A Soul-teaching without Souls! This can be carried further; but what results (to use a common comparison), is nothing else than a meal time without food. Such is psychology! Now people are of course not satisfied when dinner time comes and the plates are empty; but the science of the nineteenth century was strangely satisfied with the psychology put before it, which was in no way concerned with the soul. This began comparatively early, but into every part of it spiritual life must flow.

Therefore we have to record the beginning among us of an entirely new life. The old in a certain sense is finished and a new life must begin. We must feel this. We must feel that a primeval wisdom came to us from ancient Atlantean times, that this gradually declined, and we are now faced with the task of beginning in our

present incarnation to gather more and more new wisdom which will be the wisdom of the men of a later day. The coming of the Christ-Impulse made this possible. It will continually develop a living activity, and from it men will perhaps be able best to evolve towards the real, historic Christ, when all tradition concerning Him and all that is outwardly connected with these traditions has died away.

From what has been said you can see how the post-Atlantean evolution can actually be compared with the life of a single man; how it is indeed a kind of macrocosm facing man – the microcosm. But the individual man is in a very strange position. What is left to him for the second half of his life of all he acquired in the first half, which when used up is followed by death?

The spirit alone can conquer death and carry on to a new incarnation that which gradually begins to decay when we have passed the first half of our life. Our evolution advances until our thirty-fifth year, then it begins to decline. But the spirit then first begins truly to rise! What it is unable to develop further in the second half of life within the body, it brings to completion in a succeeding incarnation. Thus we see the body gradually decline, but the spirit blossom more and more.

The macrocosm reveals a picture similar to that of man: – Up to the fourth post-Atlantean epoch we have a youthful upward striving cultural development; from then onwards a real decline; death everywhere as regards the development of human consciousness; but at the same time the dawn of a new spiritual life. The spiritual life of man will be born again in the age following our present one. But he will have to work with full consciousness on what is to be reincarnated. When this happens the other must die, truly die. We gaze prophetically into the future; many sciences have arisen and will arise for the benefit of post-Atlantean civilisation, they, however, belong to what is dying. The life that streamed directly into human life along with the Impulse of Christ will in future rise (ausleben) in man in the same way as Atlantean knowledge rose within the holy Rishis.

What ordinary science knows of Copernicus to-day is but the external part of his knowledge, the part belonging to decline. That which will live on, that will be fruitful, not only the part through which he has already worked for four centuries, this part man must win for himself. The teaching of Copernicus as given to-day is not so very true, its truth will first be revealed by spiritual science.

So it is as regards much that is held to be most true in astronomy, and so it will be with everything else which men value as knowledge to-day. Certainly, what science discovers to-day is profitable. Therein lies its usefulness. In so far as the science of to-day is technical it is justified; but in so far as it has something to contribute to human knowledge, it is a dead product. It is useful for trade, but for that

no spiritual content is required. In so far as it seeks to discover anything concerning the mysteries of the universe, it belongs to declining civilisation. In order to enrich our knowledge of the secrets of the universe, external science must super-impose on all it has to offer, the wisdom derived from spiritual science.

What I have said to-day can form an introduction to our studies on the Gospel of Mark, which are about to begin. But first I had to speak of the necessity for the entrance into humanity of the greatest Spiritual Impulse of all time at a moment when only the last faint shreds of spirituality remained to it.



04

Lecture II

From my book, "Christianity as Mystical Fact," it can be gathered that the Gospels, when rightly understood, must be accepted in a very special way. As I intend to speak on the Gospels during this winter I would like to say that it is not possible for me always to begin again from the beginning for the sake of the younger members, so that there will certainly be much in these lectures that will be difficult of comprehension for younger members.

It has frequently been remarked on the occasion of the annual meeting how necessary it is that our younger members should take part in the courses of lectures, that these should be arranged so that early teachings are constantly repeated. May I say here something rather strange — it does not seem practical that the younger members should work so very energetically at going over the beginnings of theosophical life. In that case it might happen that the higher realms of spiritual science were incomprehensible to them, and they might for this reason form strange opinions as to what spiritual science is. This is, however, a matter for the individual member.

I showed in the book mentioned above that we have to accept the Gospels as "books of initiation." This means that they are nothing less than accounts of the ancient ritual of initiation, paraphrased in a certain way. What is stated in these ancient writings? They mainly contain accounts of how the candidate in his training was led step by step along the path to higher worlds. How he gradually went through certain soul-experiences and was finally brought to the point where certain forces slumbering in his soul were awakened. We read how higher stages gradually evolved out of lower ones, up to that stage when the spiritual world dawned within the soul of the would-be initiate and the secrets of the spiritual world were revealed to him. He could then look into the spiritual world. He could behold, for example, the Beings of the different hierarchies as we have described them in other connections on many occasions. Thus the content of such "books of initiation" was what anyone seeking initiation had to carry out.

In studying pre-Christian ages we find that many persons passed through initiation in different centres of the Mysteries; that this was not always exactly the same in form, though similar in character, that the stages were introduced one by one up to the point where the person seeking initiation could see into the spiritual world, where the Beings of the Hierarchies appeared before him spiritually — that is in a different way to a physical appearance.

This was how it was in pre-Christian times. What meaning for Christianity had these initiations into the ancient Mysteries? What was their significance towards the Christ-Impulse? Their significance was that a Being, outwardly visible on the physical plane and known as "Jesus of Nazareth," disclosed the secrets of the spiritual world in a way that was not customary, in a way not in accordance with the methods of pre-Christian times. An individual initiated in accordance with ancient ritual (when the events just described had taken place in his soul) could come before men and speak of the secrets of the spiritual kingdoms. But in the case of Christ Jesus something was present by which this personality, Jesus of Nazareth, could speak of these hidden matters *without* having been led to them in the ancient customary manner.

Jesus of Nazareth had been led to them through what is called the baptism in Jordan. The Spirit of Christ then entered into him. From this moment — that is from the moment of an historic event when the person of Christ Jesus was initiated in so open a way — the Spirit of Christ spoke to the people around Him of the Mysteries of the spiritual realms, but in a higher way than had been done before. Something had there-fore been accomplished on the physical plane, open for all the world to see, which formerly had been attainable — and to a certain extent only by initiates in the depths of the Mysteries, so that they might then go forth and speak of these mysteries to their fellow men. To put the matter pictorially we might say: — We look back to the ancient temple of the Mysteries, we see the Heirophant performing the rites of initiation, so that the person initiated can look into the spiritual world, and can then go forth and teach others of this world. This had always been carried out gradually and in the secret depths of the Temple. Any talk of such things in the world outside the Mysteries, any talk concerning the spiritual world, was an utter impossibility. But now, what had often and often taken place in the depths of the Mysteries, had been transferred to the outer world, it took place in Palestine. There it was enacted as an historic fact, as the development of Jesus of Nazareth; it was enacted historically in the Mystery of Golgotha. And we have to accept this Mystery, set forth as it was historically before all the world, as forming the link between the Mystery of Golgotha and those ancient Temple-Mysteries of the past.

Writings descriptive of initiation, though dealing in essence with the same stages of development differed in certain particulars in different parts of the earth, and were suited to the differences in human individuals according to space and time. Knowing this let us endeavour to enter into the soul of one of those, generally called Evangelists, who concerned themselves with the writing of our Gospels. These men, through their own occult schooling, had some knowledge of the initiation literature of the various peoples and Mysteries. They knew what men had to pass through before it was possible for them to speak of the secrets of spiritual realms and spiritual Hierarchies. And now through the events that had occurred in Palestine, and through the Mystery of Golgotha, they were aware

that what formerly had only been seen by initiates in the temple of the Mysteries, had been enacted openly on the plane of history before all the world, and that it would henceforth enter ever more and more deeply into the minds and souls of men.

The Evangelists were not biographers in the ordinary sense of the word when things are written which really do not concern the world, and which no one requires to know about any actively creative personality. They were not biographers like those who ferret out each private concern of the person they write of, but they were biographers in so far as they described the life of Christ by saying: — "Something happened at a certain time to Jesus of Nazareth, into whom the Christ entered, which we have seen happen again and again in the Mysteries; but there it was not compressed as a historic event into a few short years; here, on the contrary, it has become an event of history, yet is at the same time a repetition of Temple-ritual; we can therefore describe this life by describing the different stages formerly passed through during initiation."

Thus we have to regard the Gospels as books of instructions concerning initiation. In them are found again the ancient directions for initiation, but so that we are shown in a certain way the reason why that which formerly occurred in the depths of the Mysteries now emerges on to the great plane of history. The Evangelist who begins his Gospel by stating the reason for this, who tells from the beginning why he is in a position to write of an historic event which, transformed into something greater, fulfils the instructions given for initiation, is the writer of the Gospel according to Mark. He tells from the first how man has evolved so that this great fact of the removal of initiation from the secret depth of the temples and the setting of it openly on the plane of history, might come to pass. He tells us from the beginning that this is connected with an event of immeasurably great importance to human evolution; an event foretold by the Hebrew Prophets. For what occurred in Palestine as the Mystery of Golgotha had been seen and spoken of prophetically by Hebrew Initiates and Prophets.

If we try to enter into the soul of such a man as the Prophet Isaiah, with whose words the Gospel according to Mark begins, we find that he declares somewhat as follows: — A time will come when the souls of men will perceive differently than they do now; this time is now being prepared for. (Isaiah refers here to his own day.) What is it he wishes to tell us? You know that the Gospel according to Mark begins with the introduction of a mighty saying of this Prophet. You know the words well, and how they are employed. I make use here of the ordinary translation of C. Weizsäcker: —

Behold I send my messenger before thee, he shall prepare thy way. Hark to the cry in the wilderness: Make ready the way of the Lord. Make his path straight.

Thus, it is fairly well translated in our Gospel literature. The Prophet refers in these words to the greatest event in history – to the Mystery of Golgotha.

You, know that in our studies of the other Gospels great trouble has been taken to translate important passages in a comprehensible way. What matters most in this, is not the giving of a correct verbal translation according to the dictionary, but in choosing words that reproduce the deep significance of the original and convey this to us in our own language; not only in presenting them theoretically to our understanding, but so that the whole feeling that accompanied the peculiar quality of the language of that day is also passed on to us. For speech at that time was totally different from the present manner of speech. I would like to impress this fact on you, that speech was then not so abstract, so trivial as it is to-day.

The whole manner of expressing anything was such that an ever deeper meaning, a richer significance and feeling-content was imparted to the listener along with the actual words, yet he knew most unmistakably what this feeling-content was. A whole **WORLD** was then heard in the spoken word compared with what is ordinarily heard to-day. This is a special quality of the Hebrew tongue, it is exceedingly rich in this power of concealing a very great deal behind the words, because the images employed were taken altogether from the sense-world. Expressions such as "prepare the way" or "make straight the path" are pictures drawn from the sense-world. It is as if the path were prepared with spades and shovels. But when such words were used, the peculiarity of this language compared with others was that behind the expressions employed to denote outward things, a whole spiritual world stood – it stood there so clearly and incontestably that no one could interpret it to their own liking, as is so often done with poetry, where all kinds of things are sometimes read into it. The reason for this was that in the ancient Hebrew language, in the personal use of the language, which cannot be shown in the script, it was possible for whole hidden worlds to be given in the *tone*. A feeling for such secret things existed.

In Greek, the language of the Gospel text, this is not nearly so much the case. All the same it was still possible, without occult knowledge, to obtain far better translations from the Greek than from the language used by the Evangelists.

As a matter of fact, one translator has merely copied another in this without going into the matter philologically or proving how the original compared with the Greek text. I will give you later a single example of how great were the errors that arose through this. To-day I will not interrupt the course of our studies, but will try, not philologically, but with the help of what can be learnt through spiritual investigations, to put before you some important things concerning the beginning of the Gospel of Mark.

I will start with this important passage from the prophecies of Isaiah, wherein he tries to show what is to come to pass through the Event of Palestine, so that you may discover through your feeling what it means.

The Greek text is as follows:

(1) Ἴδου, ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου.

(2) Φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν Κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ.

(1) Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way.

(2) A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight."

(Translated with DeepL -ed.)

We must in the first place clearly understand that the word messenger or angel was only used in olden times in the sense employed by us when describing the Hierarchies, that is when we describe those Beings who stand immediately above man in the ranks of the hierarchies. We must feel when we read the words "his angel" that a Being belonging to this realm is meant. If this is not felt then the meaning of the whole passage is lost. Spiritual science alone can provide a foundation for such an understanding, and also for all it has to tell us about the Christ-Event.

What is the fact of greatest importance in the Christ-Impulse? The fact that through it full consciousness first entered the human soul so that a place might be prepared there for a self-conscious ego. So that there might gradually arise within this self-consciousness ego in the further course of earthly evolution, all the secret things (Geheimnisse) which formerly arose by a kind of natural clairvoyance within the astral body.

The present epoch was preceded by one in which men still carried over with them into post-Atlantean culture a natural clairvoyance which enabled them to look into the spiritual world. In certain abnormal conditions of soul the secrets of the spiritual world still poured down into men, and they were able to look up to the Hierarchies. They naturally saw more often, and for a longer period, the Hierarchy which stands nearest to man — The Hierarchy of Angels. They saw them as the

Beings standing immediately above man. In the time of this ancient clairvoyance men were not aware that they possessed something within them that was to lead them to the spiritual world. They looked on it as a grace accorded to them from without, as something granted to their souls by spiritual powers. Therefore the Prophets looking to the future could speak as follows: — "A time is coming when man will be aware of his ego; he will then know that it is through the self-conscious ego that the secrets of the spiritual world will come to him." All this was to come. A time was to come in which man would say: "When I have my ego in me, I shall be able through the power it brings, to penetrate to the secrets of the spiritual world." This had, however, first to be prepared for.

Thus man, who is as it were, the lowest of the Hierarchies, had to be prepared for what he was to become by being equipped with something which as yet he did not possess. The messenger or Angel, announced that man would become an ego-being in the fullest sense of the word. While the mission of former Angels had been to reveal to man the spiritual world, a special Angel was now to receive a special mission. This Angel was to carry revelation a stage further, and make known to man that he was to enter consciously into his ego, while the revelations of former Angels had not been suited to a self-conscious ego.

So Isaiah announces: — "The age of the Mystery of the Ego is to come, and from among the host of Angels one will be specially chosen to declare to you this Mystery!" Only in this way can we understand what is meant when it says that the Messenger or Angel was sent before. Before whom was the Messenger sent? He was sent beforehand to those who were to attain their self-conscious ego, and was to come as a Being from the Hierarchy of Angels. No angel had as yet announced generally to men that it was foretold they were to receive a self-conscious ego. So this messenger of whom the Prophet Isaiah spoke came to tell them to prepare themselves inwardly, to create within their souls a place for the ego, to prepare for the full validity of the ego. What is most important in this passage is the reference to the great change in the evolution of the human soul; whereas formerly men had to go out of themselves in order to enter the spiritual world, from this time onwards they could continue within their ego, and could, through it, discover the secrets of that world.

Let us now compare a soul of olden times with one from the time when the Christ-Impulse was drawing near; picture a man of the earlier pre-Christian centuries. If wishing to enter the spiritual world he could not to do so and maintain his self-consciousness however highly he was developed. To do this he had to divest himself of his self-consciousness, had to pass into an unconscious condition; he had to rise into the world of the Hierarchies — the world of the spirit. His consciousness was lowered. This was an old feeling belonging to pre-Christian times. What then was the position of a man who did not altogether belong to the age when it was natural for him, on the withdrawal of self-consciousness, to find

himself in the spiritual world; and what was the position of the man who did not live at a time when humanity was at the stage when his ego could be developed? The ego existed already in Atlantean times, but complete certainty that the greatest mystery of the spiritual world could well up within it came first to man through the Impulse of Christ. This was the feeling that caused men in the days of the old initiation to say: — "When I desire to enter the spiritual world and learn what these worlds can reveal to me, I have to suppress a certain part of me and stimulate and bring life to another part of my soul." What had to be suppressed? And what had to be made especially alive? That part of his soul which was gradually to develop into the "I" had to be suppressed; this is what had to become darker, heavier. It could retain no memory. It had to become void and empty. On the other hand the astral body, the body which can give a certain degree of clairvoyance, had to be specially stimulated. When this happened ancient clairvoyant powers of perception entered the astral body.

I have said that the ego was already present to a certain extent, but man could not make use of it when he desired to investigate the secrets of the spiritual world. The ego had in this case to be suppressed and the astral body stimulated. This stimulation of the astral body had become ever more and more impossible. In ancient times suppression of the ego and stimulation of the astral body so that the secrets of the spiritual world could pour into it, was something that belonged to the elemental attributes of man. Advance in evolution consisted in the increasing incapacity of the astral body to receive the secrets of the spiritual world. At this stage men acknowledged: — "My astral body will become ever less able to attain what once was mine through the old form of clairvoyance, my ego also will cease to pass out of me in the way it was wont to do, and as yet it is unable to rise to anything of itself." The most gifted clairvoyant was at most aware of something empty, something void, within his soul. Such was the ego to which as yet no Impulse had been imparted. At the same time men were aware it was not possible for them to enter the spiritual world through the ego.

From this you can gather what was the soul-attitude of those who desired to look into the spiritual realms at the time when the Christ-Impulse was approaching. They might have said: — "I can no longer develop in my astral body what formerly it was possible to develop; and no impulse has yet come to my ego; my soul is chaotic, I feel unable to rise to the spiritual world."

Then as the time for the coming of the Christ-Impulse drew near certain methods were employed, men underwent a certain training, with the result that they made the acquaintance of those who were not as yet filled with the spirit. When seeking entrance into higher worlds they were told: — "Realise that thou canst not rise to these worlds through thy astral body; thou must first of all enter that inward place where thou feelest thyself as man, where thou art no longer conscious of the smallest connection with the outer world."

This was how men felt as the time for the coming of the Christ-Impulse drew near. Everyone who sought for initiation realised that his astral body was no longer fitted to be the means for his entrance into the spiritual world; that the time for this was past; and that the ego was not as yet ready for it. But those who desired to receive the Impulse, who longed to leave the body and penetrate to spiritual worlds, divined (more than divine they could not) that there was some-thing in them that strove with all its might towards that Spiritual Impulse. This soul-experience which all passed through who sought at that time the path to spiritual illumination was called "the path of loneliness." What, then, had the messenger to do who prepared the way for the Christ-Event? He had to tell those who desired to know of the approaching Impulse, about "the path of loneliness." He had to know loneliness fundamentally. He had to be the preacher of this loneliness of soul. You will come to know, as you study the Gospel of Mark further, that in certain cases great Spiritual Beings through whom some important advance in human evolution was to be carried out found the instruments they required in living men, and that they entered into them so as to live within a soul in bodily incarnation. The "messenger" spoken of by Isaiah, who must not be accepted as a man quite in the ordinary sense, took possession of the soul of the re-incarnated Elias, lived in him and announced the approach of the Christ-Impulse. It was this messenger who spoke from the soul of John the Baptist. Whence came this voice? It sprang from what I have just described as a great loneliness of soul. We read of this in the Gospel according to Mark, it says: — "Listen to the cry of soul-loneliness." The Greek word ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ should not be translated in a symbolic sense by "wilderness," thus giving them an external meaning. In these words an image is presented to us by which the whole spiritual world may be grasped. Their real meaning is "in loneliness."

To understand this expression better, we must occupy ourselves a little with the true meaning of what is felt by the word "κυριος" or Lord, as it is usually translated in the lines "prepare the way of the Lord." The true meaning is something we can still divine in the Greek, and is confirmed when we associate it with ancient tradition. In ancient usage this word had not the trivial meaning it has to-day.

In this materialistic age man has become a great Philistine in respect of language. Words are no longer "the bodies of soul-beings," so that it is possible to sense a whole world in them.

What was felt in the Greek word "κυριος" or Lord when spoken in the connection I have indicated? Men felt that it was an *image* of what went on within them, of what they sensed was happening in their soul-life. The uprising of the "I am" from the depths of the soul was felt as the coming of the "Lord" and "Ruler," he who

regulated and ordered the soul-forces and is used in the sense employed to-day when we say the various soul-forces possessed by man – thinking, feeling and willing, are the servants of his soul. But within the soul there is a master, the ego.

This is shown by the fact that whereas in old times men said "it thinks," and in respect of feeling and willing "it feels," "it wills within me"; men now say when the ego, the Lord of the soul-forces is in command and the mighty change in human evolution is felt, "I think," "I feel," "I will." In earlier days the soul was to a certain extent unconscious, it was imprisoned and submerged within the forces that served it. But now the ego, the Lord of the soul-forces was to be born! The cry went forth: – "He who is Lord of the soul is coming!" No person or Being is meant by these words, but only the emergence of the ego as "Lord" of the soul.

This was taught in the Temples where preparation was made for what was to come to pass in human nature. With holy reverence and deep humility it was made known: – For a time the condition of souls was such that they had in them only the serving powers of thinking, feeling and willing; but now the "Ruler" was to be born.

This mighty fact is now proceeding; its development will go slowly on until the end of the earth-age, when it will have gained ever more and more power. Yes, this will come to pass! And it is the Christ who gives the first impulse to this development. This is the "Great Hour," the turning point of the world's time-piece, the hour when Christ lived on earth. The hands of the world clock now point to the moment of the coming of the ego. As Lord of the forces of the souls it now begins to evolve ever greater power and will have reached its goal when the earth perishes and man passes on to still higher stages of development.

It is only when we try to feel, as people must have felt in those early days, that it is possible for us to form some idea of what Isaiah desired to say, and John the Baptist to repeat. Isaiah referred to the great event that was to take place within the souls of men, and to the course of the further development of these souls. But then we must not translate the word "*λνφιοσ*," as "straight" as is usually done, nor as "level," but as "open," so that the road could be used.

It is then the "Lord" comes, he takes his way towards the human soul. But man must do something so that he can really take possession of the soul. The way must be made free, open. In short, if we translate this passage so that it means something, and if at the same time we hold to tradition, it must be done somewhat as follows:

.....
Take heed, ("Behold" is no longer correct.) I send my Angel before the ego in thee, he shall prepare the direction (Richtung).

Hark to the cry in the (souls) loneliness, (the cry of longing for the Lord of the soul); prepare the direction for the (soul's) ruler; work that the way be open for him.

In this form of words you have approximately an idea of what can be felt in the words of Isaiah. These words or their content, was carried over by the Angel into the soul of the Baptist. Why could the Angel do this? To answer this question we must consider for a little the nature and method of the initiation of John the Baptist, and how this initiation affected his soul.

From former lectures you know that a man can either be initiated by descending into his own soul or by going forth from his soul, by liberation from the body and uniting his soul-forces with the cosmos. These two paths were followed by different peoples in the most varied manner. When a man desired to pour out his soul into the macrocosm, the twelve stages through which he had to pass to attain to this were "marked" by the twelve signs of the Zodiac; for his soul had to expand in certain clearly defined directions of the Macrocosm. Now a very great deal was already attained – something important that is for the historical evolution of the world – when any soul had evolved so far as to be able to receive into it all the macrocosmic forces springing from those hidden things which are the meaning of each of the constellations. As a rule the ancient rites of initiations were conducted so that the soul-expansion of one Initiate was directed to the macrocosmic secret, say of Capricorn, another to those of Cancer, of the Balance, and so on. I have explained on other occasions that there are twelve different possible ways of expansion into the Macrocosm, and that these are indicated symbolically by the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Anyone attaining initiation through expansion of his soul into the macrocosm, and who does not attain at once to the highest – the Sun initiation – but only to a partial initiation, would have his soul-vision directed to the mysteries connected with some special constellation. To attain this he would have to turn his gaze away from everything of a material nature. This means, care would have to be taken that his gaze was directed, either through the rites of the Mysteries, or through John the Baptist by "Grace from above," in such a way that he would have the earth between him and the special constellation. In other words, his glance had to be directed at night to the constellation through the earth. When a constellation is seen with physical eyes it is the physical constellation that is seen. But when a man's gaze can penetrate the substance of the earth, which is between him and the physical constellation, he does not see the physical but the spiritual part of the earth; that is he sees the mysteries (*Geheimnisse*) which the constellation expresses.

The training that John the Baptist had passed through had made it possible for him to gaze at night through the material earth upon the constellation Aquarius, the Waterman. He had received therefore (after the Angel had entered into his

soul) the initiation of Aquarius. Thus, through all he knew and had felt, John the Baptist was able to put himself in touch with the faculties of the Angel, so that through this Being he could make the content of the "Waterman-initiation" known; and the information he gave respecting this was: that the lordship of the ego, the "Lord," would enter men's souls. This is what the initiation of the Waterman gave.

But simultaneously the Baptist declared that the time had now come when a change was to take place in this initiation, it was to be replaced by another, one by which men would be able to understand the approaching lordship of the ego. Therefore he said to his disciples: – "I am he who, through the initiation of the Waterman has all the powers of his Angel at his disposal. But after me ONE will come who has at his command all the subsequent powers of his Angel!"

If you advance by day toward the sun from the constellation of Ares, through that of the Bull, the Twins and so on to Virgo, you must advance at night from the direction of the Waterman (Aquarius) to the constellation of the Fishes, that is, you must advance in the direction of the Spiritual Sun. John had received the Waterman-initiation, and he pointed out that he who was to come after him would be an Initiate of Picis, the initiation which follows on the initiation passed through by John, and was therefore of a higher order. The Baptist told his intimate disciples: – "Through the initiation of Aquarius I have only those powers at my disposal by which I can announce through my Angel that the Lord – the ruler – is coming, but after me One will come who has powers symbolised by the initiation of the sign of the Fishes. Into him the Christ will enter!"

In these words John the Baptist refers to Jesus of Nazareth. Ancient tradition has on this account assigned to Christ Jesus the symbol of the Fish; and as everything that occurs outwardly is symbolic of in-ward events – though these may occur outwardly – the helpers appointed to Him were fishermen. This is an external historic fact, at the same time as regards spiritual secrets it is profoundly symbolic. John declared "a higher initiation is to come to humanity," and he described himself as a "Waterman." This is absolutely clear. But we must learn to see ever more clearly how the images employed to express the hidden things of men are at the same time connected with astronomical and cosmic mysteries.

"I have baptised you with water," said John. Water baptism was specially the baptism within the power of those who had received from heaven the initiation of the "Waterman." But in that the Spiritual Sun progresses in the opposite direction to the physical sun, which advances from the sign of the Virgin to that of the Balance; the Spiritual Sun (as in the advance from John the Baptist to Jesus of Nazareth) progresses from the Waterman to the Fishes. And were anyone to appear in the world having experienced the initiation of the Fishes and able therefore to receive into him those spiritual forces, those spiritual impulses,

which are the instruments of the Fish-initiation, then it would be possible for him to baptise not only as John did with water, but to baptise in the higher sense described by John as the *Baptism of the Holy Spirit*.

In this lecture I have put before you in a certain way a two-fold conception: — Firstly, I have shown that in the Gospel according to Mark facts of human evolution, historical events, are dealt with in which mention is made of a higher Power, of an "Angelic," not a human power; and that this Power spoke through John the Baptist. On the other hand I have shown that in the accounts given here reference is made to heavenly events; namely, to the progress of the Spiritual Sun from the sign of the Waterman to that of the Fishes. Indeed the Gospel according to Mark contains in every verse something which can only be read aright, when, in the sequence of the words, we keep before us both their human and their cosmic, astronomical meaning, and when we realise that something lives in man, the true significance of which is only to be found in heaven. Only when this is done can the connection between the mysteries of the cosmos and the mysteries of human nature be more clearly understood. To-day, at the close of my lecture, I can but hint at what lies behind such things. I merely wished to-day to give you some premonitions of what lies in this direction. For we shall have to dive to very great depths in studying the Gospel of Mark, and you will have to ponder long and deeply if you are to attain to something more than "premonitions." In what follows I will try to make clear to you the way this Gospel has to be read.

You all know the rainbow. To a child it appears as something real in the firmament. Until explained to him, he believes he can grasp it with his hands. Later, man learns that the rainbow does not depend on itself, but that it only appears when rain and sunshine stand related to each other in a certain way; when this relationship is changed it disappears. Thus it is not a reality; it is but an illusion. The realities as regards the rainbow are rain and sunshine.

If anyone has made a little progress on the path of occult development something is revealed to him which quite of himself he compares with the rainbow. Of this he says: — It is actually not true, it is but an appearance held together by things outside it. Do you know what this "appearance" is? It is man himself!

Man is only an appearance, a semblance, and if with his physical senses he regards himself as reality, he has given himself over to illusion — to Maya the great "Non est." For the word "Maya" is compounded of "Mahat aya." (Mahat=great, ya = Being, and a= not); signifying the great non-being. On the path of occult development man reaches a point where he compares himself with something resembling a rainbow; he realises he is but a semblance, a delusion, and that everything that is perceived by the senses is delusion also. The sun as physical globe is a delusion. What physical science describes as a ball of gas in space is quite correct for practical purposes, but anyone who regards this as reality is

giving himself over to delusion – to Maya. The truth regarding the sun is that it is a meeting-place of the spiritual Hierarchies, whose deeds are expressed in warmth and light, and who approach us in the warmth and light of the sun. The warmth and light we perceive is illusion. All appearance is illusion.

A man thinks he has a heart in his breast, but this heart is a delusion, nothing more. It is like the rings we see round street lamps on a misty autumn evening. These rings are not reality, but are produced by clearly defined forces. So is the human heart. You can perceive this in the following way. Suppose that this circle I have drawn represents the vault of the heavens one kind of force streams into us from one side, other forces from other sides, these forces split up here in the centre where I have drawn a small circle.

Nothing of the forces that stream into man from heaven and split up there (*sich schneiden*) really exist where he thinks they do, in his heart. Think everything else away except the forces that meet in you, as light meets in the rainbow – what remains is the human heart. It is the same with our other organs: they are fragments of forces (*Schnittkräfte*) caused by the breaking up of world forces.

When you move from one place to another you say "There is an impulse in me to move from here to there." In saying this you say something that appertains to Maya. Why? Because forces come from the Macrocosm, which are split up down here (*sich schneiden*), and these broken-up fragments give rise to: illusion concerning the power and direction in walking. The results met with down here are but fragments of cosmic forces. If we desire to know the truth we must ask: – What takes place in the Macrocosm? What do cosmic forces bring about, both the upper and the lower? They bring that about in us that makes it appear as if we had a heart, a liver, etc., or that has such an appearance that we say: I walk from here to there. If the truth regarding this were to be described, we would have to describe cosmic forces.

If we wish to describe what John the Baptist did when he baptised, we must describe what the Macrocosm, that is the forces represented by the sign of the Waterman, charged him to do. This was determined at one time within the great cosmic lodge, and the forces necessary for it were sent down into John. It is thus, in the language of the Cosmos, we must read what took place at a certain point of time. It was thus the writer of the Gospel according to Mark read the heavenly events corresponding with the earthly events that occurred in Palestine. He describes astronomical occurrences when he says: – "Understand what I have to say to you in this way: suppose there is here a wall on which visible shadows play. If you wish to know the real cause of these shadows you must consider the things of which they are the reflections. I describe what took place at Jordan, all the

same they are but the instruments of something else; in reality I am describing what was brought about on earth through the astronomical forces of the Macrocosm!"

The writer of the Gospel of Mark describes cosmic forces. He describes the shadow-pictures or projections thrown by mighty macrocosmic events on to the screen provided by the small district of Palestine. We must realise this clearly if we are to enter into the full greatness and importance of the document we call the Gospel of Mark; but we must first try to form something of the nature of a divination of what it is that is here presented to us. We must endeavour to understand what it is we are told in the beginning of the Gospel. The Prophet Isaiah had foretold that the Lord of the soul-forces of mankind would come, that in John the Baptist the "messenger" would dwell, who would prepare man for the reception of this ruler of his soul-forces. This messenger had first to take as his dwelling place the body of one who had passed through the initiation of the Waterman, who was able therefore to lead men on the path that is connected on earth with such an individuality as Jesus of Nazareth; one who because he had received the Fish-initiation had prepared himself for the reception of the Christ.

All the events that take place on earth are the reflections of cosmic events, and are connected with cosmic conditions in the same way as the rainbow is connected with rain and sunshine, and as, if we wish to describe the rainbow, we must study rain and sunshine. If we wish to know what was in the heart of John the Baptist or of Jesus of Nazareth, in whom the Christ dwelt, we must study cosmic conditions. So far as man is concerned, the whole world is explained by what took place in Palestine and on Golgotha. He who does not read the Gospel of Mark otherwise than merely as a document, which provides him with groups of letters descriptive of great world events, is on a level with one who says: — "Here I have one group of lines and strokes, there another;" he has no conception of what is referred to in the word "Lord," but thinks only of the black letters. It is mostly in this way that the Gospel of Mark is read in our day. For what is told in it is but the outer lettering of what it really contains. To understand this Gospel we must rise to the level of those things to which, as in a shadowy reproduction, the events in Palestine refer.

Try to get at the meaning of the words: — "Earthly events are the shadows of macrocosmic events." When you have done this you will have taken the first step in the understanding of one of the greatest documents in the world — the Gospel according to St. Mark.



05

Lecture III

In the last Lecture I began by giving some idea of the nature and character of the Gospel according to Mark. I showed that when this Gospel is studied something more can be gathered from it than from the other Gospels concerning the great laws both of human and cosmic development. One has to acknowledge that in what is indicated concerning the profundities of the Christian Mystery, an opportunity is here given us to enter perhaps most deeply into these mighty secrets.

I originally thought that it might be possible, in the course of this winter, to give intimate and important instructions concerning matters we have not heard as yet within our spiritual-scientific movement; or perhaps I should say concerning things that lie on the border of spiritual matters not as yet dealt with by us. But it has been necessary to abandon this scheme, for the simple reason that our Berlin Group has grown so enormously during recent weeks that it would not have been possible at present to bring to the understanding of its members all that I had intended to say.

It is necessary in the case of mathematics, for instance, or any other science, that preparation should be made for any special stage, and this is necessary to a still higher degree when we advance to the consideration of certain high spiritual matters. Therefore we shall leave to a later date the consideration of those parts of the Gospel of Mark which cannot be explained to so large a circle.

It is most necessary when a document like this Gospel is under consideration that we should clearly understand through what important factors the evolution of mankind has passed. I have always impressed on you – as a quite abstract and general truth – that in every age there have always been certain guides or leaders of men who, because they stood in a certain relationship to the Mysteries, to the spiritual super-sensible world, were in a position to implant impulses in human evolution which contributed to its further progress. Now there are two principal and essential methods by which men can come into relationship with super-sensible worlds. The one is that to which I have referred when indicating certain features of the teaching of that great leader, Zarathustra; and the other is one that comes before our souls when we study the special methods of the great Buddha. These two great teachers, Buddha and Zarathustra, differ very much as regards their whole method and manner of working.

We must realise that the entrance into that state which Buddha and Buddhism describe as being "under the Bodhi tree," is a symbolic expression for a certain mystic enhancement of consciousness, and opens a path by which the human ego can enter into its own Being, its own deeper nature. This path, blazed by Buddha in such an outstanding way, is a descent of the ego into the abyss of its own human nature.

You will gain a more exact idea of what is meant by this if you recall that we have followed man through four stages of development, three of which are already concluded and the fourth is that we are in at present. We have traced human development through the Saturn, Sun and Moon evolutions; now it is passing through the Earth-evolution.

We know these three stages correspond with the upbuilding of the physical, the etheric, and the astral natures of man; that now during earthly evolution we are at the stage corresponding to the development of the human ego, in so far as this can be developed as a member of man's Being. We have described the human Being from various points of view as an ego enclosed within three sheaths: an astral sheath corresponding to the Moon-evolution, an etheric sheath corresponding to the Sun-evolution, and a physical sheath corresponding to the Saturn-evolution.

As normally developed to-day, man has no consciousness of his astral, etheric and physical bodies, he really knows nothing of them. You will naturally say: but man is aware to-day of his physical body. This, however, is not the case. What ordinarily confronts him as the human physical body to-day is only illusion, Maya. What he regards as the physical body is in reality the interblending activity of the four members of his Being physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego; and the result of this interplay, of these interblended activities, is what our eyes see and our hands grasp as *man*. If we really wish to see the physical body we must separate off three parts and retain one; as when analysing a chemical compound formed of four substances; we must separate the ego, astral body and etheric body, then the physical body remains. But this is not possible under present conditions of earthly existence. You might perhaps say this happens whenever a man dies. But this is not correct, for what a man leaves behind at death is not the human physical body but a corpse. The physical body cannot live when the laws present at death are active in it. These laws did not originally belong to the body, but are laws belonging to the external world. If you carry out these thoughts you must acknowledge that what is usually called man's body, is a Maya, an illusion, and what spiritual science calls the "physical body" is the combination, the result, within our mineral world of organic laws, which produces the physical body of man in the same way as the laws of crystallisation produce quartz, or those of emerald-crystallisation produce emeralds. This physical body of man as it works in the physical mineral world is the true human body. What man knows of the

world to-day is but the outcome of observation made by the senses. But observation as it is made by the senses can only be made by an organism in which an ego dwells. The present day superficial method of observation states that animals perceive the external world, for example, in the same way as men do; through their senses. This is a most confused conception, people would be much astonished if they were shown, as must be done some day, the picture of the world formed by a horse, a dog, or any other animal. If a picture were made of what a horse or a dog sees round it this would be very different from the picture of the world as seen by man. That the human senses perceive the world as they do is connected with the fact that the ego reaches out over the whole surrounding world and fills the sense organs, eyes, ears and so on, with the pictures it perceives. So that only an organism in which an ego dwells can have such a picture of the world as man has; and the human organism belongs to this picture and is part of it. We must therefore say: What is usually called the "physical body" of man is only the result of sense-observation and not reality. When we speak of physical man and of the physical objects around him it is the ego, aided by the senses and the understanding connected with the brain, that regards the world. Hence man only knows those things over which his ego extends, to which his ego belongs. So soon as the ego is not present the pictures the world presents to it are no longer there; this means the man is asleep. Then no pictures of the world surround him — he is unconscious.

Whenever you regard anything, at every moment, the ego is hound up with what you see. It is spread out over what you see so that you really know only the content of your ego. As normal human Beings you know the content of your ego, but of that which belongs to your own nature, into which you enter each morning when you wake — of your astral body, etheric body, and physical body you know nothing. The moment he awakes, the normal man of to-day sees nothing of his astral body. He would indeed be horrified if he did, that is if he perceived the sum of the instincts, desires and passions that have accumulated in him in the course of his repeated earthly lives. Man does not see these. He would not be able to endure the sight. When he does dip down into his own nature, into his physical, etheric and astral bodies his attention is at once deflected from this to the external world; he there beholds what beneficent Divine Beings spread over the surface of his sphere of vision, so that it is in no way possible for him to sink into his own inner nature.

We are correct therefore when in speaking of this in spiritual science we say: The moment a man awakes in the morning he enters through the door of his own being. But at this door stands a watcher, the "little guardian of the threshold." He does not permit man to enter his own being, but directs him at once to the outer world. Each morning we meet this little guardian of the threshold, and anyone who on awakening enters his own nature consciously, learns to know him. In fact the mystic life consists in whether this little guardian of the threshold acts

beneficently towards us, making us unaware of our own being, turning our ego aside so that we do not descend into it, or permitting us to pass through the door and enter into our own being. The mystic life enters through the door I have described, and this in Buddhism is called "sitting under the Bodhi tree." This is nothing else than the descent of a man into his own being through the door that is ordinarily closed to him. What Buddha experienced in this descent is set before us in Buddhistic writings. Such things are no mere legends, but the reflections of profound truths experienced inwardly — truths concerning the soul. These experiences in the language of Buddhism are called "The Temptation of Buddha."

Speaking of this Buddha himself tells us how the Beings he loved approached him at the moment when he entered mystically into his own inner being. He tells how they seemed to approach him bidding him to do this or that — for instance, to carry out false exercises so as to enter in a wrong way into his own being. We are even told that the form of his mother appeared to him — he beheld her in her spiritual substance — and she ordered him to begin a false Askese. Naturally this was not the real mother of Buddha. But his temptation consisted in this very fact, that in his first *evolved* vision he was confronted not by his real mother but by a mask or illusion. Buddha withstood this temptation. Then a host of demoniac forms appeared to him, these he describes as desires, telling how they corresponded to the sensation of hunger and thirst, or the instinct of pride, conceit and arrogance. All these approached him — how? They approached him in so far as they were still within his own astral body, in so far as he had not overcome them at that great moment of his life when he sat under the Bodhi tree. Buddha shows us in a most wonderful way in this temptation, how we feel all the forces and powers of our astral body, which are within us because we have made them ever worse and worse in the course of our development through succeeding incarnations. In spite of having risen so high Buddha still sees them, and now at the final stage of his progress he has to overcome the last of these misleading forces of his astral body which appear to him as demons.

What does a human personality find when through temptation it passes down through the realms of its astral body and etheric body into its physical body? That is, when it really gets to know these two members of human nature?

If we are to know this, we must realise that in the course of his descending incarnations on earth man has been in a position to injure his astral body very much, but has not been able to injure his etheric and physical bodies to the same extent. The astral body is deteriorated through the "Egoism of human nature," through greed, hate, selfishness, arrogance and pride. Through all these, and through his lower desires man injures his astral body. The greater part of the etheric body is so strong that however much a man may try to injure it he is unable to do so, for the etheric body resists injury. A man cannot descend so deeply into his own nature with his individual powers, as to injure the etheric or

physical body. It is only in the course of repeated incarnations that the faults he develops directly affect the physical and etheric bodies injuriously, and appear later as weaknesses and as dispositions to illness in the physical body. But a man cannot affect his physical body directly. If he cuts his finger, this is not brought about through the soul, neither is infection. In the course of his incarnations he has only become capable of affecting his astral body and a part of his etheric body; on his physical body he can only work indirectly, not directly. We can therefore say if a man descends into his etheric body on which he can still work directly he sees in this region all the things connected with his former incarnations, so that the moment he dips clown into his own being he also dips into his earlier, more remote incarnations. Man can therefore find the way to his former incarnation by sinking down into his own being. If this plunging down into his own being is very intensive, very thorough and forceful, as was the case with Buddha, the insight into other incarnations goes further and further back.

Originally man was a spiritual being, the sheaths that envelop his spiritual nature only gathered round him at a later day. Man came forth from Spirit, and everything external has condensed, as it were, out of Spirit. So that in sinking down into his own being man enters into the Spirit of the world. This sinking down, this breaking through the sheaths of the physical body, is one path into the spiritual framework of the world.

In the information handed down to us concerning Buddha (and these are no mere legends) we learn of the different stages he attained in the passage through his own being, of which he says: — "When I had got as far as to the attainment of illumination" — that is when he felt himself to be a part of the spiritual world — "I beheld the spiritual world as a cloud spread out before me; but as yet I could not distinguish anything; I felt I was not as yet ready for this. Then I advanced a step further. There I no longer merely saw the spiritual world as a widespread cloud, but could distinguish separate forms, although I could not yet see what these forms were, for I was not yet sufficiently advanced. Again I rose a step higher, there I perceived not only separate Beings, but I knew what kind of Beings they were."

This continued so far that Buddha even beheld his own archetype, that which had passed down from generation to generation, and he saw it in its true connection with the spiritual world. This is one path, the mystic path, the path leading through a man's own being to the point where the boundaries are broken down beyond which lies the spiritual world. By following this path certain leaders of humanity attained what such individuals had to have in order that they could give the necessary impulse to the further development of mankind.

It is by quite another path that personalities, such as the first Zarathustra for instance, attained what enabled them to become leaders of humanity. If you recall what I said about Buddha you will realise that in his former incarnations when he was a Bodhisattva he must have already risen through many stages. Through illumination – that which is known as "sitting under the Bodhi tree" – I described in the only way it can be described how an individual can gradually rise through his personal merit to heights whence he can behold the spiritual world.

If humanity had only had such leaders to look to, it could not possibly have advanced as it has. But it had also other leaders. Of these Zarathustra was one. (I am not speaking now of the "individuality" of Zarathustra, but of the personality of the original Zarathustra who taught concerning Ahura Mazdao.) In studying this personality in the parts of the world in which we find him, we must realise, that at first no individuality was in him as had risen so high through his own merit as Buddha had done; but he had been set apart to be the bearer, the sheath one might say, of a higher Being, of a spiritual entity, who could not himself incarnate in the world, but could only illuminate and work within a human form.

I have shown in my Rosicrucian Mystery Play, "The Portal of Initiation," how when it is necessary for the further evolution of the world, a human Being is inspired at certain times by some higher Being. This is not intended as a mere poetic image, but is an occult truth presented poetically. The personality of the original Zarathustra was no such highly evolved Being as the Buddha, but was chosen as one into whom a high individuality could enter, could dwell, and inspire him. Such persons were mainly found in olden times, that is in pre-Christian times, in the civilisations that evolved in North-Western Europe and Mid-Western Asia, but not among the peoples that in pre-Christian times evolved in Africa, Arabia, and the districts of Asia Minor extending eastwards into Asia. In these countries that kind of initiation was found which I have just described in its highest development as that of Buddha; while the other I am now about to describe as that of Zarathustra was more suited to northern peoples. The possibility of anyone being initiated in this way has only existed, even in our part of the world, for the last three or four thousand years. The personality of Zarathustra was selected somewhat in the following way to be the bearer of a higher Being, who could not himself incarnate. It was ordained from the spiritual worlds that a Spiritual Being should enter into some child, and when the child had grown up should work within this human being making use of the instruments of his brain, his will, etc. In order that this might take place something quite different had to happen than would otherwise happen in the individual evolution of this human being. Now the events I am about to describe did not happen in any such physical way throughout the life of this highly evolved human being as they otherwise should; though, naturally, people who follow the life of such a child with ordinary perceptions do not observe this. But those who have higher perception see that there is conflict from the beginning between the soul-forces of this child and the outer world, that

it is possessed of a will, of an impulsiveness that is in apparent contradiction to all that goes on around it. The fate of this divine, spirit-filled personality is that it grows up as a stranger, that those about it have no idea, no feeling, by which they can rightly understand such a child. As a rule there are few, perhaps only one person, who is able to divine what is developing within this human being. Conflict with its surroundings is apt to develop, and then occurs (but not till later years) what I described as happening when dealing with the story of the temptation of Buddha, when a man descends into his own being.

In normal life a man's individuality is born in him by means of the "sheath-nature" he receives from his parents or his nation. This individuality is not always in entire harmony with its sheaths, and on this account such a man feels more or less dissatisfied with the way fate has treated him. But so heavy, so mighty a conflict as occurred in Zarathustra's case is not possible if a man's individuality develops as it does in ordinary life. When a child like Zarathustra is observed clairvoyantly it is seen that he has feelings, thoughts, and powers of will very different from the feelings, thoughts and will-impulses developed by the people about him. We are shown (and indeed it is always to be seen, only nowadays people do not notice spiritual, but only physical facts) that the people around such a child know nothing of his nature. They feel on the contrary, an instinctive hatred for him, no matter what may be developing within him. To clairvoyant vision the sharp contrast is revealed that such a child who is really born for the salvation of mankind is surrounded by storms of hatred.

This has to be. It is because of this contrast that great impulses are born into humanity. Similar things are then told concerning such personalities as are told of Zarathustra.

One thing we are told — that Zarathustra could do at birth which otherwise only occurs weeks later. We are told he looked on the harmony of the world in such a way that he evolved his "Zarathustra smile." This smile is described as the first thing which showed him to be quite different from the rest of mankind. The second thing is that there was an enemy, a kind of King Herod, in the neighbourhood where Zarathustra was born. His name was Duranasarum, and after he had been informed of the birth of Zarathustra, which had been divulged to him by the Magi, the Chaldeans, he tried single-handed to murder the child. The legend goes on to tell how, at the moment he raised his sword to kill the child, his Hand was paralysed, and he was forced to let it go. These are pictures perceived by spiritual consciousness, pictures of spiritual realities. Further, we are told how this enemy of the child Zarathustra, unable himself to slay him, had him carried away by his servant to the wild beasts of the wilderness so that he might be devoured by them; but when people went to look for him no wild beast had harmed him, the child was found sleeping peacefully. As this attempt failed his enemy had the child placed where a whole herd of cows and oxen would pass over

him and trample him to death. But the first beast, so we are told, took the child between its legs and bore it away, so that the rest of the herd might pass by; it then set him down uninjured. The same thing was repeated with a drove of horses. And the final attempt of this enemy was that he was given to some wild animals after their young had been taken from them. Now it happened when his parents sent people to look for him, they found that none of these animals had harmed him, but as the legend relates "the child Zarathustra was nourished for a considerable time by a heavenly cow."

We need see no more in all this mass of evidence than that through the presence of the spiritual individuality that had been introduced into such a soul, very exceptional powers had been aroused in the child which brought it into disharmony with its surroundings, and that this was necessary in order that an upward impulse could be given to human evolution. For disharmonies are always necessary if true progress towards perfection is to be made. The nature of these forces is thus revealed, in spite of so great a Being making use of such a child they were required to bring it in touch with the spiritual world into which it was to enter. But how did the child experience this conflict? Picture to yourselves the entering of the soul into its own being at a moment of awaking. When the soul is able to experience the physical body and etheric body it then passes through the evolution I described in respect of Buddha. Now think of falling asleep as a conscious process. As things are to-day man loses consciousness when he falls asleep, instead of the ordinary pictures of the world a blank surrounds him. But suppose that a man could retain his consciousness when falling asleep, he would in that case be surrounded by a spiritual world — the world into which he pours his Being when sleep overtakes him. But here also there are hindrances. When we fall asleep a guardian of the threshold stands before the door through which we would have to pass. This is the Great Guardian who prevents our entrance into the spiritual world so long as we are unripe. He prevents our entrance because if we have not made ourselves inwardly strong enough, we are exposed to certain dangers when we allow our ego to pour forth over the spiritual world into which we enter when we fall asleep. The danger consists in this, that instead of seeing what is in the spiritual world objectively, we only see what we take there through our own fanciful imaginations, through our thoughts, perceptions and feelings. In this case we take what is worst in us, what is not in accordance with truth. Hence an unripe entry into the spiritual world indicates that a man does not see reality but imaginary forms, fantastic images which are described technically in spiritual science as "non-human visions." If a man would see objectively in the spiritual world he must rise to a higher stage where "human" things are seen. It is always a sign of a fantastic vision when animal forms are seen on rising to the spiritual world. Such animal forms represent the man's own fantasy, and are owing to his not being strongly enough established in himself. What is unconscious in us at night must be strengthened so that the surrounding spiritual world becomes objective, otherwise it is subjective, and we take our fantasies with us into the

spiritual world. They are within us in any case; but the Guardian preserves us from seeing them. This rising into the spiritual world and being surrounded by animal forms which attack us and desire to lead us astray is a purely inward experience. We have only to encompass ourselves with greater inward strength, we can then enter the spiritual world.

When a child is filled by a higher Being, as was the young Zarathustra, his bodily nature is naturally unripe, and has first to become ripe. The human organism, that is the understanding and sense-organisms, are disturbed. Such a child is in a world which is rightly described as "being among wild animals."

We have often shown that descriptions like this, which are both historical and pictorial, only represent different sides of the same matter. Events then happen so that spiritual powers, when represented as hostile forces, make their influence felt as did King Duranasarum in the case of the child Zarathustra. The whole thing exists in its archetypal form in the spiritual world, and external happenings only correspond with what takes place there. Present day methods of thought do not grasp such ideas easily. When people are told that the events connected with Zarathustra are of importance in the spiritual world they think — "Then they are not real." But when they are shown to be historic, the man of to-day is then inclined to regard everyone as only evolved so far as he is himself.

The endeavour of present day liberal theologians, for instance, is to present the figure of Jesus of Nazareth as being similar to, or at least as not far surpassing, what they can picture to themselves as their own ideal. It disturbs the materialistic peace of their souls when they have to picture great individualities. There should not be anyone in the world, they think, so very much exalted above the modern Professor of Theology.

But when dealing with great events, we are concerned with something that is at the same time both historic and symbolic, so that the one does not exclude the other. Those who do not understand that external things indicate more than appears on the surface will not attain to the understanding of what is true and essential.

The soul of the young Zarathustra really passed through great dangers in his early years, but at the same time, as the legend tells, the heavenly cows stood at his side helping and strengthening him.

We find similar things happening to all great founders of religions through all the regions of the Caspian Sea and even into Western Europe. We find people (without their having raised themselves through their own development) who are ensouled by a spiritual Being so that they can become leaders of mankind. Numerous legends and sagas exist among Celtic peoples, They tell of a founder of

religion, one Habich, he was exposed as a child and was nourished by heavenly cows, hostile forces appeared later on and drove away the animals – in short, the accounts of the dangers to the Celtic leader Habich are such that one can almost say they were extracts from certain of the miracles of Zarathustra. While we recognise Zarathustra as the greatest of these personalities, certain features of his miracles are found everywhere, all through Greece and as far as the Celtic countries of the West. As a well-known example we have only to think of the story of Romulus and Remus.

This is the other way in which the leaders of mankind arose. In speaking of it we have described, in a deeper sense, what we have often considered before: the two great streams of civilisation of post-Atlantean times. After the great catastrophe of Atlantis one of these streams continued to spread and develop throughout Africa, Arabia and Southern Asia; the other, which took a more northerly course, passed through Europe and Northern Central Asia. Here these two streams eventually met. All that has come to pass as a result of this is comprised in our post-Atlantean culture. The northern stream had leaders such as I have just described in Zarathustra; the southern, on the other hand, those such as we see in their highest representative in the great Buddha.

If you recall what you already know in connection with the Christ Event you might ask: – How does the Baptism by John in Jordan now strike us? The Christ came down and entered into a human being – as Divine Beings had entered into all the leaders and founders of religions – and into Zarathustra as the greatest of these. The process is the same, only here it is carried out in its sublimest form: Christ entered into a human being. But He did not enter this human being in childhood. He entered it in its thirtieth year, and the personality of Jesus of Nazareth had been very specially prepared for this event. The secrets of both sides of human leadership are given us in synthesis in the Gospels. Here we see them united and harmonised. While the evangelists, Matthew and Luke preferably, tell us how the human personality was organised into which the Christ entered; the Gospel according to Mark describes the nature of the Christ, tells of the kind of Being he himself is. The element that filled this great individual is what is especially described by Mark. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke give us in a wonderfully clear manner a different account of the temptation from that given in the Gospel of Mark, because Mark describes the Christ who had entered into Jesus of Nazareth. Hence the story of the temptation has here to be presented as it occurred formerly in the childhood of such great persons: the presence of animals is mentioned and the help received from spiritual powers. So that we have a repetition of the miracles of Zarathustra when the Gospel of Mark states in simple but imposing words:

"And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness (loneliness). And he was there in the wilderness with the wild beasts; and the angels (that is Spiritual Beings) ministered unto him." (Mark I, 12-13).

The Gospel of Matthew describes this quite differently, it describes what we perceive to be somewhat like a repetition of the temptation of Buddha; this means the form temptation assumes at the descent of a man into his own Being; when all those temptations and seductions approach to which the human soul is liable.

We can therefore say the Gospels of Matthew and Luke describe the path the Christ travelled when He descended into the sheaths that had been given over to him by Jesus of Nazareth; and the Gospel according to Mark describes the kind of temptation Christ had to pass through when He experienced the shock of coming up against His surroundings, as happens to all founders of religions who are inspired and intuited by Spiritual Beings from above.

Christ Jesus experienced *both* these forms of temptation, whereas earlier leaders of mankind only experience one of them. He united in Himself the two methods of entering the spiritual world; this is of the greatest importance; what formerly had occurred within two great streams of culture (into which smaller contributory streams also entered) was now united into one.

It is when regarded from this standpoint that we first understand the apparent or real contradictions in the Gospels. Mark had been initiated into such mysteries as enabled him to describe the temptation as we find it in his Gospel; the "Being with wild beasts," and the ministration of spiritual Beings. Luke was initiated in another way. Each evangelist describes what he knows and is familiar with. Thus what we are told in the Gospels are the events of Palestine and the Mystery of Golgotha, but told from different sides.

In stating this I wish once more to put before you, from a point of view we have as yet not been able to discuss, how human evolution has to be understood; and also how we must understand the intervention into it of such individuals as are passing on from the evolution of a Bodhisattva to that of a Buddha. We have to understand that the main thing in the evolution of these men is not so much what they are as men, but what has come down into them from above. Only in the form of Christ are these two united, and it is only when we realise this that we can rightly understand this form. We can also understand through this the many inequalities that must appear in Mythical personalities.

When we are told that certain Spiritual Beings have done this or that, in respect of what is right or wrong, and have done, for instance, what Siegfried did, one often hears people exclaim: — "And yet he was an Initiate!" But Siegfried's individual evolution does not come under consideration as regards a personality through whom a Spiritual Being is working. Siegfried may have faults. But what matters is that through him something had to be given to human evolution. For this a suitable personality had to be found. Everyone cannot be treated alike; Siegfried cannot be judged in the same way as a leader who belonged to the southern stream of culture, for the whole nature and type of those who sunk down within their own being was different. Thus one can say: — A Spiritual Being entered the forms belonging to the northern culture, compelling them to transcend their own nature and rise into the Macrocosm. While in the southern stream of culture a man sank down into the Microcosm, in the northern stream of culture he poured himself forth into the Macrocosm, and by doing so he learnt to know all the Spiritual Hierarchies as Zarathustra learnt to know the spiritual nature of the Sun.

The law contained herein can be summed up as follows: — The Mystic path, the path of Buddha, leads a man so far within his own inner being that breaking through this inner being he enters the Spiritual World. The path of Zarathustra draws a man out of the Microcosm, sending his being forth over the Macrocosm so that its secrets become transparent to him. The world has as yet little understanding of the mighty Spirits whose mission it is to reveal the secrets of the great universe. For this reason very little real understanding of the nature of Zarathustra has spread abroad, and we shall see how greatly what we have to say concerning him differs from what is usually said of him.

This lecture has again been an Excursus concerning those things which should gradually reveal to you the nature of the Gospel according to St. Mark.



06

Lecture IV

If you continue reading the Gospel of Mark from the verses we endeavoured to explain in the last lecture, you come to a remarkable passage similar in every way to what we are told in the other Gospels, but the full meaning of which can be best studied in the Gospel of Mark. This passage tells how Jesus Christ, after He had received baptism in Jordan and passed through the experiences met with in the wilderness, went into the synagogue and taught. The passage is generally translated as follows: – "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for He taught them as one that had authority and not as the scribes." What more does this sentence mean to the man of to-day, however much he may believe the Bible, than the somewhat abstract statement: "He taught with authority and not as the scribes?" If we take the Greek text we find for the words "For he taught with authority" – "He taught as an Exusiai" and not as the "scribes."

If we enter deeply into the meaning of this important passage, it leads us a step further towards what may be called the secrets of the mission of Christ Jesus. For I have already remarked that the Gospels as well as other writings that spring from inspired sources are not to be understood so simply as people think, but that we must bring to the understanding of them everything in the way of thoughts and ideas concerning the spiritual world that we have been able, to acquire in the course of many years. Only such thoughts can show us what is meant in the Gospel where it say: – For he taught those who sat in the synagogue as an "Exusiai," as a Power, and not as those who are hero called "scribes."

If such a sentence is to be understood we must recall the knowledge we have acquired in recent years concerning the super-sensible worlds. We have learnt during this period that man as he lives in this world is the lowest member of a hierarchical order; it is here we must place him. He is a part of the super-sensible world, a world where, in the first place, we find Beings called in Christian esotericism, Angeloi or Angels; these are the Beings standing next above man. Above them come the Archangeloi or Archangels, then the Archai or Spirits of Personality. Above these again are the Exusiai, Dynamis and Kyriotetes, and still higher are the Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim. We have thus a Hierarchical order of nine kinds of Beings one above the other, the lowest of which is man. Now we ought to understand how these many different spiritual or super-sensible Beings intervene in our lives.

Angels are those who, as *messengers* of super-sensible realms, stand nearest to man as he is on earth; they constantly influence what may be called the fate of individuals on our physical plane. As soon as we mention Archangels on the other hand, we speak of Spiritual Beings whose activities cover a wider span. We can also call them "Folk-Spirits," for they order and guide the concerns of whole nations or groups of peoples.

When a "Folk-Spirit" is spoken of to-day people generally mean so many thousands of people who are guided by this spirit merely because they live within the same territory. But when a "Folk-Spirit" is spoken of in spiritual science, we mean the individuality of the people, not such or such a number of people, but a real individuality, just as we speak of the "individuality" of separate men. And when speaking of the spiritual guidance of the individuality of a people this guide or leader is called an Archangel. In speaking of these exalted Beings we speak of real super-sensible entities having their own spheres of activity. The Archai (called also Spirits of Personality or first Beginnings) are spoken of in spiritual science as being again different from "Folk-Spirits." We speak, for instance, of a French or an English or a German "Folk-Spirit," and in doing so speak of something allotted to different parts of the earth. But there is something that unites all men, at least all western humanity, something in which these people feel at one. This, in contradistinction to the separate "Folk-Spirits," we call the "Spirit of the Age or Time-Spirit" (Zeitgeist), there is a different "Time-Spirit" or Zeitgeist for the time of the Reformation from that of pre-Reformation times, and again a different one for our own day. The Beings we call "Time-Spirits" or Zeitgeists have therefore to be ranked above the separate "Folk-Spirits"; in fact the name Archai is given to these leaders of succeeding epochs, but all the same they are "Time-Spirits."

When we rise still higher we come to the Exusiai, here we have to do with a quite different kind of super-sensible Being. In order to form an idea of how the Beings of the higher Hierarchies differ from the three just mentioned — the Angels, Archangels, Archai — think how similar members of one group of people is to another. As regards their external physical constitution — as regards what they eat and drink for instance — we cannot say they differ very much in anything outside the realm of the soul and spirit. Even in respect of succeeding epochs of time we must allow that the spiritual guides of humanity are connected only with the things of soul and spirit. But man does not consist only of soul and spirit, these influence mainly his astral body, but within his Being are also denser parts, and these, as regards the activities of the Archai, Archangels and Angels, do not differ much from each other. Creative influences are however at work on these denser members of man's Being, and this creative activity of Hierarchical Beings beginning with the "Exusiai," continues upwards.

We have to thank the "Time-Spirits" Zeitgeister or Archai, and the "Folk-Spirit" or Archangels, for ideas connected with time and for speech, but human nature is influenced also by other things, by what lives in light and air and in the climate of particular districts. The humanity that flourishes at the Equator is different from that which flourishes at the North Pole. We do not perhaps quite agree with a well-known German professor of philosophy who states in a widely read book that "Important civilisations must develop in the temperate zone, for all those great Beings who have introduced important civilisations would have frozen at the North Pole and been burnt up at the South Pole!" We can say however, food, etc., is different in different climates, and this affects people differently. External conditions are by no means unimportant to the character of a people, whether this people dwells, for instance, among mountains or on wide plains. We observe how the forces of nature influence the whole constitution of man, and as students of spiritual science we know that the forces of nature are nothing else than the result of the activities of Beings of a spiritual nature. For we hold that super-sensible spiritual Beings are active in all the forces of nature and make use of these to influence man. We therefore distinguish between the activities of Archai and of Exusiai by saying: – Angels, Archangel and Archai do not influence man by making use of the forces of nature, but they make use of that which affects his spiritual nature, his speech, and the ideas that connect him with epochs of time. The activity of these Beings does not extend to the lower members of his organism, neither to the etheric nor yet the physical body. In the Exusiai, on the other hand, we have to recognise those higher Beings affecting mankind who work through the forces of nature, who are the bringers to man of the different kinds of air and light, of the various ways in which foodstuffs are produced within the different kingdoms of nature. It is they who control these kingdoms of nature.

What comes to us in thunder and lightning, in rain and sunshine, how one kind of food grows in one region, other kinds in other regions – in short, the whole distribution and organisation of earthly condition we ascribe to spiritual Beings that have to be sought among the higher Hierarchies. So that when we look up to the nature of the Exusiai we do not see the result of their activities in any such invisible way as in the case of the "Time-Spirits" for instance; but we see in them that which works on us in light, and that also works on the plant creation as light.

Let us now consider what was given to man as "culture," what he had to learn in order to progress. Every man receives in his own age what this age has produced, but he also receives to a certain extent what former ages have produced. This can, however, only be preserved historically, can only be the result of historical teaching and learning. This is derived from the lowest of the Hierarchies, and reaches as far as to the "Time-Spirit." What comes to man on the other hand from the kingdoms of nature, cannot be preserved in records or traditions. Yet those who are able to penetrate to super-sensible worlds pass beyond the sphere of

Archangels to still higher revelations. Such revelations are perceived as carrying more weight than what comes from the realms of the Zeitgeists, they affect mankind in a quite special way.

Every clear thinking man should occasionally turn back and seriously ask himself – "Which has the greatest effect on my soul, that which I have learnt from the traditions of different peoples and 'Time-Spirit' since history began, or a lovely sunrise; that is, than the revelations of spiritual worlds presented to me by nature itself?"

Such a man feels that the grandeur and beauty of a sunrise reveals infinitely more to his soul than all the sciences, learning, and art of the ages. What nature reveals can be felt by anyone who having visited the Art Galleries of Italy and seen what have been preserved to us of the works of Michelangelo, of Leonardo da Vinci, or Raphael, and having allowed the power of these to act on him has then climbed one of the mountains of Switzerland, and viewed the marvellous spectacles provided by nature. He might then ask: – Who is the greater painter, Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci, or those Powers who paint the sunrise as seen from the Rigi? And he would be obliged to answer: – However much we may admire what man has achieved, what is here presented to us as the divine revelation of Spiritual Powers appears to us infinitely the greater!

When the great spiritual leaders of men appear whom we call Initiates, who speak not according to tradition but in an original way, their revelations resemble the revelations of nature itself. But what we feel in a sunrise would never have the same effect on us if it were something merely repeated. Compared with what we have received as the communications of Moses and Zarathustra, when these were *traditional* and had been handed down as the external culture which the "Time-Spirits" and "Folk-Spirits" had preserved and then passed on – compared with this what nature has to give is infinitely greater. For the revelations of Moses and of Zarathustra only worked as powerfully as nature's revelations when they sprang directly from the experiences of super-sensible worlds.

The grandeur of the original revelations made to man is seen in their power to affect him in the same way as the revelations of nature itself. But this only begins where, as lowest among the Hierarchies controlling nature, we divine something of the Exusiai.

What then was felt by those who sat in the synagogues when the Christ appeared among them?

We are told by the "Grammarians" that until then they had experienced those things which the "Time-Spirits," "Folk-Spirits" and others had communicated to them. People had got accustomed to this; but now One had appeared who did not

teach as those others, but so that His words were a revelation of the super-sensible Powers in nature itself, or of the Powers working in thunder and lightning.

Therefore when we know how the greatness of the Hierarchies increases as they ascend, we can understand such a saying in the Gospels and accept it in the full depth of its meaning. This is how we must feel about these words in the Gospel according to Mark, and even in such human endeavours as have come down to us in the works of art of Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci. Anyone with a feeling for the super-sensible quality lying behind these is aware — even in what remains — of all they originally presented to us. So that it is in all great works of art, in all great works of genius. Something continues to affect us in these like an echo of those others (the Hierarchies); and if we are able to see what Raphael, for instance, put into his pictures, or if we are able to pour fresh life into the works of Zarathustra, we can hear in them something of what streams down to us from the realms of the Exusiai. But in what was taught by the scribe in the Synagogue, that is, by those who accepted what originated from the "Folk-Spirits" and "Time-Spirits," nothing could be heard that agreed in any way with the revelations of nature.

We are justified therefore in saying, a sentence like this shows that men began at that time to have a feeling, a presentiment, that something entirely new was speaking to them; that through this man who had appeared among them something made itself felt that was like a power of nature, like one of those super-sensible powers that stand behind nature. Men began gradually to divine what it was that had entered into Jesus of Nazareth, and was symbolised in the baptism in Jordan. In reality, they were not far from the truth when they said in the synagogue: we feel when He speaks as though one of the Exusiai spoke — not only an Archai, or Archangel, or Angel.

It is only through what spiritual science has given us that we can fill once more with living sap these modern translations of the Gospels that have become so thin and meaningless; only then are we able to learn how very much goes to a true understanding of what is contained in the Gospels. It will take many generations to fathom, even approximately, all the depths of which our present age is only beginning to have some perception.

What the writer of the Gospel according to Mark desired especially to point out was really a further development of the teaching of Paul, who was one of the first to grasp the nature and Being of Christ through direct super-sensible knowledge.

Men had now to understand what Paul taught to all, what it was that all men could receive into them through the revelation of Damascus. Although this event is described in the Bible as a sudden illumination, yet those who know the truth

regarding such occurrences know that it can happen at any moment to one who desires to rise to spiritual realms; and that through what such a man experiences he becomes a changed Being. With regard to Paul we are amply told how he became an entirely different man through the revelation made to him on the way to Damascus.

Even a superficial study of the letters of St. Paul will prove to anyone that he saw in the Event of Christ and in the Event of Golgotha the central point of our whole human evolution; that he associated this directly with that other event spoken of in the Bible as "the first creation," the first Adam, so that he might have spoken somewhat as follows: —

What we describe as the true man, the spiritual man (of whom in this world of Maya only a Maya exists) came down in ancient Lemurian times to this world of illusion and to all he had to experience in the flesh in successive incarnations. He became man, as this was understood in Lemurian and Atlantean times, and up to the time of Christ. Then came the Event of Golgotha. All this was firmly fixed in the mind of Paul after the vision of Damascus. He realised that in the Event of Golgotha something was given which is comparable with the descent of man into the flesh. With this was given an impulse by which he could gradually overcome those forms of earthly existence which had entered into him through "Adam." Hence Paul calls the humanity that began with Christ, the "new Adam," the "Adam" that everyone can put on through union with the Christ.

We have therefore to see in the man of Lemurian times, and on into pre-Christian humanity, a slow and gradual descent of man into matter (whether he be called Adam or not). Then came the power and impulse that enabled him to rise again; so that along with all he acquired in earthly life man was able to return to his original spiritual state, that state in which he was before he descended into matter. Unless we misunderstand the true meaning of evolution we must now ask "Could man not have been spared this descent? Why had he to enter a fleshly body and pass through many incarnations, only then to rise again to what he had been before? Such questions can only spring from a complete misunderstanding of the spiritual nature of evolution. For man takes with him all the fruits and experiences of his earthly evolution, and is enriched with the results of his incarnations. These are results — contents, which he did not have previously. Picture to yourselves a man entering into his first incarnation: in it he learns certain things; he learns more in the second incarnation, and so on through all his subsequent incarnations. The course of these is a descending one; he is entangled more and more in the physical world. Then he begins to rise again, and is able to rise so far that he can receive within him the Christ-Impulse. One day he will again enter the spiritual world, but will have taken with him all he had gained on earth.

Paul saw in the Christ the true central point of the whole earthly evolution of man; he saw what gave man the impulse to rise to super-sensible worlds enriched by all the experiences he had gained on earth.

How, from this standpoint, did Paul regard the sacrifice on Golgotha, the actual crucifixion? It is not easy to bring these facts, these most essential facts of human evolution clearly before modern minds, in the sense in which Paul saw them. For this sense is also that of the writer of the Gospel of Mark. Before we can do this we must make ourselves familiar with the thought, that in man, as he comes before us to-day, we are concerned with a microcosm, a small world, and we must study everything that this idea brings with it.

As man comes before us to-day in the course of his evolution between birth and death in one re-incarnation, two parts of his development are presented which differ greatly from each other; only this difference is not noticed as a rule. I have frequently spoken about these fundamentally different parts of man's life (for our whole spiritually scientific endeavour has a more systematic construction than is often supposed), one of these parts or periods is that between birth and the moment to which at the present time memory extends. If we trace our life backwards, a point is finally reached beyond which all memory ceases. Although you were present, and have perhaps been told by parents or relatives of things you did, and so have knowledge of them, you have no recollection of them, memory does not reach beyond a certain point. Under favourable circumstances this lies round about the third year. Up to this period the child is specially active and impressionable. How much he has learnt during this period, during his first, second and third years! But of *how* things impressed him he has not the least recollection.

Then follows the time through which the thread of conscious memory extends smoothly.

These two parts of his development should be carefully considered, for they are of very great importance when man is studied as a whole. Human evolution must be followed carefully, and without the prejudices of modern science. The facts of modern science certainly confirm what I have to say; but if we are not to wander far from the truth we must not follow the prejudice of science. Observing human evolution closely we say: — Man's life among his fellows as a social being can only be lived in accordance with conditions regulated by memory, which begins as a rule about his third year. Of all that concerns this we can say: it is under the direction of our conscious life; all the things we consciously accept as laws according to which we guide our impulses, etc., and that we feel to be worthy, all this is contained in memory. Of what lies before we are unconscious so far as ego consciousness is concerned.

The threads of memory which belong to our conscious life do not reach to this period. There are therefore certain years of our conscious life during which the surrounding world works on us quite differently from how it does later. The difference is a most radical one. Were we able to observe a child before the period to which at a later age its memory extended, we should see that it then feels itself to be much more within general macrocosmic spiritual life; it is not yet separated from this, is not yet isolated within itself, but reckons that it belongs rather to the whole surrounding universe. It does not express itself as others; it does not say: — "I will," but "Johnnie wills." It only learns later to speak of itself as an ego; modern psychologists criticise such facts adversely, but this in no way denies the truth, but only their own powers of insight.

In its early years a child still feels within the whole surrounding world, feels that it is a part of this world. Memory first begins when it separates itself as an individual from the world around it. We can therefore say, the laws a man accepts, and which form the content of his consciousness, belong to the second part of his consciousness, to the second part of his evolution, the part we have just described. A quite different relationship to his environment belongs to the first part, he then feels far more a part of, far more within, the enviroing world. What I wish to say can only be clearly understood if you imagine hypothetically that the consciousness which gives man this direct contact with the surrounding universe in the first years of childhood, were able to continue. In that case his life would be entirely different, he would not feel so isolated, but would feel in later life that he was a part of the whole macrocosm, that he was within the great world. At present he loses this. He has no later connection with that world, he feels cut off from it. If he is a man belonging to ordinary life this feeling of isolation only comes to him in an abstract way. For instance, it enters his consciousness for the most part when egoism increases, when he shuts himself up, as it were, more and more within his own skin. Opinions limiting his life to what is contained within his skin are but half baked opinions, in fact nonsense, for the moment man exhales breath, the breath he had drawn in is now outside of him. So that even as regards our in-breathing and out-breathing we are continually in touch with our whole environment. The way man regards his own being is an absolute illusion, but his consciousness is such that he must live in this illusion. He cannot help himself. For we are really neither suited, nor are we ripe enough, to experience our own Karma at the present day. If, for example, someone wishes to close the window, we are apt, because we regard ourselves as separate beings, to feel injured and annoyed. But if we believed in Karma we would feel that we belonged to the whole macrocosm, and would know as a fact that it was really we who had closed the window, for we are interwoven with the whole cosmos. It is absolute nonsense to think we are enclosed within our skins. But the feeling of being one with the macrocosm is only retained by the child in its early years, it is lost from the point of time to which later its memory extends.

Things were not always thus. In former times, which do not lie so very far behind us, man was still able to a certain extent to carry this consciousness of his early years on into later times. This was in the days of the ancient clairvoyance. With it was associated a quite different kind of thinking as well as a different way of expressing facts. This is something belonging to human evolution that it would be well the student of spiritual science should understand.

When a man is born among us at the present day, what is he? He is in the first place the son of his father and of his mother. And if in communal life he has not got a certificate of birth or baptism showing the standing of his father and mother by which he can be identified nothing is known of him, and his existence is ignored. According to the ideas of the present day, a man is the physical son of his father and of his mother.

This is not how men thought at a time not so very long ago. But because the scientists and investigators of to-day do not know that in former times men thought differently, that their words and their relationships to each other were different from what they are now, they have therefore arrived at interpretations of ancient communications that are also quite different. We are told for instance, in these ancient communications of a Greek singer, Orpheus. I select him because he belongs to an age immediately preceding that of Christianity. It was Orpheus who inaugurated the Grecian Mysteries. The Greek age falls within the fourth period of post-Atlantean civilisations, so that in a way the Greeks were prepared by Orpheus for what they were to receive later through the Christ Event.

What would a modern man say if confronted by a person like Orpheus? He would say: — He is the son of such and such a father and mother, modern science might perhaps even look for "inherited attributes" in him. There exists to-day a large volume treating of all the inherited characteristics of the Goethe family, and would present Goethe as the sum of these inherited attributes. People did not think in this way at the time of Orpheus, they did not then regard external man and his attributes as what was most essential. The most essential thing in Orpheus was the power by which he became the inaugurator, the true leader, of pre-Christian civilisation in Greece. They recognised quite clearly that his physical brain and nervous system were not what was most important in him. They considered this to be far more the fact that he bore within him an element that had its direct source in super-sensible worlds, that through it, all he experienced in these worlds came in touch, by means of his personality, with a physical sensible element, and could then express itself in the various stages provided by a physical personality. The Greeks saw in Orpheus not the man of flesh descended from father and mother, even perhaps from grandfather and grandmother, this was not to them the main thing, it was only his shell, his outer

presentment. For them the essential thing in him was what had descended from a super-sensible source, and had entered into a sensible being on the physical plane.

When the Greeks confronted Orpheus they hardly considered his descent from father and mother, what mattered to them was the fact that his soul qualities, the qualities through which he had become what he was, sprang from a super-sensible source that till then had never had any connection with the physical plane, and that through what this man was, a super-sensible element was able to work within his personality and be united with it.

Because the Greeks saw, as what was most essential in Orpheus, a pure super-sensible element, they said of him: — "He is descended from a Muse." He was the son of the Muse Calliope; he was not the son of any mere earthly mother, but of a super-sensible element that had never had connection with sensible things. Had he been the son of Calliope alone, he could only have given information concerning super-sensible worlds. But because of the age in which he lived he was ordained to give expression also to that which would be of service to his age physically. He was not only an instrument for the voice of the Muse Calliope, as the Rishis at an earlier day had been the vocal instruments of certain super-sensible forces, but he was able to express super-sensible things so vividly in his own life that the physical world was influenced by him. Because Orpheus had a Thracian river God for his father, what he taught was closely associated on the other side with nature, with the climate of Greece, and with all that external nature gave to the river god, Okeanos.

We gather therefore that the soul-nature of Orpheus was considered the most important part of him. It was in respect of their souls men were described long ago, not as became customary later when people were described by saying: he is the son of so and so, and was born in such a town, but they were described according to their spiritual values.

It is extraordinarily interesting to note how intimately the fate of a man like Orpheus was felt; a man who was descended on one side from a muse and on the other from a river god. He had within him not merely super-sensible qualities as the prophets had, but to these he had added sensible qualities. He was therefore exposed to all the influences exercised on man by the physical sensible world.

You are well aware that the nature of man is composed of several members. The lowest of these is the physical body, then comes the etheric body (concerning which I told you that it comprises the opposite sex), then the astral body and the ego. A man like Orpheus was still able to look on one side into the spiritual world because he was descended from a Muse (you now know what that means), but on the other side the capacities by which he could live in the spiritual world were

undermined owing to the life he led on the physical plane, and because of his descent from his father, the Thracian river god. Through this his purely spiritual life was undermined. In the case of all the earlier leaders of mankind in the second and third periods of post-Atlantean culture, by whom only a verbal teaching concerning the spiritual world had been imparted, conditions were such that they were conscious of their own etheric body as something separated from their physical body. When in the civilisations of ancient Greece, and also in those of the Celts, a man was empowered to perceive what he had to communicate to his fellow-men, these revelations came to him because his etheric body extended beyond his physical body. It became in this case the hearer of forces which entered into the man. If the person giving out these revelations was a *man* and his etheric body therefore female, he perceived what he had to communicate from the spiritual world in a female form.

Now it had to be shown that where Orpheus came into purely spiritual relationship with Spiritual Powers, he was exposed, owing to his being the son of the Thracian river god, to the risk of not being able to retain the revelations that came to him through his etheric body. The more he entered into the life of the physical world and expressed what he was as a son of Thrace, the more he lost his clairvoyant powers. This is shown in the fact that Eurydice, she through whom he revealed himself, his soul-bride, was removed from him, and was taken to the underworld. This occurred through the bite of an adder. He could only receive her back again by passing through an initiation. This he now did. Whenever we are told of anyone "going into the underworld," it means an initiation, so he had to pass through an initiation before receiving his bride back again. But already he was too closely interwoven with the physical world. He certainly did attain powers by which he was able to penetrate to the underworld, but on his return, as he again beheld the light of the sun, Eurydice disappeared from his sight. Why? Because when he beheld the light of day he did something he should not have done — he looked back. That means, he overstepped a law strictly laid on him by the God of the underworld. What law is this? It is, that physical man as he lives on the physical plane to-day must not look back beyond that moment of time I have already described, within which lie the macrocosmic experiences of childhood, and which, when extended into later states of consciousness, gave him the ancient form of clairvoyance. "Thou shalt not desire to unravel the secrets of childhood," said the God of the underworld, "nor remember how the threshold was crossed." If he did this he lost the faculty of clairvoyance. Something infinitely fine and intimate in Orpheus is shown us by this loss of Eurydice, one result of which is the sacrifice of man to the physical world. With a nature that is still rooted in the spiritual world, he is directed to what he has to become on the physical plane. Through this nature all the powers of the physical plane rush in on him, and he loses "Eurydice" his own innocent soul, which must be lost to modern humanity. The forces among which he is then placed lacerate him. This in a certain sense is regarded as the sacrifice of Orpheus.

What did Orpheus experience as he lived on from the third to the fourth period of post-Atlantean culture? He experienced in the first place that stage of consciousness which the child leaves behind — he experienced connection with the Macrocosm. This does not pass over into his conscious life. Therefore, as we see him, he is swallowed up, slain by life on the physical plane, which really begins at the point of time of which we have been speaking.

Consider now the man of the physical plane, who is normally only able to carry his memory back to a certain point of time, before which lie the first three years of childhood.

The thread of memory so entangles Orpheus with the physical plane that with his true nature he could not abide in it, but is torn to pieces. Thus it is with the spirit of man to-day; we see how profoundly the human spirit is entangled in matter. This is the spirit which, according to the Christianity of St. Paul, is called the "Son of Man." You get this conception of the "Son of Man" who is in man from the point of time to which memory extends, along with all that he has gained through culture. Keep this man before you, and then think what he might have been through union with the Macrocosm, if there had entered into him all that streamed towards him from the Macrocosm in the early years of childhood. In these early years what comes can only form a foundation, for the evolved human ego is not yet present. But if it entered into an evolved human ego there would then take place what occurred for the first time through the baptism in Jordan at the moment when "the Spirit from above" descended upon Jesus of Nazareth. The three innocent stages of childhood's development would blend with all the rest of the human being. The consequence would be as this innocent life of childhood sought to develop on the physical earth, that it could do so only for three years (as is always the case): — it would meet its end on Golgotha. This means it cannot mingle with what man becomes at the moment when he achieves his egohood, at the point of time to which later his memory extends.

If you ponder this; if you ponder what it would mean if all the connections with the Macrocosm were to meet in one man; if everything that approached him in a vague, uncertain way in his early childhood streamed into him, but could not really dawn in him because the evolved ego was not present, were you to carry this thought further and picture it dawning within a later consciousness, something would be formed in man, something would enter into him, which did not spring from a human source, but from the vast world-depths out of which we are born. You would then have the interpretation of the words uttered in connection with the descent of the dove: — "This is my well beloved Son; this day have I begotten Him!" This means: Now is the Christ — incarnated — "begotten" in Jesus of Nazareth. Christ was actually born in Jesus of Nazareth at the moment of baptism in Jordan. He then stood at the summit of that consciousness, which otherwise man only enjoys in the early years of childhood, but He was aware at

the same time of this union with the whole cosmos. A child would also have this feeling of union if it were aware of what it felt during those three early years. In this case other words heard at that time would acquire a different meaning: — "I and the Father (the cosmic Father) are one!"

When you allow all this to affect your souls you will be conscious of something within you that is like an echo of what Paul felt, the earliest initial element of that which came to him in the revelation of Damascus, and experienced in the beautiful words: — "Unless ye become as little children ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." This saying has manifold meanings, among others this — Paul said, "Not I, but Christ in me!" This means a being having the macrocosmic consciousness a child would have were it to experience the consciousness of its three early years along with that of a later day. In the normal man of to-day these two kinds of consciousness are separate, they must be separate, for they are not compatible. Neither were they in Jesus Christ. For after these three years death had necessarily to follow under such circumstances as occurred in Palestine. It was not by chance these occurred as they did, but because two factors lived in one Being: the "Son of God" — which man is from the time of his birth until the development of his ego-consciousness, and the "Son of Man" which he is after this ego-consciousness has been acquired. Through the union of the "Son of God" and the "Son of Man" all those events came to pass which later led to the Events of Palestine.



07 Lecture V

For the goal we have set before us, which is connected with the study of the Gospel of Mark, is to be pursued further, it must be grasped in its widest meaning. It may perhaps be only after a considerable time that the reason will appear why one or another line of study has been pursued, and what connection these have with our subject. We will have to speak to-day, for instance, of certain things which apparently are far removed from our theme, but which will be of great assistance to us in our later studies.

Allow me to say in the first place that those who are outside our movement will always have difficulty in understanding certain things connected with the direction of the theosophical spiritual movement so long as they do not inform themselves intimately with what concerns the central nerve of this movement. Such things, for instance, as: what meaning and value have "clairvoyant investigations" for those who have not yet attained clairvoyant powers. The objection might be made: — "How can a faith or conviction concerning spiritual truths be developed by those who cannot see into the spiritual world?"

Here attention must be drawn to the opposite — that as long as our clairvoyant eyes remain unopened we cannot see into the spiritual world, although from this spiritual world all the results and revelations it contains are derived. When it is stated as a result of clairvoyant investigation that man consists of four members — physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego — the person who holds aloof from such investigation might perhaps object: — "I only see the physical body, how can I convince myself of the existence of these higher members of my Being before my Karma makes it possible for me to see them and realise the truth of what I am told concerning them."

It is easy for anyone, if he so wishes, to deny the existence of the astral and etheric body, but he cannot by decree annul the processes that go on in them, for they are seen in human life. I would like, in order that you may enter into the whole composition of the Being of man, as revealed by many of the expressions found in the Gospels, to show how clearly the results of processes within the etheric and astral body can be seen in our ordinary life on the physical plane.

Let us, in the first place, consider the difference between a man who is full of idealism and sets up high ideals, and one who is disinclined to do this, who acts according to instinct, who eats when he is hungry, sleeps when he is sleepy, does

this or that when moved by desire for one thing or another. Naturally there are all kinds of intermediate stages between these two types; between the one just described and others whose thoughts and ideals rise far above what they are able to attain in ordinary life. Such idealists are always in a peculiar position regarding life. They must always try to convince themselves of the truth of the saying that it is not possible really to satisfy their highest ideals in any domain of the physical plane. Idealists constantly state: — "My deeds ever lag behind my ideals." We must therefore acknowledge when speaking strictly: in a man's ideals — in what he thinks or feels, there is always something greater than in his deeds. According to spiritual science this is the outstanding feature of the idealist. Keep this clearly before you: the idealist is one whose intentions and thoughts are always greater than what he is able to accomplish on the physical plane. Of the man whose life we have described as being the opposite of this we can say: his thoughts and views are narrower, more restricted than his deeds. Anyone who acts only from instinct, passion, or desire, has not thoughts capable of grasping the result of his actions at any given moment, the things he does far exceed his power of thought. His intentions and thoughts are therefore narrower, more restricted, than his deeds on the physical plane.

The clairvoyant has something to tell us concerning these two types. When we do something, when we carry out some piece of work that is greater and more far-reaching than our thoughts, this activity always casts a reflection into our astral body. We do nothing in life that is not reflected or imaged in our astral body. This image is imparted later to the etheric body and as it is imparted so it remains in the Akashic Chronicle and can be seen there by the clairvoyants as a picture of what the man has done during his life. In the same way images remain behind in the astral body and are later projected into the etheric body, thoughts that are greater than the fulfilment of them. This means thoughts that are the outcome of idealism, that are reflected in the astral body and continue further into the etheric body.

There is a great difference between the reflected images of actions that have sprung from instincts, desires, passions, etc., and the reflected images of deeds that are the outcome of idealism. The first contain something that remains as a destructive element during a man's whole life. They are those images, those contents of the astral body which gradually affect the entire human being so that it is slowly destroyed. Such images are closely connected with the way human life on the physical plane is gradually prepared for death. But those other reflections springing from thoughts which transcend our actions, have life-giving qualities. They are specially stimulating to our etheric body, for they continually bring new vital forces to man's whole being.

Thus, according to clairvoyance, we have destructive forces within us on the physical plane and at the same time forces that continually impart fresh life. As a rule the effect of these forces on life can be easily seen. We meet people who are gloomy, hypochondriacal, of a sombre temperament, people who are not happy in their soul life, all this works back on their physical organism. They become nervous, and one observes how nervousness, if it continues, undermines the health of the physical organism. Such men become melancholy in later life, are discontented with themselves, and in various ways are unbalanced natures. If the cause of this is investigated we find that such persons have had little opportunity in the earlier periods of their physical life of transcending action by idealistic thought. In ordinary life such things are not noticed; but their results are clear! Many people feel these results strongly, they feel them as an attitude of soul and of life, and perceive them also in bodily conditions.

So, though the astral body may be denied, its consequences cannot be denied, for they are felt. And when life reveals the things I have just described people are forced to acknowledge that we are not so very foolish when we declare that we have proof of them. For though spiritual happenings can only be seen by the clairvoyant, the results can be seen by anyone.

On the other hand we find that thoughts which are more noble than the actions connected with them, leave impressions which appear in later life as courage, confidence and calmness. These continue to work even into the physical organism, but the connections are only noticed when a man's life is observed over long periods of time. The mistake of many scientific observations is that people are apt to judge results immediately in the course of the first few years, whereas the results of many things are only apparent after decades.

Now, we must realise, there are not only people of a purely idealistic nature whose thoughts transcend their various experiences, and others whose thoughts lag behind their experiences, but we have a large number of experiences which our thoughts only grasp with the greatest difficulty. Eating and drinking are things that spring anew each day from instinct, and it takes a long time before those who are going through a spiritual training learn to connect such things with spiritual life. It is precisely everyday things that are the most difficult to connect with spiritual life. We have first done this as regards eating and drinking when we have discovered why, in order to serve the progress of the world, we have to receive physical substances into us regularly, and what connection these physical substances have with spiritual life. We then learn that digestion is not merely a physical process, but that there is something spiritual in its rhythm. In any case there is a way of gradually spiritualising those things which are not demanded purely by external necessity; it is possible so to regard them that we say: — We eat this or that fruit, and through our spiritual knowledge can always form an idea of how an apple, or any other fruit, is related to the universe as a whole. This,

however, takes a long time. For we must in this case accustom ourselves to allow eating to be no mere material fact, but to observe the connection between the spirit and the ripening of any fruit by the rays of the sun.

In this way we spiritualise the most material, most everyday processes, and acquire power to enter into them with our thoughts. (Here it is only possible to hint how thoughts and ideas can be brought into this realm.) It is a long road, and very few men in our age can arrive at thinking perfectly as regards eating.

Thus there are not only people who act instinctively, and others who act idealistically, but with everyone life is partitioned so that one part of a man's actions is carried out in a way that thought cannot follow, and others so that thoughts and ideas have a wider range than actions. We have one set of forces within us which lead our life downhill, and operate so that our physical organism through internal causes is gradually prepared for death; and another set of forces which bring life to our astral and etheric bodies, and dawn continually like a new light within these bodies. These are the life-giving forces within our etheric body.

When after death we forsake our sheaths with the spiritual part of our being we still have the etheric body about us for a few days, and because of this we have that backward vision of our whole life of which I have often spoken. The best of what now remains to us is something inwardly constructive, the life-giving forces just mentioned, that rise within us because our ideas transcend the sum of our actions. These continue to work in us after death, and contain the life-forces necessary for our following incarnation.

The life-giving forces we implant in us remain within our etheric body, they are forces of enduring youth, and though we cannot lengthen our life through them we can so shape it that it retains the freshness of youth for a longer time. We do this by acting in such a way that our thoughts surpass the measure of our deeds.

When a man asks himself: — "How can I gain those ideals which best transcend my actions?" We answer: — This is possible when people give themselves up to spiritual science which directs their thoughts to super-sensible worlds. When they learn, for instance, from spiritual science of the evolution of man, these communications stir up forces in the higher members of their being, and they gain through them at the present day the most certain, most concrete idealism. And when questioned further: — "What specially does spiritual science do compared with other sciences?" We answer: — "It pours into our astral and etheric bodies, fresh, youthful, life-giving forces."

People are related to what we call spiritual science in so many different ways, not because as men of to-day they are non-clairvoyant, but because they do not observe things in ordinary life with sufficient care; otherwise they would see the

various ways in which what we call the man of soul and spirit reveals himself, even within his organism.

Those who live in the world and only approach spiritual science as thorough unbelievers may hear it said: — "This science holds, that the human physical body is filled by various *higher* members, it sums these up as the *soul-* and *spirit-man*. But the materialists of the present day do not wish to believe in this man of soul and spirit. They believe only in the physical man, and for this reason they are materialists. Under the term *materialists* people frequently understand only theoretical materialists, those who only believe in matter! But as I have often said — these theoretical materialists are not the worst, for such a materialist might be one who created ideas merely through his understanding, and such ideas are usually very short-sighted, a materialism that springs only from ideas is not necessarily very harmful. But when it is fortified by other things it can be very harmful for a man's whole life, especially when with the innermost spiritual kernel of his being he is attached to his material side. And how dependent people are today on what is material!

It may be misleading to assert that there are theoretical materialists as regards thoughts, and that some thoughts are fatal to our souls; but our external life is also greatly influenced by the fact that in the practices of life there are so many materialists. What do I mean by this? I mean a man who is so dependent on physical things, that he can only spend a few months in his office in winter, and in the summer must go to the Riviera. Such a man is entirely dependent on materialistic arrangements and combinations; he is a materialist as regards the practices of life; he is entirely dependent on material things; his soul is forced to run after the wants dictated by life. This is a different kind of materialist from the one who lives only in thoughts which are materialistic. A theoretical idealism may yet lead to the conviction that theoretical materialism is a mistake, but the practical materialist can only be cured by entering profoundly into spiritual science.

If people would only think, that is, if their thoughts did but spring, not merely from understanding, but from a connection with reality, they would recognise from quite ordinary facts that there is a great difference between the various parts of man's being.

I will first point out the difference between the hands and, let us say, the shoulders.

If we investigate physical man in an entirely external way, we find physical differences, for instance, in the way the nerves behave. Yet we must remember that we can exercise a certain influence on this. If the behaviour of our nerves was the absolute and only authority for the soul, we should be dependent on the

activity of substance, for the behaviour of the nerves is an activity of substance. This we most assuredly are not; for we are able to influence the state of our nerves, and we do so in the most varied way, especially through our etheric and astral bodies; that is through our soul and spirit. We must not simply say: — "The physical body is filled by the etheric and astral body," for this varies according to the part we are considering, whether it be the head or the shoulder or some other part. Different spiritual parts act differently. It is easy to convince ourselves of this. We must, however, realise that what takes place in life is in accordance with reality, and cannot be studied without thought. If our breath is not drawn correctly the physiologist discovers by physiological laws why it did not reach the place intended.

And why do people not ponder the profound significance there is for life in the fact that they wash their hands more often than any other part of their body? (It may seem strange that such things should be mentioned, but it is precisely by everyday events that the communications of the clairvoyant can be verified.) In any case this is a fact. And it is also a fact that some people wash their hands more frequently and more gladly than others. This fact so apparently trivial is really connected with the highest knowledge. When a clairvoyant observes the hands, they are for him wonder-fully different from all the other members, even from the face. From the fingers luminous projections stream forth from the etheric body, sometimes glimmering feebly, sometimes piercing surrounding space. They stream forth differently according to whether the person is joyful or sad, and differently from the inner surfaces than from the backs of the hands. For anyone who can observe things clairvoyantly the hand, more especially in its etheric and astral parts, is a most wonderful formation.

Everything around us even if material, is a revelation of spirit. Matter has to be thought of in regard to spirit as ice is to water; matter is formed out of spirit. If you like you may call it consolidated spirit. Therefore if we come in contact with any substance, we contact the spirit in that substance. Any contact we make with substance, in so far as this is material, is Maya (illusion). In reality it is the spirit we encounter.

The way we come in touch with the spirit in water, when we wash our hands for instance, is seen — when life is observed with sharpened senses — to have a great influence on our whole disposition, however often we wash them. There are natures that have a certain preference for washing their hands, they must wash at once if they touch anything dirty. These natures are related in a quite special way to their surroundings. They are not restricted merely to what is material, for it is as if a fine force within the material substance begins to affect them, and that they have established the connection I mentioned between their hands and the element of water. Such people are even seen to possess, in an entirely healthy sense, more sensitive natures, finer powers of observation than others. They

know at once, for instance, if they encounter anyone of a brutal or of a kindly nature. Whereas those others who endure dirt on their hands are actually of a coarser nature, and show by such ways that they have raised a wall between themselves and the more intimate relationships with the surrounding world. This is a fact and, if you like, it can be proved ethnographically. Pass through and observe the various countries of the world. You are then able to say: — "Here or there people wash their hands more." Observe the relationship between such people, observe how different the relationship is between friend and friend, between acquaintance and acquaintance, in regions where hands are more frequently washed than in regions where walls have been raised between them owing to this being done less frequently.

Such things have the value of natural laws, Other connections can cancel them. If we throw a stone through the air, the line of its flight describes a parabole. But if the stone is caught by the wind the parabole is not there. This shows that we have to know the conditions before certain relationships can be observed correctly!

Whence does this knowledge come? It comes from clairvoyance, for it is revealed to this consciousness how finely the hands are permeated by soul and spirit qualities. This is so much the case that a special relationship of the hands to water is apparent, greater than in the case of the human countenance, and greater still than in respect of the surface of other parts of the human body. This must not be understood as an objection in any way to bathing and washing, but rather as throwing light on certain relationships. It is only to show how very differently man's soul and spirit-nature is related to his various members, and how differently this is impressed on them.

You will find it hard to believe, for instance, that anyone could suffer injury in his astral body through washing his hands too frequently. But this must be considered in its widest aspect. It depends on the maintenance of a healthy relationship between man and the surrounding world — that is, between the astral body of man and the surrounding world — through the relationship of his hands to water. For this reason excess in this is hardly possible.

If people think only in a materialistic way, clinging with their thoughts to what is material they say: — "What is good for the hands is good for the rest of the body." Showing that they do not note the fine differences between them and the other members.

The result is one that is seldom noticed; namely, that as regards certain things all of the human body should not be treated alike. For instance, as a specific cure children used to be ordered frequent cold baths and friction. Fortunately, because of certain results on the "nervous system" physicians have found these methods unwise. For, owing to the special relationship between the hands and the astral

body, what is in some ways suitable for them, may soon prove harmful where the body stands in a different relationship to the astral body. Where a healthy sense of perception towards the surrounding world is evoked through frequent handwashings, an unhealthy, hyper-sensitiveness is often the result of an exaggerated cold water treatment; and this, especially if employed in childhood, may last during the whole life.

It is therefore most necessary that the limits should be known, and this is only possible when people acknowledge the fact that the physical body is closely linked with the higher members of man's Being. People will then realise that the more physical part of us – the physical instrument – must be treated quite differently from the soul and spirit-nature. They must also realise this in connection with the glands which are instruments especially of the etheric body, while everything connected with the nerves and the brain is intimately associated with the astral body. If these things are not understood, neither will certain other appearances ever be understood. Materialists err most in this, because they always look to the instrument and not back to the cause. Everything we experience is experienced in the realm of the soul, and that we are conscious of these experiences depends on our having an instrument of reflection in the physical body. In it everything is preserved, but the physical body is only the instrument. This is often brought to our notice in a remarkable way. I need only mention the thyroid gland. This you know is regarded as a meaningless organ, and in cases of illness is removed, but the patient may sink into idiotcy. If only a part of this gland remains the danger is avoided. This shows that the secretions of this gland are necessary for the development of certain things in the life of the soul. Now the strange nature of this organ is further revealed in the fact that if the secretions of the thyroid gland of a sheep are given to the patient who has lost his own gland, the tendency to idiotcy is lessened, but the contrary if the secretions of the sheep are withheld. Materialists find great satisfaction in this fact. Spiritual science is able, however, to estimate it in the right way. We are faced with the strange fact that we are here concerned with an organ, the products of which we can trace directly to our organism. Activities such as occur in the thyroid gland are only possible when there is a certain connection with the etheric body. Where a similar connection exists with the astral body these activities are not possible.

I have known more or less feebly endowed men who have eaten sheep's brains, yet have not become clever! This shows the great difference there is between different organs. This difference is only so considerable because one group of organs have connection with the etheric body, others with the astral body. From this another very remarkable fact is disclosed to spiritual observation.

It seems very strange that a man becomes feeble-minded when his thyroid gland is removed, but can be restored to cleverness by having the extract of the same gland administered to him. It seems strange because it cannot be discovered that

his brain is affected thereby. This is again a point where ordinary human observation is of necessity led to spiritual scientific methods of observation, for spiritual science shows that the man did not become the least feeble-minded when his thyroid gland was removed. "But," you say, "the facts show that the man was feeble-minded!" In reality men do not become idiotic because they are wanting in understanding, but because the possibility of making use of the instrument which gives them "awareness" is wanting. They do not become idiotic through any loss of understanding, but because contact with their surroundings is blunted, and bluntness is different from the loss of understanding. Understanding is not lost if through want of awareness it has never been developed. If you are unable to think about a thing, you cannot express yourself regarding it; you must first think of it before any contact with it can be established. The "power to participate," the living interest in things is undermined when the thyroid gland is removed. Men become indifferent to such an extent indeed, that they cease to employ their understanding.

From this you can see the great difference between the employment of an instrument of understanding like the various parts of the brain, and of an instrument connected with a gland such as the thyroid gland. In this way we are able to throw light on the different ways in which our physical body is an instrument, and when this is understood we can distinguish between the different parts of human consciousness.

Even in respect of the ego we can say that it is related in the most varied way to the surrounding world. We have here to consider things connected with the ego which I have described elsewhere from different aspects, showing how man either enters more within himself with his ego, strives to become more aware of himself, or he turns to the outer world striving rather to find his connection with it. We become in a certain sense conscious of ourselves when we turn our glance inwards – when we devote ourselves to the thought of what life gives us, what it holds for us. We are then conscious of our ego. We can become conscious of it when we come in contact with the outer world; for instance, when we knock up against a stone, or if we can-not solve a calculation we are conscious of our ego as something feeble compared to conditions in the external world. In short, both within ourselves and also in the external world we can become conscious of our ego. We become aware of our ego in a very special way when those magic connections between man and the surrounding world arise which we describe as feelings of sympathy or compassion. Here it is clearly seen that a magic activity passes from soul to soul, from spirit to spirit. For whatever takes place in the world is felt by us; what is there felt or thought, is experienced again within us, we experience it as something inward, something of the soul and spirit. We are then inwardly intensified; for compassion and sympathy are experiences of the soul. And if our ego is not sufficiently developed for these experiences and requires strengthening, this is expressed in a purely spiritual way through sorrow and in a

physical way through tears. Sorrow as a soul-experience brings greater strength to the ego in respect of outward experience than does indifference. Sorrow is always an inner enhancement of the ego. Tears but express the fact that at the moment the ego strives to experience more than it would through indifference.

In this connection we are forced to admire the poetic fantasy of the young Goethe, closely connected as it was with profound facts of human nature. It is where he allows the weakness of Faust's ego to lead him so far that he feels at first constrained to extinguish this ego physically, he feels driven to suicide.; then the Easter bells ring out, and at the sound the ego of Faust begins to gather strength, so much so that tears spring – the sign of this in the soul of Faust: – "Tears start, earth holds me once more," he cries.

This means that what belonged to earth was strengthened through the shedding of tears, the increased intensity of the ego found expression in tears.

In mirth and laughter we again have what is connected with the strength or weakness of the ego in its relationship to the external world. These show that the ego feels strong as regards its understanding of things and events. In laughter our ego draws together, and its intensity is strengthened. (See *Paths of Experience: the Chapter on Laughing and Weeping*, where this subject is fully explained. – Ed.) This finds expression in mirth, in the way we show our amusement. With this is associated the fact that sorrow is fundamentally something that should be so experienced, at least by the healthy man, that what occasions this sorrow is real to him. What affects us in this reality, so that in sharing it we feel we must enhance the inner activity of our ego, brings about a feeling of sadness. But when sorrow depends on what is unreal and is expressed merely in an artistic sense, the man of sound thought will feel that he requires something more. He feels that to the cause of his sadness a certain conviction must be added that sorrow can be overcome by something able to conquer misery. Therefore we demand from the drama that it should represent the victory of the person who is overtaken by misery. It is no aesthetic representation of life that sets only its trivial elements before us; in a man who trusts entirely to his healthy nature, the ego is not satisfied when confronted with misery that is counterfeited.

The whole weight of reality is required before our ego can rise to compassion.

Now, do you not feel in your souls how different it is as regards anything comic? It is in a certain extent inhuman to laugh at a simpleton, but it is quite sound to laugh at one when represented on the stage. Burlesques and comedies are a healthy means of showing how the folly of men's actions leads to absurdities.

When our ego is able to rise to laughter over what is generally recognised as folly, it is strengthened, and there is no healthier laughter than that evoked through such artistic presentations, though it is inhuman to laugh at what actually befalls our fellow men, or at a real simpleton. Thus different laws come into operation whether these things affect us as representations or in actual life. We must allow that if our ego is to be strengthened through compassion this is best done when we are actually confronted with the fact that moves us to compassion. On the other hand as healthy men we demand from misery that is counterfeited, that we should find in it the means of overcoming it. In the dying heroes of tragedy, where death is actually enacted before our eyes, we feel that the victory of the spirit over death is symbolised in these deaths. The whole matter is re-versed when the ego is brought in touch with the world around us. We then feel that faced with reality we can-not attain to mirth or laughter in the right way, that we are best able to laugh at those things that are more or less removed from reality.

When a man meets with some misfortune, which does not specially injure him and is not closely connected with the real facts of life, we may well laugh at his misfortune. But the nearer this experience is to reality the less can we laugh at it when we understand it. From this we see how varied are the relationships of our ego to reality, but in all this variety of facts we recognise everywhere a link with what is greatest.

From many lectures you have learnt that in ancient initiation there were two ways of gaining entrance to the spiritual world. One method was by sinking deeply within one's own being – within the Microcosm; the other was by passing out into the life of the Macrocosm or great world. Now everything which comes to expression in great things is revealed also in the smallest. The way in which a man descends into his own inner being in daily life is shown by his sadness; and the way in which he is able to expand into the life of the outer world is shown by his ability to grasp the connections of such events as he there encounters. In this is seen the supremacy of the ego. And you have heard that if the ego is not to be lost it must be guided by the initiation that leads into the outer world; otherwise it loses itself, and instead of going forth into the outer world it is brought to apparent nothingness.

The smallest things are connected with the greatest. Therefore, in Spiritual Science, where we have so often to rise to the highest spheres, we must sometimes concern ourselves with what belongs to the most everyday things. In the next lecture, when once more we shall occupy ourselves with higher spheres, we shall make use of some of the things dealt with to-day.



08

Lecture VI

When aided by spiritual science we give ourselves up to the study of the Gospels, we are at once aware of powerful experiences coming to us from them. And we venture to say that people will first gain some idea of all that has been poured into the Gospels by those who wrote them, when spiritual science has been popularised somewhat as is the fashion to-day. Many things will then be recognised as belonging to the Gospels that are not found directly in these documents, but are only discovered when the four Gospels are studied side by side.

I should like, in the first place, to say that in the Gospel of Matthew the true history of the Christ Impulse is put before us in the story of a child. Beginning with an account of the ancient Hebrew people – or rather of their first ancestor – the account of the Christ-Impulse in this Gospel only goes back to the origin of the Hebrew people. In this Gospel we learn to know the bearer of the Christ Being as he developed out of the Hebrew people. When we pass on to the Gospel of Mark we meet with the Christ-Impulse directly. Here all mention of the life of the child is at first disregarded. After being told that John the Baptist is the great prophet who foretold the coming of the Christ-Impulse, it describes the baptism by John in Jordan.

Then from the Gospel of Luke we receive a new history of the childhood of the bearer of the Christ-Impulse, but this time it goes much further back as regards the origin of Jesus of Nazareth – it goes back to the beginning of mankind upon the earth. The descent of Jesus of Nazareth is traced back to Adam, and then to one who it states "was God." Therefore, this story of his childhood clearly indicates that the human nature of Jesus of Nazareth can be traced back to a point of time when man first came forth from Divine Beings. The Gospel of Luke takes us back to a time when man can no longer be regarded as a Being incarnated in the flesh, but as a Spiritual Being, a Being that had come forth from the womb of divine spirituality.

In the Gospel of John the great facts are put before us so, that again without giving any account of the childhood or the destiny of Jesus of Nazareth, we are introduced directly, and in a very profound sense, to the very Being of Christ. In the course of the spiritual development we have ourselves passed through in

recent years we sketched out a certain path as regards the study of the Gospels; our design was to begin first with the Gospel that gives us the most exalted outlook into the abstract spirituality of Christ – the Gospel according to John.

This was to be followed by the study of the Gospel of Luke, in order to show how the highest degree of spirituality possible in man becomes apparent when the life of this man, Jesus of Nazareth, is traced back to the point of time when as earthly man he came forth from the Godhead.

The study of the Gospel of Matthew was to follow, so that we might understand the Christ-Impulse as this passed through the ancient Hebrew people.

The Gospel of Mark we reserved to the last. Why this was done will be rightly understood when much that has been touched on recently as general spiritual science is connected with things you have known for long, and also with others that are comparatively new. This is why I have spoken recently of many things in human life, and in the composition of the members of man's being, and shall speak of similar things to-day, which may serve as an introduction to certain facts of human evolution. For it becomes ever more necessary that the conditions of human evolution should be recognised, not recognised only, but kept constantly before us.

As we advance towards the future, mankind will become ever more self dependent, ever more individual. Belief in external authority will be replaced more and more by the authority of the individual soul. This is the necessary course of evolution, but in order that it may bring well-being and blessedness, man has to know his own nature. We cannot say that as a whole we are far advanced in the estimation and understanding of human nature. For what, among much else, is taking place in the history of man to-day? All kinds of programmes, all kinds of so-called ideals for mankind are certainly not wanting at the present time. One can almost say that not only a man here and there, but every man might come forward to-day as a little Messiah with a special ideal for our humanity; might construct out of his head and heart an ideal by which well-being and blessedness might be attained. Nor are societies and associations wanting that suggest one thing or another which they think necessary to introduce into our culture. These we have in great measure, and faith in them is not wanting. The strength of conviction in those who put forward such programmes is so great that it will shortly be necessary to form councils to establish the infallibility of each. In speaking of such things we mention what is deeply characteristic of our age.

Spiritual science does not keep us from thinking of our future, but points to certain fundamental tendencies and laws which cannot be disregarded if anything is to be gained from its impulse.

For what does the man of to-day believe? He takes counsel with himself; an ideal rises in his soul and he believes he is capable of making his ideal actual. He does not pause to think that perhaps the time is not ripe for its introduction, that the picture he has formed may perhaps be a caricature, and that it may possibly only reach fruition in a more or less distant future. In short it is very difficult for people to-day to understand that every event must be prepared for, that owing to the general macrocosmic relationships of the world these are ordained to take place at fixed times. It is exceedingly difficult for present day humanity to grasp this. All the same it is a universal law, and holds for each individual as well as for the whole human race.

We can recognise the working of this law as regards individuals, when we observe their lives by means of spiritual science. Here we have to consider the smallest, most intimate things that rise within the soul.

I am not now dealing with general ideas, but will keep rather to what has been observed in particular cases. In the first place let us suppose that we have someone before us who has been able to grasp some idea in his soul most intensely; that he has been so fired by it that it assumed a distinct form in his soul and he desires earnestly to make this idea actual. Let us suppose then that this idea first arose in his head, and was then filled with impulses of feeling from his heart. Such a man would not be able to-day to wait, he would set about at once giving reality to his idea.

Suppose that at first this was quite a small idea concerned with some scientific or artistic fact. Will an occultist who knows the laws put such an entirely strange idea at once before the world? We are assuming that the idea is quite a small one. The occultist knows that it appears first in the life of the astral body. This can be observed even outwardly through the fact that enthusiasm dwells in the soul. It is pre-eminently a force of the astral body.

It is as a rule harmful when people do not allow the idea at this stage to rest quietly and not set it at once before the world; for the idea has first to follow a clearly defined course. For instance, it must enter ever deeper and deeper into the astral body and then impress itself, as a seal does, on the etheric body. If the idea is a small one this process may take seven days. But this time is necessary. And if the man goes ahead hurriedly with his idea, he is apt to overlook one important fact, namely, that after seven days a quite clearly defined experience of a very subtle kind takes place. If these things are noticed he may have this experience, but if he goes madly ahead saying: — "Out with it into the world!" The result is that his soul is not disposed to listen for what may happen on the seventh day. With a small idea it always happens on the seventh day that the person does

not rightly know how to carry it out, that it vanishes again within the soul. The man is restless, perhaps even frightened, oppressed with doubts, yet all the time in spite of feeling perturbed he is attached to his idea.

Enthusiasm now changes to an intimate feeling of love. The idea is now within the etheric body. If it is to prosper and thrive it must lay hold of the outer astral substances with which we are always surrounded; thus from our astral body it must first pass into our etheric body and thence into the external astrality. To accomplish this another seven days is necessary. And if the man is not such a tyro that when the idea begins to trouble him, he says: — "Away with you!" But if he pays heed to the way life progresses he can see that after this period something comes to meet his idea from outside which can be expressed somewhat as follows: — "It is well to have waited fourteen days, for now I am no longer alone with my idea. It is as if I had been inspired from the macrocosm, as if something had entered my ideas from the outer world."

A man then feels for the first time that he is in harmony with the whole spiritual world, that it brings something to meet him, when he has something to give to it. A certain soul-satisfying feeling arises after a period of about twice seven days.

This idea has then to follow the path backwards, it has to enter the etheric body again by way of the external astrality. We are then aware of it quite objectively, and the temptation is very great to give it to the world. This must again be resisted with all our power; for there is a danger, while the idea is still in the etheric body, of its entering the world in a cold way, of being communicated to the world in a cold and icy way. But if you wait for a further period of seven days the coldness leaves it and it is filled again with the warmth of the individual astral body; it takes on the character of the personality. Thus what we gave birth to in the first place, and then allowed to be baptised by the Gods, we are now able to hand over to the world as our own. Every impulse we feel in our souls must pass through these three stages before it becomes ripe within us. This holds as regards small ideas.

For more important ideas longer periods of time are necessary, but these always pass in a rhythm of seven and seven. In this way not weeks but months are built up, and then again years in the same rhythm. We can have a rhythm of seven to seven weeks, and of seven to seven years.

From this you can see that the important thing is not so much what the man of to-day thinks, or what impulses are in his soul, but that he has the power to bear these impulses with patience to allow them to be baptised by World-Spirits, and then emerge when they are ripe. Other laws of a similar kind might be added to this, for what is called the "development of the soul" is full of such ordered arrangements.

When, for instance, on a certain day, and such days are very rare in men's lives, you have the feeling: — "To-day I feel as if blessed by the World-Spirit, ideas arise in me!" It is well to receive these quietly, to know that after nineteen days a process of fructification such as I have described will take place in the soul. The evolution of the human soul is full of such ordered arrangements. Now man has an instinctive feeling not to overvalue these things, and for this we should be very thankful, not to allow himself to be too much uplifted by them. He takes note of them, especially those men whose aim it is to develop and ripen their higher natures, take note of them without really knowing the law. Thus it is often noticed that artistic natures reveal certain periods in their creative activities, that there is a rhythm in them according to days, weeks, and years. This is easily seen in artists of the first rank, in Goethe, for instance. We note how something rises in Goethe's soul, and that only after four times seven years is it really ripe, and then it emerges in another form from that in which it first appeared.

People might easily remark here in accordance with the inclination of to-day: — "Yes, my dear spiritual investigator, such laws there may be, but why should people trouble so much about them? They note them instinctively!"

Such a remark has reference to a time that is past. Because people are becoming more self-reliant, because they harken more and more to their own individuality, they must try to develop within them an inner calendar. Just as an outer calendar is of importance in external affairs, so in the future, when the intensity of man's soul has increased, he will feel "inner weeks" he will feel an inward ebb and flow in his life of feeling and experience, inner Sundays. Men will progress in accordance with this inwardness. Many things felt by man formerly in the partitioning of his life according to number will be experienced at a later day inwardly; this will be the dawn of what is macrocosmic in the souls of men. It will then be for him a self-understood duty not to bring tumult or disorder into human evolution by overstepping the sacred laws of the soul's development. He will come to understand that it is but a refined form of egoism to desire to communicate immediately what is taking place in the soul.

Men will come of themselves to experience the spirit within them, and this not abstractly as is done to-day, but they will perceive how this spirit works regularly and according to law in their souls. When something happens to them, and they wish to communicate this to others, they will not let this loose headlong on humanity like a mad bull, but will listen to what the spirit-filled nature within them has to say.

What importance will it have for men when they learn to value more and more and to harken more and more to what emerges in this way as law out of the inner spirituality of the world, and when they allow themselves to be inspired by it? Men in general have little feeling for such things. They do not believe that

Spiritual Beings enter into our inner being and work there according to law. They will for long regard it as foolishness, even where culture is well advanced, when the ordered activity of the Spirit is spoken of. And those who from spiritual scientific knowledge believe in the Spirit, will experience through the deep antipathy of the times that are approaching what is said concerning our day in the Gospel of Mark:

"And when they shall lead you (away) and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither premeditate, but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak but the Holy Ghost." – Mark XIII, 11.

We must endeavour to understand a sentence like this which has such special reference to our day, because of the value it acquires through its connection with this Gospel – not with the other Gospels.

As regards the Gospel of Mark you see that in a general way it contains what is also to be found in the other Gospels. But one passage found in this Gospel is remarkable just because it is not found in the other Gospels. This passage is especially remarkable because commentators have said some really very silly things about it. It is where Christ Jesus came out from preaching to the people, and where, after he had chosen his disciples, we are told: –

"And they went into an house. And the multitude cometh together again so that they had not room so much as to eat bread. And when His friends heard of it they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said: He is out of His senses, He is beside Himself." – Mark III, 19-21.

This passage is not found in the same way in the other Gospels. When we realise that the future course of human evolution will be such, that the saying of St. Paul: – "Not I, but Christ in me!" will become ever more and more true, that that human ego alone is fruitful which receives into it the Impulse of Christ, we ought to feel that this passage refers in a most outstanding way to our own day. The fate experienced through the events of Palestine by Jesus Christ, as a representative, will be lived through by the whole of humanity in the course of time. In the near future men will divine more and more that wherever Christ is taught from an inward understanding of Spiritual Science, great antipathy will be manifested by those who turn from this teaching instinctively. It will not be at all difficult to see that those things will come to pass in the future which are described in prophetic images as the Events of Christ in the Gospel according to Mark.

The outward behaviour of many people, as well as much that is produced as art, and especially what is widely circulated to-day under the guise of science, will clearly show that those who speak of the Spirit in the sense in which Christ spoke of it will say in the near future: — "There are many among them who appear to be out of their senses, 'beside themselves'!"

It has to be stated again and again that the most important facts of spiritual life, as put forward by Spiritual Science, will be regarded in the future as fanciful tales by the greater part of humanity.

From the Gospel of Mark we should be able to evolve the necessary strength to stand firm against all the opposition that will be stirred up against the truths to be discovered in the domain of the Spirit.

If one has a feeling for the finer differences of style found in this Gospel from those found in the other Gospels, one notices spiritual scientific differences here also; we find in it things not found in the other Gospels. One notices in the construction of its sentences, in the exclusion of many sentences found in the other Gospels, that many things which might be accepted quite abstractly take on a special shade of meaning. When one has a feeling for this, one notices also that in the Gospel of Mark we are given an incisive, a most pregnant teaching concerning the ego. One sentence only need be noted for this to be made clear, one sentence, the special feature of which consists in certain things being omitted that are found in the other Gospels. If one has such perception, one realises the deep significance of the following passage: —

And Jesus went out, and His disciples into the towns of Cesarea, Philippi, and by the way He asked His disciples, saying unto them, "Who do men say the 'I' is? What do people recognise as the?" And those who were round about Jesus answered and said: "The people say that in the true 'I' must live John the Baptist." But others say this 'I' must be filled with Elias, that Elias must live in the 'I'; others again say, another of the Prophets must be so worked on that the "I" says: "Not I — but the Prophet works in me." But He said to those who were with Him, "What do you say that the 'I' is?" Then Peter answered: "We understand the 'I' so that we grasp it in its spirituality as Thee, that is as the Christ." And He charged them that they should not tell ordinary men of this! For this mystery they could not understand.

But to those who had been moved by His words He began to give the following teaching: "That which is the outward physical expression of the ego-nature in man must suffer many things if it is to attain full development; and so it came to pass that the most ancient masters of

mankind and those who knew the content of the holiest wisdom could say: The form in which the ego dwells at present serves it no longer; in this form it shall be slain, and after three days, in accordance with the ordered rhythm of universal connections, it will rise again in a higher form."

And they were all amazed that He should speak these words openly before all men.

Here I must remark that up to that time such words could only have been spoken in the Mysteries. It was a secret that until then was only mentioned in the temple of the Mysteries — the secret that men had to undergo "death and birth" (Stirb und Werde) in the course of initiation and after three days had to rise again. Hence we are told: —

Peter was amazed, took the Christ aside and pointed out that such things should not be spoken of openly. Then the Christ turned Himself about and said: "In speaking thus Peter, thou givest thyself over to Satan; for stating this truth as thou dost is not for our time, but belongs to the past." These things were in those days confined within the temple. In the future, in view of the superlative Mystery of Golgotha they will gradually become the possession of all men. Thus it is ordained in the divine guidance of earthly evolution. Those who say otherwise do not speak in accordance with the divine wisdom men had in the past, but gave a temporal form to the wisdom of the gods.

It is somewhat in this way we have to understand this passage that meets us in all the grandeur of its clear-cut phrases in the Gospel of St. Mark. We have to realise that the Impulse of Christ according to the Gospel of Mark consists in our receiving the Christ into our ego, so that the saying of Paul: — "Not I, but Christ in me," may become ever more actual; and not the abstract Christ only, but He who sent the Holy Spirit, the concrete Spirit, who in an ordered and regular manner (as we have described to-day) works inspiringly with his inward calendar in the souls of men.

In pre-Christian times people only attained knowledge through being initiated into the Mysteries, when for three and a half days they remained in a death-like state after having endured the tragic suffering of one who, while living on the physical plane, tries to raise himself to spiritual heights. There they learnt that this earthly man must be slain, that a higher man must rise again in him — that is, he must experience "death and birth." What formerly had only been experienced

in the Mysteries now became an historical fact through the Mystery of Golgotha. If they felt united with this Mystery it provided the possibility by which all men could become pupils of this greater wisdom.

Understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha was therefore the most important understanding. It was only possible for earthly man to acquire an understanding of what was to enter more and more into the human ego after the coming of the Christ-Impulse.

We can now receive inspiration in a certain way from the Gospels. For the time in which the Christ Event took place, the Gospel of Matthew was a good "book of initiation"; for our day this holds good more especially with regard to the Gospel according to Mark.

You all know that this is the age in which the consciousness-soul is to be especially developed, in which it is to be separated in isolation from its milieu. You know that we are now summoned to direct our attention not so much to the fact that we belong to any special race, but to what is to be born in us, and is described in the words of St. Paul: — "Not I but Christ in me!"

Our fifth post-Atlantean period is that specially inspired by the Gospel according to Mark. The task of the sixth post-Atlantean period on the other hand, will be gradually to fill the whole of humanity with the spirit of Christ. Thus while in the fifth period of civilisation the Being of Christ will be an object of study, of deep inward penetration, in the sixth men will receive His nature into their whole being. Added to this, what we have learnt to recognise as the inner nature of the Gospel of Luke is of great value, for it is the one which reveals fully the origin of Jesus of Nazareth, as does also the Gospel of Matthew, which leads us back to Zarathustra, just as the Jesus of the Gospel of Luke leads us back to Buddha and Buddhism. For in our studies of the Gospel of Luke we realise that Jesus of Nazareth is presented to us throughout the course of his long evolution in such a way that we are led back to the divine spiritual origin of mankind. Through this man will be able to realise more and more his own divine nature, and because of this must fill himself with the Christ-Impulses. This stands before us as a wondrous ideal, but it will only become concrete when, through the Gospel of Luke, we rise to a true understanding of the physical man of the sense world as a divine Being with a spiritual origin.

And for the seventh post-Atlantean period of civilisation, and on until the next great catastrophe, the Gospel of John will be the book of inspiration, as for the man of to-day it is a guide for his spiritual life. In that period many things will be of service to man which he has learnt in the course of the sixth epoch. But much of what is believed to-day will have to be *unlearnt* — fundamentally unlearnt. This will not be difficult, for scientific facts indicate that we will have to overcome

many things. Thus many things are so regarded to-day that they are called "of the senses," things which inform us concerning such self-understood wisdom, as that the terms "motor" and "sensory nerves" are pure nonsense. There are no "motor nerves." There are only nerves of perception. Nerves that control movements are also nerves of perception, only their purpose is to bring to our perception the corresponding movement of the muscles. It will not be so very long before people realise that movement is not conveyed to the muscle by means of the nerves, but by the *Astral body*, and indeed by that within our astral body which in the immediate future will not be directly perceived to be what it is. For there is a law which lays down that what is active (operative) is not recognised immediately for what it is. What calls forth movement in the muscles is connected with the astral body, and indeed in such a way that in the astral body itself, by the movement of the muscles, a kind of resonance or tone is developed.

Something of the nature of music permeates our astral body; and finds expression through the movement of the muscles. It is really the same as in the case of the well-known Chladnic tone-forms, when a fine powder scattered on a metal plate can be set in motion if this is stroked by a violin bow; certain figures then appear in the powder. Our astral body is filled with nothing but such forms which are at the same time tone-forms, and their united activity is what causes our astral body to assume its special aspect (Lage). All this is imprinted in the astral body. People can convince themselves of this in a quite trivial way. If the biceps or the muscles of the forearm are tightly braced and then laid against the ear this tone can be heard; but the exercises must be done in the right way, the muscles must be stretched and the thumb laid on them. This is no real "proof," but only a means by which what is here mentioned can be illustrated in a trivial manner. We are permeated by music and reveal it in the movement of our muscles, and we are endowed with "motor-nerves" as they are wrongly called, so that we may know something concerning the movements of our muscles.

This is but one form of those truths that will convince people more and more that man is really a spiritual being; that he is really interwoven with the harmony of the spheres — even to his muscles. And spiritual science, whose task it is to prepare the sixth epoch in respect of the spiritual understanding of the world, will concern itself in every particular with such truths as deal with man as well as with spiritual Beings. Exactly as tone in one connection rises to a higher sphere when from musical sound it becomes the spoken human word, so it is in cosmic relationships. The sphere harmonies become something higher when they become the cosmic word or Logos; and this they are when all that is active as sphere harmonies becomes Logos.

Now in the physical organisation of man the next thing higher than the muscles is the blood. In the same way as a muscle is attuned to the sphere harmonies, the blood is attuned to the Logos, and can become ever more and more an expression

of the Logos as it has been, unconsciously, since the beginning of man.

This means there is a tendency on the physical plane for the blood of man which is the expression of his ego to become the conscious expression of the Logos. And when in the sixth period of civilisation men have learnt to recognise themselves as spiritual beings, they will no longer hold to the fantastic idea that muscles are moved through motory nerves, but will know that they are moved by sphere harmonies which have become personal.

Then in the seventh period of civilisation men will feel that even to their blood they are permeated by the Logos – they will then feel for the first time the real content of the Gospel of John. The science of this Gospel will be first understood in the seventh period, and people will come to feel that every book of physiology should begin with the opening words of the Gospel of John. What our attitude to it should be is well expressed in the following words:

"Much of this Gospel we can understand now, but for long there will be much more that we cannot understand!" It stands before us as a high ideal.

From all I have said to-day you will gather that the Gospel of Matthew has to be regarded as especially inspiring for the fourth period of post-Atlantean civilisation, and for our own day the Gospel of Mark must be considered especially inspiring. For the next period, the sixth, the Gospel of Luke is important, and we must prepare ourselves for it, because the seed of everything that is to come to pass in the future must have existed already in the past. And everything that is to come to pass in the further course of human evolution, everything that is to develop in the seventh period up to the time of the next catastrophe comes fully to light in the Gospel of John if we can but understand it. It is therefore specially important that we should understand the Gospel of Mark as a book that can give us guidance in much that we have to practise, and much we have to guard against. Especially those short sentences which in their pregnant style impart to us the meaning of the Christ-Impulse for the human ego. It is very important we should realise that our task is to grasp the *Spirit* of Christ; and that we should realise how He will reveal Himself in the different periods of the future.

We have attempted to present this as regards our day in the words of the Rosicrucian Mystery Play, "The Portal of Initiation" as put into the mouth of the seeress Theodora. In the scene referred to we have something like a repetition of the Event of Paul on the way to Damascus. It is but a sign of the materialism of our day when people think that the Christ-Impulse could reveal itself again within a physical human form. That we have to guard against such a belief we learn from the Gospel of Mark, which holds a special warning for our day. If much that is found in this Gospel has reference to what is past, yet one sentence, in the higher moral sense just mentioned, has meaning for the near future. When considering

spiritual realms the eye of the spirit can see that the influence proceeding from Spiritual Science is a necessity. When the deep spiritual meaning of the following passage is understood we shall connect it with our age and with the one shortly to follow:

"For in those days shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, neither shall be."

We have to direct men's attention to these words. All kinds of afflictions await those in the future who desire to give expression to spiritual truth in its true form: — "And except that the Lord had shortened those days nothing of spiritual nourishment would have been left, but for the elect's sake He has shortened those days!"

And then we are told:

"If in that time anyone shall say to you, 'Lo, here is Christ, or Lo, He is there, believe Him not.' "

The Gospel here refers to an eventual materialistic acceptance of Christ.

"For false Christs and false Prophets shall rise and shall show signs and wonders to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold I have foretold you all things!" — Mark XIII, 19-23.

The attacks of materialism will be so strong that it will be necessary for men to acquire sufficient strength of soul really to endure what is expressed by the words: — "False Christs and false Prophets will appear." And when they are told: — "Lo, here is the Christ!" those who have come under the influence of Spiritual Science will be able to accept the warning given in the Gospel of Mark.

When men say to you "Lo, here is the Christ," believe it not!



09 Lecture VII

Our talk today must bring to a temporary conclusion the studies which, during the last few weeks we have connected in a somewhat loose and irregular way with the Gospel according to Mark.

In the lectures you have heard during this winter we have tried to make you realise that we stand to-day at a period of transition. Even by those who consider spiritual life in a somewhat external way, it can be noticed that a new order of ideas and thoughts is gradually emerging, though the people living within the new order may themselves be unaware of it. It will therefore be well if such a stimulus can be given to your thoughts this evening as will enable you to carry somewhat further the spiritual scientific matter already imparted to you.

In speaking of periods of transition, it is helpful to recall the great "period of transition" through which human evolution passed, often mentioned by me as the great incisive moment of the Event of Palestine. What this moment meant we know from many things that have been spoken of here.

When we try to form a conception of how this most important "idea" — for so we may call it — the Christ-idea, developed out of the thoughts and feelings of the age immediately preceding it, it is well to remember that the Jahve or Jehova-idea meant as much to the ancient Hebrews as the Christ-idea does to the believers in Christ. From other lectures you know that for those who enter deeply into the essence of Christianity Jahve did not really differ very greatly from the Christ Himself. We must realise far more clearly the inward connection between the Christ-idea and the Jahve-idea. It is very difficult to give, in a few words, the whole connection between these two ideas which has been developed by me in many lectures and cycles in recent years, but it is possible to show in a parable how this connection has to be thought of. We have but to recall the symbol of the sunlight to which your attention has often been directed; how this comes to us either directly from the sun or reflected back from the moon at night, especially when the moon is at the full. Sunlight comes to us from the full moon, but reflected sunlight, which is somewhat different from direct sunlight. Were we to compare the Christ with direct sunlight, then Jahve might be likened to sun-light reflected from the moon; this represents exactly what is met with here in the evolution of mankind. Those who understand such things can feel the passing over of the reflection of Christ into Jehova, or of Jehova into Christ, as men feel the difference between moonlight and sunlight — Jahve being an indirect and

Christ a direct revelation of the same Being. But in thinking of "evolution," we must think of things side by side in space, and following each other in time. Those who have to speak of such things from the occult point of view say: — If we call the religion of Christ a "sun-religion" (and we can use this expression when we remember what has been said concerning Zarathustra) then the religion of Jahve can be called a moon-religion.

So in the period preceding Christianity, we have a sun-religion prepared for by a moon-religion. What has just been said will only be rightly appreciated by those who know that symbols are not chosen arbitrarily, but are deeply rooted in the things they represent. When any religion or world-faith is represented by a symbol, this represents, for those who know how to interpret it, the essential thing in that religion. Perhaps men have lost understanding to-day to a certain extent of a symbolism which sees the moon as representing the religion of Jahve, and also of the connection between the Christian religion and the symbol of the sun; but where thoughts are completely filled with the meaning of such symbols they have to be considered.

Call to mind how I have described the whole course of human evolution. First we have a descending evolution which began when man was first driven out of the spiritual world and entered ever more deeply into matter. This is a descending path. When we picture the general course of human evolution we think of the deepest point as having been reached at the time the Impulse of Christ entered, and that through this Impulse the descending direction was gradually changed to an ascending one.

In human evolution we have at first a descending path, then after the deepest point is reached the Christ-Impulse begins to affect it and will continue to do so till earth reaches the end of its mission.

Now evolution occurs in a very complicated way; certain conditions of its progress are the result of Impulses which had been given at an earlier time. It was an evolutionary event such as this that took place through the Christ-Impulse. The Christ-Impulse was poured forth at the beginning of our era and advanced in a direct line, and growing ever more and more powerful it will permeate all human life until earthly evolution has reached its goal. This is an impulse that was imparted once, and we have to picture it as advancing in a straight line; any evolution that arose later, is seen through it to be at a higher and more perfect stage. There are many such impulses, and also others, affecting the evolution of the world which work differently, and cannot be said to advance on straight lines. We distinguished in post-Atlantean evolution the ancient Indian civilisation, following it the ancient Persian, the Egypto-Chaldean, then the Greco-Latin; and in the middle of this period the Christ-Event took place. In the fifth post-Atlantean age, in which we are now living, certain things are repeated which

occurred in the third age — the Egypto-Chaldean — but a somewhat different way, and so that between them and maintaining a certain relationship between the third and the fifth ages we have the Christ-Impulse. This relationship is maintained in the same way between the sixth age and the second, and between the seventh and the first. We are here concerned with powerful factors of evolution which are revealed in such a way that in referring to them we can make use of the Biblical expression: — "The first shall be last." The primeval Indian age will reappear in the seventh age in another form — yet so that it will be recognisable.

There is another way in which an earlier is seen to affect a later, and this is shown through the fact that we can distinguish smaller epochs. Thus, what took place in pre-Christian times during the ancient Hebrew civilisation appears again in a certain way in post-Christian times — overpassing the Christ-Impulse as it were — ideas which had been prepared within the religion of Jehova appeared again, and, in spite of other factors being present, had an effect on these later times.

Were I to explain symbolically what I cannot deal with adequately to-day owing to the short time at my disposal I might say: — If we feel that the religion of Jehova is represented by the symbol of the moon in contradistinction to the sun, we might expect that a similar belief, overpassing Christianity, would re-emerge at a later day. This did occur, and if such things are not accepted in an external sense or smiled at for they are deeply connected with the symbolism of religions — we may say that the old moon religion of Jehova appeared again in the religion of the half-moon, the Crescent, that its influence, which had preceded the Christ-Event, was carried over into post-Christian times. The repetition of an earlier age in a later is seen with overwhelming results in the last third of the Greco-Latin period, which is reckoned by us in an occult sense as continuing to about the 12th-13th century. This means that after having been separated from it by a period of six hundred years, we have a kind of repetition of the moon religion of Jehova in the religion brought by the Arabs from Africa into Spain. It is not possible to specify here all the characteristics it brought with it. But it is important that we should impress on our souls the fact that in the religion of Mahomet the Christ-Impulse was at first disregarded, that in it we have really a kind of revival of the religion of Moses — the religion of the one indivisible God. Only into the idea of this indivisible God-head something was introduced that had come over from the other side — from the Egypto-Chaldean view-point — which preserved very exact traditions concerning the relationship of the starry heavens to worldly events. Hence many of the thoughts and ideas found among the Chaldeans, Babylonians and Assyrians are found again in the religion of Mahomed, but permeated in an extra-ordinary way with what we might call the teaching concerning the indivisible divinity of Jehova. Speaking scientifically what meets us in Arabism is a synthesis of all that was taught by the priests of Egypt and Chaldea, and in the Jahve religion of the ancient Hebrews.

In a union of this kind there is not only a compression, but there is also always something excluded and left behind. Everything which led to clairvoyant perception was excluded from it. What remained was merely a matter of intellectual research, of a combining of thought, so that all the ideas connected with the Egyptian art of healing and Chaldean astronomy, which both among the Egyptians and the Chaldeans was the outcome of ancient clairvoyance, is found in an intellectual and individualistic form in the Arabism of Mahomet.

Something filtered into Europe along with the Arabs by which all the old ideas that had prevailed among the Egyptians and Chaldeans were stripped of their clairvoyant imaginative content and given abstract forms. From this sprang the marvellous science which the Arabs brought from Africa to Europe by way of Spain. If Christianity brought an impulse mainly for the souls of men, then the great Impulse for the human head, for the intellect, came through the Arabs. Those who are not fully acquainted with the course of human evolution have no idea what the mental outlook, which appeared anew under the symbol of the moon, gave to humanity as a whole. Kepler and Copernicus would not have been possible without this Impulse which the Arabs brought to Europe. The whole method of thought, the manner in which different religious views were connected with the laying aside of the old clairvoyance, is seen again in our modern astronomy and modern science when the third period of culture celebrated its revival in our fifth age. Thus we have to see the evolution of man progressing on the one hand, so that the Impulse of Christ reaches the people of Europe *directly* by way of Greece and Italy; and, on the other hand, we see it taking a more southernly route which, leaving Greece and Italy on one side, unites with what came to us through the Arabs.

By the union of the religion of Christ with that of Mahomet there arose, during this most important period with which we are dealing, what really forms the content of our culture. From causes which cannot be gone into to-day, we must reckon a period of from six to six-and-a-half centuries for such an impulse to develop; so that the renewed moon-culture actually arose, spread, and entered Europe six hundred years after the Event of Christ, and until the thirteenth century it enriched that Christian civilisation which had received its direct impulses by other paths. Even those who only observe the external course of events know that, however much they are opposed to Arabism, Arabian thought and science entered even into the cloisters of Western Europe, and up to the middle of the thirteenth century (which again indicates something important) we have a blending of these two impulses – the Arabian and the direct Christ-Impulse.

We may say that the sun-symbol and the moon-symbol were merged into one from the fifth and sixth centuries until between the twelfth and thirteenth, this being again a period that lasted for about six hundred years. After this direct

union had reached its goal some-thing new arose which had been in gradual preparation since the twelfth and thirteenth century. It is interesting to note that even external sciences recognise that some-thing inexplicable passed through the souls of the people of Europe at that time. External science calls it "inexplicable," but occultism says that, following the direct Impulse of Christ, there was poured by spiritual means into the souls of men what the fourth period of post-Atlantean culture had to give. The age of Greece threw up a following wave of culture called the culture of the Renaissance, it enriched everything that already existed through the centuries that followed. This was because the age of Greece, which occurred in the middle of the seven periods of post-Atlantean civilisation, underwent a certain renewal in the culture of the Renaissance.

This points again to a period of six hundred years — that is up to our own time — in which this wave of Greek culture has to a certain extent been exhausted. We are living within this period. We are living to-day in an atmosphere (as we are again at the beginning of a sixhundred-year-long wave of culture) into which some-thing new is pressing; an age which must again be enriched with something new from the Christ-Impulse. After the Moon-cult had its revival in the religion of the Crescent during the Renaissance, the time is now come when the Christ-Impulse, which continued as the direct stream, has to receive into it a neighbouring stream. Our age is powerfully attracted towards this neighbouring stream; only we must clearly understand what the addition of it to our civilisation means. All these things are absolutely in accordance with the correct progress of an occult system.

If we think of Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, according to the old-not the new sequence — we may expect, after the renewal of the Moon-wave during the Renaissance, the influx of another stream to which we can quite correctly assign the symbol of Mercury. We might therefore say theoretically when this symbol appeared that we were confronted with the influx into our culture of a wave of a kind of Mercury-influence, just as the wave of Arabism was called a Moon-influence.

If we understand the evolution of our own time aright we may describe Goethe as the last great mind who united in himself the fullness of science, of Christianity, and of the culture of the Renaissance; and we might expect that his soul would reveal a beautiful union of these — intellectualism enriched as it had been by Arabism and Christianity. If we study Goethe as we have been accustomed to do for some years past, it is easily seen that these elements did indeed meet within his soul. But in accordance with what has just been announced concerning the repeated cycle of six, and again six centuries, we might expect that nothing of the Mercury element could have appeared as yet in Goethe's soul, that could only appear as something new after his time. Now it is interesting to note that Goethe's pupil, Schopenhauer, reveals this Mercury influence. You can learn from

some of my publications that Eastern wisdom entered into Schopenhauer's philosophy, especially in the form of Buddhism. Mercury was regarded as the symbol of Buddhism, and following on the age of Goethe we have a revival of the Buddha-Impulse (in which Buddha stands for Mercury and Mercury for Buddha) in the same way as the moon is symbolic of Arabism. We can now give a name to this neighbouring stream that entered the direct Christ-Impulse as a new tributary at the beginning of a new six-hundred-yearly epoch. We have to see in this neighbouring stream a revival of Buddhism only with the restrictions I explained in my public lectures on Buddha.

We now ask – which is the direct stream of the culture of the future? The Christ-stream! It advances in a direct line. And what neighbouring streams are there? We have first the Arabian stream, which flowed into the direct stream, paused for a time, and then received purification through the culture of the Renaissance. At present we are experiencing a renewed influx of the Buddha stream. When these facts are seen in their right light, we realise that we have to absorb certain elements out of the Buddha-stream which until now could not be received into our Western civilisation. We have to see how these elements of the Buddha-stream must pass into the spiritual development of the west. Such things, for instance, as the idea of reincarnation and Karma. These must be accepted. But one fact must be firmly impressed on our souls: – All these neighbouring streams will never be able to throw light on the central facts of our spiritual science. To question Buddhism or any other pre-Christian oriental religion that may have appeared as a revival in our time concerning the Christ, would be as sensible as for a European Christian to have questioned the Arabs of Spain concerning the nature of Christ!

The people of Europe were well aware that no conception of the Christ could come from the Arabs. If they had anything to say their ideas would not accord with the real Christ-idea. The various prophets who arose as false Messiahs up to Schabbathoi Zewi were really the outcome of Arabism, and had no knowledge of the Christ-Impulse. We must understand that the neighbouring stream of Arabism had to be made fruitful by quite other elements, not by solving in any way the central mystery of Christ. This must also be our attitude towards the stream which approaches us to-day, as the renewal of an ancient one, bringing us understanding of reincarnation and karma, but being incapable of imparting understanding of the Christ-Impulse. For this would be as absurd as to think the Arabs could impart a right conception of Christ to the people of Europe. They imparted many ideas concerning false Messiahs to Europe up to the time of Schabbathoi Zewi, and such things will occur again, for human evolution only progresses when strengthened by seeing through such deceptions. We must penetrate ever more deeply and consciously into these connections. Facts will

show that the spiritual science founded by European Rosicrucians, with Christ as its central idea, will be established in the souls of men against all opposition and all misleadings.

How the central-idea of the Christ must enter men's souls, how the Christ must be interwoven, not only with the general evolution of man, but with the whole world, can be gathered from my book on *Outline of Occult Science*.

From it you can find which is the direct, the forward path. Everyone has the possibility of hearing of this path who understands the words from the Gospel of Matthew quoted at the end of the last lecture: — "False Christs and false prophets will appear when people will say unto you: Lo, here is the Christ or lo, there! believe it not."

Alongside the Buddhistic stream of thought is another far removed from it, which thinks it is better in-formed regarding the Christ than the western spiritual science of the Rosicrucians. It brings all kinds of ideas and teachings into the world which have developed quite naturally out of the neighbouring oriental Buddhist stream. It would show the worst kind of weakness in western souls if they were unable to grasp the fact that the Buddha, or Mercury-stream, has as little light to throw on the direct course of the Christ-idea as Arabism has. This is not put forward from any spirit of dogmatism or fantasy, but from knowledge of the objective course of the evolution of the world. It can be proved by figures or by the trend of civilisations if you wish to follow them up, that things must be as is taught by occult science.

Added to this there is also the necessity to distinguish between an ancient orthodox Buddhism which seeks to transplant a non-progressive Buddhism into Europe, and out of it to develop a "Christ-idea;" and a truly progressive Buddhism. This means, there are people who speak of Buddha as follows: — "Look to Buddha, who lived some five to six hundred years before our era! Look to what he taught!" What such people say is comparable with what spiritual science says in a Rosicrucian sense: — "It is your fault, not Buddha's, that you speak as if Buddha had remained at the same stage at which he stood five to six centuries before our era! Can you not think or imagine that Buddha has progressed?" When speaking thus, these people refer to a teaching suited to a time long past; of a teaching given by Buddha five to six centuries before our era. But we look to a Buddha who has advanced, and who from spiritual realms exercises his enduring influence on human culture. We look to the Buddha we presented to you in our studies on the Gospel of Luke, whose influence came from the Jesus of the Nathan line of the house of David; we look to the Buddha as he has evolved further in spiritual realms, and who imparts truths to us to-day concerning the things of which we are speaking.

Something very curious has happened to dogmatic Christianity in the West; through a strange concatenation of circumstances it has come to pass that a Buddha-like form has appeared by chance among Christian Saints.

You will recall how once I spoke of a legend told all over Europe in the Middle Ages, the legend of Balaam and Josaphat. It was somewhat as follows: — There was once an Indian king on earth. He had a son. This son was brought up at first far removed from all human misery; from all external life. He lived in the king's palace, where he saw only what conduced to human happiness. He was called Josaphat; the name has been much changed and has assumed various forms — Josaphat, Judasaph, Budasaph. Josaphat lived up to a certain age in the palace without learning anything of the world. Then one day it happened that he left his father's palace and learnt something of life. He first saw a leper, then a blind man, then an aged man. We are then told that he met a Christian hermit called Balaam. By him he was converted to Christianity.

You will not fail to notice that this legend has a strong resemblance to the legend of Buddha. But you will also notice that something is added to this legend of the Middle Ages with which Buddha cannot be charged; namely, that he allowed himself to be converted to Christianity. This legend gave rise to a certain consciousness among Christians — among some of them at least — who had made calendars of the saints.

People knew that the name Josaphat or Budasaph is connected with the name "Bodhisattva." Budasaph passes directly over into Bodhisattva. So that there is here an extraordinary and deep connection between a Christian legend and the figure of Buddha. The oriental legend, as we know, represents Buddha as entering Nirvana and passing on the Bodhisattva crown to his successor the Maytreya-Buddha, who is now a Bodhisattva, and will later become the future Buddha of the world. Buddha appears again in the legend as Josaphat. The connection between Buddhism and Christianity is described marvellously by someone who said: — Josaphat is a saint, and Buddha was himself so holy that according to the legend he was converted to Christianity from being the son of an Indian king; so he can be ranked among the saints although from one side he was regarded as a heathen.

You can see from this that it was known where the later form of Buddhism, or rather of Buddha, has to be sought. Buddhism and Christianity have meanwhile flowed one into the other in the hidden worlds. And Salaam is that strange figure who made the Bodhisattva acquainted with Christianity, so that when now we trace the course of Buddhism as an enduring world-movement in the sense of this legend, we can only see it in the changed form in which it exists at the present time. We are obliged to speak of Buddha as he exists for us to-day, when clairvoyantly we understand what he reveals to us.

Just as Arabism was not Judaism, and the Moon of Jehova did not reappear in Arabism in its old form, so neither does Buddhism reappear in its old form when it returns to enrich the culture of the West, but changed. For a later never appears as an exact replica of an earlier.

These short detached remarks are intended to act as a stimulus to thoughts on human evolution, which you can develop further for yourselves. And I assure you if you accept all the historical knowledge that it is possible to discover, and are really able to follow the spiritually scientific development of Europe, you will see that we are standing at present at the point where Christianity and Buddhism flow one into the other.

Just as at the time of which I have been speaking a union of the Jahve-religion with Christianity occurred, so to-day a union of Buddhism with Christianity is taking place. Test this by accepting all that the historians of Europe are able to give you! Test it, but not as they are wont to do, take all the factors into consideration; you will then find confirmation of what I have said. Only we should have to speak for weeks if we were to give out all that reaches us from the direction of European Rosicrucianism.

But it is not only in history that proof can be found, if you go to work in the right way you can find it also in natural science and in allied realms. You have only to look in the right way to find that new ideas appear everywhere sporadically at the present day, and that old ideas become useless and disappear. Our thinkers and investigators seem to work with ideas that have become ineffectual, because in the widest sense they are incapable as yet of accepting and making use of other lines of thought, such as those of reincarnation and karma, and all that theosophy has to give. You can search the modern literature of the various departments of science, there you will find what is so painful for those who know how fact after fact appears in scientific life and nowhere are ideas capable of grasping them. There is one such idea that plays an important part in science to-day – the idea of heredity. (These things can only be hinted at here.) The idea of heredity as it is put forward in various departments of science and even in popular literatures to-day is simply untenable.

People must learn facts, for the understanding of which other kinds of ideas are required -such, for instance, as those entirely useless ideas concerning "heredity" that are common to-day. Certain facts, well known to-day concerning heredity in man and in other creatures, will only be understood when quite different ideas prevail. When heredity is spoken of to-day, people seem to think that any faculties that appear in the human being can be traced to his immediate forefathers. The idea of rein-carnation and karma will first make it possible for clear ideas to emerge instead of the present confusion. It will be realised that a great part of what is found in human nature has nothing to do with what is called the mutual

co-operation of the sexes — for a confused science still teaches that all man is to-day comes from the union of the male and female elements at conception. It is not at all true that all the things appearing in a man have to do with physical inheritance. These matters must be gone into more thoroughly. I only put them before you to-day as a stimulus to further thought.

When you consider the physical body of man you know that it has a long history behind it — it has passed through the Saturn epoch, the Sun epoch and the Moon epoch — now it is passing through the Earth epoch. It was only during the Moon epoch that the influence of the astral body appeared. This did not exist previously, and the physical body has naturally been very much changed by it. Hence we do not see the physical body as it was under the forces of the Saturn and Sun epochs, but only as it has become under the influence of these forces added to those of the astral body and the ego.

Only the physical body can be inherited through co-operation of the sexes, for this depends on the influence of the astral on the physical body; everything appertaining to laws going back to the Saturn and Sun epochs has nothing whatever to do with this. One part of human nature is received directly from the cosmos, not from the opposite sex. This means that what we have in us does not spring altogether from the union of the sexes, for this is dependent on what comes from our astral bodies, but a large part of our human nature — that which comes from the mother for example — is received directly from the macrocosm.

We have therefore to distinguish one part of our human nature as being the result of the intercourse of the sexes, and another part as received directly by the mother from the macrocosm. Clarity will only be reached in respect of this when we succeed in distinguishing the separate parts of human nature, concerning which there is the greatest confusion at the present day. The physical body is not something shut off within itself, but is formed from the combined activity of the ether body, astral body and ego; again we distinguish the forces that have to be ascribed to the direct influence of the macrocosm, and others that have to be ascribed to the co-operation of the sexes.

But something is also received from the paternal nature that has nothing to do with physical inheritance. Just as certain organs and laws having nothing to do with physical inheritance are received directly from the macrocosm, and are implanted in the organism by means of the mother; other laws are received from the macrocosm through the instrumentality of the father's organism and follow a spiritual path. It can be said of that which is received by way of the mother — her organism provides the moment of contact (Angriffsmoment). But this that is active in the organism of the mother has not its source in any co-operation of the sexes, but it co-operates with what comes from the father, and this also does not spring from any union of the sexes, but from the paternal element. It is therefore a

world event — a macrocosmic event that takes place, and finds expression in a physical way. People are entirely mistaken when they describe the development of the human embryo as being only the outcome of heredity. It is the result of what is received directly from the macrocosm.

I have spoken here of facts that far transcend the ideas of science; they are ideas originating from very ancient epochs. Does anything show us this? Popular literature tells us very little about it, but it is clearly evident on the plane of occult endeavour. I should like here to tell you something. I can indeed only hint at it, but would like to point out what a remarkable difference there is between two natural scientists and thinkers of the present day who had, however, been brought up in different circles and with widely different ideas. The characters of the two men are clearly revealed in what follows.

We have in the first place Haeckel, who because he elaborated his marvellous facts with most primitive ideas, led everything back to heredity and presented the whole embryonic evolution as dependent on heredity; opposed to him is the investigator His, who held more to facts, concerning whom it was objected, with a certain amount of truth, that he thought too little. His was a Zoologist and Naturalist. Because of the special way he traced out facts, he was constrained to oppose the heredity theory of Haeckel, and pointed out that certain organs and organic formations in man can only be explained when we turn away from the idea that we have to thank the co-operation of the sexes for our origin, Haeckel makes fun of this and writes: — "Therefore Herr His ascribes the origin of the human body to a certain 'virginal' influence that does not depend on the co-operation of the sexes!"

This is absolutely correct. For scientific facts force us to acknowledge to-day that what is brought about through co-operation of the sexes has to be kept apart from that which comes directly from the macrocosm, which, naturally, for wide circles is an absurd idea.

From this it can be seen that even on scientific grounds we are driven towards new ideas. We are placed in the midst of an evolution that says: — If the facts that have been imparted to you are to be rightly understood you must acquire a whole host of new ideas, for the ideas that have come down from olden times do not reach far enough.

From what I have said you will see that a neighbouring stream must enter our culture — this is the "Mercury stream"; its presence is revealed through the fact that those who go through an occult development, such as has frequently been described by me, evolve towards the spiritual world, and by doing so experience many new facts. These facts stream towards them, they stream into their souls. We might compare the entrance of man into another world with the passing of a

fish from the water into the air; the fish has first to be prepared for this by changing its air bladders into lungs. This resembles the transition from sense perception to spiritual perception, whereby a man's soul is made capable of employing certain forces in a different element. Many things are then revealed to him.

The air is full of thoughts to-day which make it necessary for us to grasp the new facts of science now appearing on the physical plane. As investigator of the super-sensible one participates in things pressing in from all sides. This could not have been before the entrance of the new stream of which I have spoken. When these facts are rightly understood, it will be realised we are living in an extraordinarily important age, one in which it is quite impossible for us to continue to live unless some such change takes place in human thought and feeling as I have declared to be necessary.

Man must learn to live in a new element just as the fish that is accustomed to live in water has to learn to live in a new element when compelled to live in air. We must learn to live with our thoughts within those facts which the physical plane produces. Anyone who rejects these thoughts is like a fish taken out of the water. Man must not remain in the water. If he did, his later life would be "airless" as regards spiritual ideas — he would gasp for air. Those people who desire to live within the monism of to-day resemble fish who have exchanged their watery abode for an airy one, but would like to retain their gills. Only human souls who have changed their faculties, whose thoughts have evolved to a new wait of accepting facts, will grasp what the future has to bring.

So with full understanding we feel we are standing at the confluence of two world-wide streams of thought — the one should bring us a deeper comprehension of the Christ-problem and of the Mystery of Golgotha; the other new conceptions and ideas concerning reality. They must of necessity flow one into the other in our day; and not cease to do so even though they encounter the worst of obstacles. For the periods in which such streams of thought meet are fraught with many checks and hindrances. In some respects it is the people who rely on spiritual science who find themselves in a position to understand such things.

Many of our members might perhaps say with reference to the teaching given here: — What you tell us is difficult of comprehension, we have to work at it for a long time. Why can you not give us a more comfort-able diet, that we might absorb more easily what is able to convince us of the spiritual nature of the world? Why do you lay such stress on understanding the world?" Many might say this and add: — "How much more beautiful it would be if we might believe in a Buddhism that has come down to us from the past; if we did not have to think of the Christ-Event as the *single* point on which the balance rests, that no other is to

be compared with it, but might think that a Being like the Christ would incarnate again and again as other men do. Why do you not say — here or there such a one will appear in the flesh! Instead you say men must make themselves capable of experiencing a renewal of the event of Damascus. If only you would say: — 'One will come in the flesh,' then we could say: — 'Behold, He is here!' We could then see Him with our physical eyes! This would be much easier to understand!"

That such things have been said is the concern of others. The task of western spiritual science is to make the truth known; to declare the truth with full responsibility and understanding of what lies within the evolution that has brought us thus far.

Those who desire to be comfortable in the spiritual world must seek spirituality along some other path. But -those who desire the truth, such truth as is required in our day — which has need of all the intelligence won in the time of old clairvoyance and preserved until the dawn of the new clairvoyance — will, I am very sure, follow the path indicated in the words spoken to-day and on many other occasions.

What is most important is not that we should say in what form we desire truth, but that we should know from the whole course of human evolution that the truth must necessarily be spoken at a certain point of time. O! there are many other things that must be said! But for these things you shall not go unprepared.

Therefore again and again within our Rosicrucian spiritual movement things will be said which stand at the very summit of the spiritual knowledge of our day. You need never accept what is said here or elsewhere with blind belief, blind belief is never appealed to here. In your intelligence, in the employment of your own understanding you have the means for testing what is said. You may frequently hear it said: Take the whole of life, all science, everything you are able to experience, and test them by what is given out within the stream of Rosicrucian spiritual life. Do not fail to ex-amine everything — you will find it stands the test! You who live within our movement know this, but you must not fail to apply the test. For it is precisely where opposition stirs, when on the ground of true spirituality perhaps, the direct opposite appears, that belief alone does not suffice. Everything that rests on blind belief is sterile and stillborn. It may be easy to build on blind faith, but those who belong to the spiritual life of the West renounce it. They build on that which the human intellect can scrutinize. Those who are in touch with the sources from which our Rosicrucian spiritual teaching comes say of it: — After scientific examination, this is how things are found to be! The edifice of spiritual science is raised on a foundation of truth! This is a foundation of no easy belief! Our edifice is raised on the foundation of a carefully

tested if perhaps difficult truth, and the prophets of a blind and comfortable faith are in no way able to shake the foundations on which the edifice of Spiritual Science is raised!



The Path of Theosophy from Former Ages until Now

A Note on the Term "Theosophy"

At first glance the use of the term "theosophy", as it might be used above, may be somewhat misleading for the English reader. It may suggest to him associations with Anglo-Indian Theosophy and the Theosophical Society founded by H. P. Blavatsky.

Rudolf Steiner, however, uses the term independently and with different and much wider connotation. In earlier centuries, particularly in Central Europe, "Theosophy" was a recognised section of Philosophy and even of Theology. Jacob Boehme was known as the great "theosopher". In English the term goes back to the seventeenth century.

Ultimately it leads us back to St. Paul who says (I Cor. ii, 6-7): "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world ... But we speak the wisdom of God (Greek 'Theosophia') in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory."

All "theosophy" implies a knowledge of the spiritual world, and such knowledge has been attained in different ways at different epochs of man's history.

It is easy to see how the conceptions of spiritual science that have been voiced for some years within our circle, and in the German section generally, are spreading more and more in the world, that understanding of them is beginning to find its way into the hearts and souls of our contemporaries. It is naturally not possible, although it might be a help to present day understanding, to speak casually of introducing the ideas, feelings, and knowledge of our spiritual movement into the modern world. Many of you might be glad to know how the spiritual nourishment you have received has affected other souls at the present time. It is only on certain occasions that we can speak of the spread of our spiritual ideas, but it may fill you with a certain satisfaction to know that we can see again and again how in

different countries and in different hemispheres the spirit which inspires us is gaining a footing — more in one place, less in another. When I was in Trieste a short time ago trying to arouse some comprehension of our point of view, I could see how the ideas we hold were gaining ground. And when from that southern city I passed northwards to Copenhagen, where, in a recent course of lectures, I tried to arouse some interest in the hearts of my hearers, it could be seen there also how the spirit we cherish under the symbol of the Rosy Cross is entering into them more and more. Taking together these separate facts one sees that a need and a longing for what we call "spiritual science" does exist at the present time.

That we should not carry on any agitation or propaganda is a fundamental principle of our spiritual movement; we should rather listen attentively to what of the great wisdom of the world the hearts and souls of the men of to-day required, so that they may have both the possibility and the certainty of life. We may therefore add to the thoughts put forward in a general lecture like this, one more — that we consider it a kind of duty at the present time to make of these spiritual thoughts nourishment for other souls. This depends upon the whole manner in which we enter into the life of our time.

You have doubtless already accepted sufficient of the great law of Karma to know that it is not a matter of chance when an individual feels constrained at a certain point of time to assume a physical body and come down in the physical world. All the souls gathered here have felt a longing to assume a physical body at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, because they desired to experience in their own souls all that was being prepared and carried out in their physical environment at this time.

Let us now consider our own age as it appears spiritually to souls, which, like our own, are born in it. Things were very different in the spiritual world, as well as in the external world, at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to what they were even fifty or sixty years earlier.

The person who is making progress — and you are all in this position — is trying to learn something of the spirit, and of the spiritual guidance of the world; of what fills surrounding space as the creatures of the different kingdoms of nature, and of what enters into our own souls. For the past half century souls longing for the spirit found extraordinarily little true spiritual nourishment where they hoped to find it. This longing for the spirit exists deep within the souls of all men, it is easily silenced for it does not speak loudly, but the longing is there, and each one whatever he is, or does in life, can receive true spiritual nourishment. Whatever department of science people take up to-day, they only learn from it external material facts which serve to further the progress of civilisation in a bright and clever way, but they learn nothing of what is revealed to man through the spirit. Whether he works as an artist or in some practical walk of life he finds little of

what he has need, nothing that can enter his soul, his head, or his hands, to give him power and impulse for his work, and also assurance, solace, and power in life. At the beginning of the nineteenth century people had already come to the conclusion that in the near future little of this would be found. Many a one said to himself in the first half of the nineteenth century when some remnants of the old life still remained even if in another form: — "There seems to be something in the air; it is as if the ancient treasures of the spirit that have come down to us from olden times were disappearing. It is as if the expected advance in culture of the nineteenth century had entirely wiped out the spiritual communications that have been handed down to us from ancient times." Many such voices were heard in the first half of the nineteenth century. To show what I mean I will mention but one example. There was a man living at that time who knew the old kind of Theosophy well; he knew also that this old form would completely disappear in the course of the nineteenth century, yet he was firmly convinced that a future was coming when the old Theosophy would surely return. The passage I am about to read was written in the year 1847, when the first half of the nineteenth century was drawing to a close. He who wrote it was a thinker such as is no longer met with to-day, for he was still conscious of the last echoes of those ancient communications which have long since been lost to us: —

What Theosophy really desires is often difficult to discover from the older theosophists, and this is even less clear to-day, because on its present path theosophy can attain to no scientific existence, and therefore cannot have any great results. It would be most premature to conclude from this that it is a passing phenomenon without scientific justification. History loudly proclaims the opposite. It tells how it can never get to the bottom of this mysterious phenomenon which breaks out unnoticed again and again, and whose changing forms are preserved by the links of a never-dying tradition. At all times there has really been little that has connected this vital, speculative need, with vital religious needs. It is only for these last that theosophy exists. The main thing is, if it might one day become really scientific, and produce clearly defined results, so that it would become popular and come to be accepted generally, and in this way bequeath these truths to others who are unable to travel the path on which alone they could discover them for themselves. But all this rests within the womb of the future which we have no wish to anticipate; for the present we are thankful for the beautiful writings of Oetinger, which can certainly reckon on a large circle of sympathisers. (From the introduction by Richard Rothe to "The Principles of Theosophy according to Frederick Cristopher Oetinger," Tubingen, 1847.)

From this we see how the theosophic spirit was regarded in 1847 by a man like Richard Rothe of Heidelberg.

What kind of spirit is the theosophic spirit really?

It is a spirit without which true culture would never have taken place. When we think of what is greatest in this, we think of the spirit without which there would have been no Homer, no Pindar, Raphael or Michelangelo, without which there would have been no deep religious feeling in man; neither spiritual life nor external culture. Everything a man creates must be created by the spirit; if he thinks he can produce anything without it, he is unaware that his whole spiritual endeavour would in that case fail for a certain time. The less spiritual the source from which anything comes the sooner it dies. Anything having enduring worth must have its source in spirit. The smallest creative act, even in everyday concerns, has an eternal value and connects us with what is eternal; for everything done by man is under the guidance of spiritual life. We know that theosophical life as cultivated by us is founded in Rosicrucianism, and it has often been explained that since the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Masters of Rosicrucian wisdom had been preparing what has come to pass since the end of the nineteenth century and will go on further into the twentieth. What was indicated by Rothe as a "future" he hoped and longed for, has already become "present" for us to-day, and will continue to become so more and more. This had long been in preparation by those who allowed this spiritual influence to pour, at first unconsciously, into mankind.

What in a special sense we have called the "Rosicrucian path" has been consciously accepted within our theosophical movement since the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and what the spirit has imprinted as science on the people of Europe, has since then flowed into our hearts.

Can we form an idea from what has taken place in our civilisation of how this spirit works?

I have said that since the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it has "worked" as the true Rosicrucian spirit, but it was always there, and has only assumed this last form since the dates mentioned. This spirit that is active at present as the Rosicrucian spirit goes back to very early ages of humanity. Its mysteries existed in Atlantis. The activity it has recently developed, becoming ever more and more conscious, streamed not so very long ago in an unconscious way into the hearts and souls of men. Let us try to form some idea of how this spirit entered man unconsciously.

We meet together here, and our studies show us how the human soul has developed in this or that, till it has gradually attained to a region where it understands spiritual life, where it may even perhaps see spiritual life. Many of you have striven for years to fill your souls with thoughts and ideas which can set the spiritual life before your eyes. You know the way we regard the secrets of the world. I have often explained the different stages of development the soul passes through, and how it rises to higher worlds. You know that we have to distinguish a higher from a lower part of the self; that man has come over from other planetary conditions and has experienced the Saturn, Sun and Moon evolutions. During these his physical body, etheric body and astral body were formed; he then entered on his earthly development. You know that something dwells within us that passes through its training here so as to rise to higher conditions. You have heard that certain Beings remained behind on the Moon as Luciferic Beings, and these later approached the human astral body as tempters, giving to humanity in this way what they had to give. Then we have often spoken of how man has to overcome certain things in his lower self, that he has to conquer them before he can enter those spheres to which his higher self belongs – that in order to reach these higher regions he has to fulfil the saying of Goethe: –

*Und so lang du das nicht hast
Dieses Stirb und Werde,
Bist du nur ein trüber Gast
Auf der dunklen Erde.*

"So long as thou hast not experienced death and becoming, thou art a gloomy (sorry) Guest upon a dark earth."

We have also said that the human evolution possible to-day, and that can give us power, certainty, and real content in our lives, is only to be attained when we learn, for instance, of the manifold natures of man, and that this man is not put together in any chaotic manner, but consists of physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego. This must not be accepted merely as words, but by describing different temperaments, by studying the education of man, we have presented clear conceptions of these things, showing how up to his seventh year he is concerned with the development of the physical body, up to his fourteenth year with that of the etheric body, and up to his twenty-first year with the astral body. And we learnt from our studies dealing with the mission of truth, of devotion, of anger and so on that what we describe as physical body, etheric body, and astral body, feeling-soul, rational-soul and consciousness-soul are no abstract ideas, but that they impart life to our whole mental outlook, making everything around as clear and full of meaning.²"Metamorphoses of the Soul Volume One," and "Metamorphoses of the Soul Volume Two," (see Book Catalogue).

It is possible by such ideas to gain understanding of the secrets of the world. And if there are many who consciously or unconsciously persist in their materialistic opinions, there is also a certain number of souls who feel it as a necessity of existence to listen to such statements as we are able to give. Many of you would not have shared in what has been practised here for years if it were not a necessity of your life. Why are there souls present to-day who understand the views and ideas evolved here, and who conduct their lives in accordance with them? Because, as you have been born into the world with longings such as I have described, so your forefathers (which means many souls present here to-day) were born in past centuries into other surroundings and into another world than that of the nineteenth century. Let us look backwards to the sixth and seventh, or to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when many who are here now were incarnated, and let us see what these souls experienced at that time.

There was no theosophical society in those days where people discussed things as we do here, but souls then heard something quite different from the people about them. Let me try to call up before you what these souls heard. They did not travel from place to place in order to hear lectures on spiritual science, but they heard rhapsodists who passed from village to village, from place to place, declaring things concerning the spirit. What did these people say? Let us recall a single instance of this. People did not then say: — "We have a Theosophy, a teaching concerning the lower and higher ego, that deals with the different members of man's Being and so on," but rhapsodists travelled through the land, men who were called by the spirit to declare somewhat as follows: — (I am now repeating some of the things that were spread abroad through Middle and Eastern Europe at that time).

There was once a king's son. He rode forth and came presently to a deep ditch, he heard moaning proceeding from it. He followed the course of the ditch to discover the cause of the moaning, and there he found an old woman. He left his horse, descended into the ditch, and helped the old woman out. He then saw that she could not walk for she had injured her leg, so he asked her how this accident had come about. She then told him: — "I am an old woman and I must rise early soon after midnight in order to go to the town to sell eggs. On the way I fell into this ditch." The king's son said: — "Thou canst" not now reach thine own dwelling. I will set thee on my horse and take thee there." This he did. The old woman said: — "Although of noble birth thou art a kind and good man, and because thou hast helped me, thou shalt receive a reward from me." He now guessed that she was something more than an old woman. Then she said: — "Because of the kindness thou hast shown me thou shalt receive the reward that thy good soul deserves. Dost thou desire to marry the daughter of the Flower-Queen?" "Yes," he said. Then, she continued: — "To do so thou hast need of what I can easily give thee." And she gave him a little bell, saying: — "When this is rung once the king-eagle will come with his hosts to help thee, whatever the position in which thou mayst be,

when thou ringest twice the king of the foxes with his pack will come to help thee, wherever thou art, and if thou ringest thrice the king of the fishes will come with his hosts and will help thee wherever thou art."

The king's son took the little bell and returned home and said that he was going to seek the daughter of the flower-queen, and rode forth. He rode a long, long time and no one could tell him where the daughter of the flower-queen dwelt. His horse was by this time worn out and broken down, so that he had to pursue his wanderings on foot. He met an old man and asked him where the dwelling of the flower-queen's daughter was. "I cannot tell thee," said the old man, "go on further and ever further, and thou wilt find my father, and he will perhaps tell thee." So the king's son went on further, and at last found a very ancient primeval man of whom he asked if he could tell him where the flower-queen dwelt with her daughter. Then the old man said to him: — "The flower-queen dwells afar in a mountain that thou canst see in the distance from here. She is, however, watched over by a savage dragon. Thou canst not reach her, for the dragon never sleeps in these days; there is only a certain time in which he sleeps, and this is his waking time. But thou must go still further to another mountain, there lives the dragon's mother. Through her thou will reach thy goal." Courageously he went on. He reached the first mountain, then the second mountain; there he found the dragon's mother, the archetype of all ugliness. But he knew it depended on her whether he would find the daughter of the flower-queen or not. He then saw near the first, seven other dragons who all desired to watch over the flower-queen and her daughter, who had long been held prisoners and who were to be liberated by a king's son. He said to the dragon's mother: — "O, I know that I must be thy bondsman if I am to find the flower-queen!" "Yes," she answered, "thou must be my bondsman," and thou must do me a service that is not easy. Here is a horse, thou must lead him out to pasture the first day, the second and the third day. If thou bringst him home safe then on the third day perhaps thou mayst attain thy desire. But if thou doest not bring him safe home the dragon will eat thee — we shall all eat thee." The next morning he was given the horse. He tried to lead it to the pasture, but soon the horse escaped from him. He sought it but could not find it, and was most unhappy. He remembered the little bell the old woman had given him. He drew it forth and rang it once. Then many eagles appeared led by the king-eagle. They found the horse, and he was able to lead it back to the mother dragon. She said: — "Because thou hast brought it back I will give thee a mantle of copper; with it thou canst take part in the ball that is to be given tonight in the circles of the flower-queen and her daughter."

On the second day he was again to take the horse to the meadow. It was given to him, but soon it escaped again, and nowhere could he find it So he drew forth the little bell again and rang it twice. Immediately the king of the foxes appeared with a large following. They found the horse, and he was able to restore it to the dragon's mother. She then said to him: — "To-day thou shalt receive a silver

mantle with which thou canst again attend the ball that takes place tonight in the circle of the flower-queen and her daughter." At the ball the flower-queen's daughter said to him: — "Demand on the third day a number of these horses, with them thou canst rescue us and we shall be united." On the third day the horse was again handed over to him so that he could take it to the pastures. At once it escaped again, for it was very wild. He drew forth his little bell and rang it three times. The fish-king then appeared with his following. They found the horse and he took it back a third time. He had successfully performed his task. The dragon mother then gave him as recompense a mantle of gold as his third covering; with it he could take part on the third day at the ball at the flower-queen's dwelling. Besides this he was able to bring as a fitting present to her those horses that he had taken care of. With them he could carry the flower-queen and her daughter to their own fortress. And round this fortress which all the others wished to steal from her they allowed a thick hedge of bushes to grow so that the fortress could not be taken.

Then the flower-queen said to the king's son: — "Thou hast won my daughter, thou shalt have her by and by, but only on one condition. Thou shalt only have her for half the year, the other half she must withdraw from the surface of the earth so that she may be with me; only thus is it possible for thee to be united with her."

In this way he won the daughter of the flower-queen and lived with her always for half the year; during the other half she was with her mother. This and other stories entered into very many souls. They listened to them, but did not interpret them allegorically after the manner of the strange theosophists of recent times; for these things have no value as symbolic or allegoric statements. No! people accepted them because they found pleasure and joy in them, they felt warm life flow through their souls when they listened to such tales.

There are many souls living now who heard such tales and accepted them with joy. And when received in this way they continued to live within these souls, they turned into thought-forms, into feelings and perceptions, thus they became something different than they were before. This produced results, it imparted powers to such souls, and these powers were changed, they were transformed into something else. Into what were they changed?

They were changed into that which lives in men's souls to-day as longing for a higher elucidation of these same secrets, a longing for theosophy. The rhapsodist did not tell of people who strove towards their higher self, and to attain it must conquer the lower self which held them down, but they told of a king's son who, as he rode forth through the world, found an old woman in distress, and did a good and kindly deed! To-day, we say: — People must do good deeds, deeds of love and sacrifice. At that time men spoke in images. To-day we say: — Men must feel within such sympathy for the spirit that they divine something of the spiritual

world, something that connects them with it, and enables them to develop forces that can put them in touch with it. In earlier times men were told in parables of the old woman who gave the king's son a bell. To-day they are told: — Man has taken all the other kingdoms of nature into himself, what lives scattered in them is united harmoniously in him. But he must understand how something lives in him which lives in all surrounding nature, that he can only overcome his lower nature when this is brought into right relationship with himself so that it can help him.

We have often spoken of the evolution of man through the Saturn, Sun and Moon epochs, how he left the other kingdoms of nature behind him, retaining the best out of each, so that he might rise to something higher. By what means has he evolved? By means of that which Plato uses as a symbol — the horse; on this he rides forward from incarnation to incarnation. At that time the image of the bell was used; it was rung to summon the kingdoms of nature through their representatives — the Eagle-king, Fox-king, and Fish-king — so that he who was to become the ruler of these kingdoms might be brought into right relationship with them.

The soul of man is untamed, and only when love and wisdom control it is it brought into the right relationship. At one time this was brought to man's notice in pictures; his soul was guided so that he could understand what to-day is told us differently. At that time he was told: — When you ring the bell once the Eagle-king comes, when you ring it twice the Fox-king comes, and when you ring it three times the Fish-king; these brought back the horse. This means the storms which rage in the human soul must be recognised, and when we recognise them we can free it from the lower disturbances and bring it into order.

Man must learn to know how his own passions, anger and so on, are connected with his development from one seven years to another seven; he must learn to know the threefold nature of the human sheaths. In former days we were presented with a wonderful picture. Every time the king's son rang the bell (that is when by his own power he had subdued one of the kingdoms) he acquired a covering, a sheath.

To-day we say: — We study the nature of the physical body; at that time an image was used, the dragon-mother gave the man a mantle of copper. To-day we say: — We study the nature of our etheric body; then it was said: — The dragon-mother gave him a silver mantle. Again we say: — We learn to know our astral body with all its surging passions. At that time they said: — The dragon-mother gave him on the third day a golden mantle.

What we learn to-day concerning the threefold sheath-nature of man was brought to people at an earlier day through the image of the copper, silver, and golden mantles. And to the souls that then received the thought-form of the

copper, silver, and golden mantles, we say to-day: — What brings you understanding of the dense physical body, is related to the other bodies as copper ore is to silver and gold. To-day we say: — Backward Luciferic Beings of seven different kinds remained behind on the moon and worked upon the human astral body. The rhapsodists said: — When the king's son came to the mountain where he was to be united with the flower-queen's daughter, he met seven dragons who would have devoured him if he had not accomplished his day's task. We know that if our evolution is not carried out aright it is owing to the power of the seven different kinds of Luciferic Beings. To-day we say: — In carrying out our spiritual development we find our higher self. Formerly, people were presented with a picture. The king's son they were told united himself with the flower-queen's daughter. We say: — The human soul must attain to a certain rhythm.

In one of the earlier lectures in this course I said: — When an idea rises in a man's soul he must allow it time to mature, he will then observe a certain rhythm. After seven days the idea has entered deeply into his soul; after fourteen days, the idea now being more mature, is able to lay hold of the outer astral substance, and to allow itself to be "baptised by the universal spirit"; after twenty-one days it has matured still further, and only after four times seven days does it reach the stage where he can give it to the world as his own personal gift. What I have described is an inner rhythm of the soul.

A man can only create successfully when he has no desire to impart hurriedly to the world what has chanced to come to him, but knows that the orderliness of the external universe must enter in his soul. We must live so that we repeat the macrocosm microscopically in ourselves.

These pictures which were told everywhere — and hundreds of them could be cited — stimulated the powers of the human soul by means of thought-forms, so that such souls are to-day ripe enough to listen to the other form of instruction, the form cultivated in spiritual science. But the longing for this had first to become very strong. All the conscious striving of men's souls had first to disappear from the physical plane. Then with the coming of the second half of the nineteenth century materialistic culture arose, and all was desolation as regards spiritual life. But the longing, on the other hand, grew ever greater and greater, the more the ideal of a future spiritual movement grew. There were but few remaining in the first half of the nineteenth century who felt, as in a faint memory, and experienced in silent martyrdom, how the ideas which were once perceived, discussed, and developed, still existed; but were in decline.

In 1803 a man was born in whose soul some echo of the wisdom of an earlier day still remained. Something dwelt in him that was closely related to our theosophical ideas. His soul was filled with longing to solve the secrets of spiritual science — his name was Julius Mosen. His life could only be preserved by

spending the greater part of it in bed. His soul no longer suited his body, for owing to the way he had grasped these things, yet was unable spiritually to enter further into them, he had drawn his etheric body out of his physical body, and consequently he had become an invalid. He had, however, risen spiritually to considerable heights. In the year 1831 he wrote a remarkable book called "Ritter Wahn." He knew of a wonderful legend in Italy about the Knight Wahn, and when studying it he said to himself: — Something of the spirit of the universe lives in this legend, this saga has arisen in the way it has, these pictures have been formed as they are, because those who formed them were filled with the living spiritual guidance of the world. What was the result? In 1831 he wrote a most wonderful dramatic work. It has naturally been forgotten — as everything is that originates in this way from greatness of spirit. Ritter Wahn sets out to conquer death. On the way he meets with three old men. It occurred to Julius Mosen strangely enough to translate the name of one of the old men, it Mondo, as Ird (earth), for he knew something special lay in translating it thus into German. The name of the three old men whom Ritter Wahn met when he set out to conquer death were Ird, Zeit, and Raum — earth, time and space. The three could not help him for they were subject to death. Ird (earth) is that which is subject to the laws of the physical body, and therefore to death; Zeit (time), the etheric body, is transient; and the third, the lower astral body, which gives us the impression of space, is also subject to death. Our individuality passes from incarnation to incarnation, but that by which we are fixed within our three sheaths according to this Italian legend is Ird, Zeit and Raum (earth, time and space). What is the Ritter Wahn? — Illusion.

We have often spoken of what enters us as Maya. We ourselves are it; we who go on from incarnation to incarnation look out on the world, and are confronted with the great illusion. Each one of us is a "Ritter Wahn" and each one goes forth, if we live in the spirit, to conquer death. In this life we meet the three old men, our sheaths. They are very old. The physical body has existed since the age of Saturn, the etheric body since the Sun-age, the Astral body since the Moon-age, and that which dwells in man as the "I" has been united with him since the coming of the Earth-age. Julius Mosen represents this in such a way that the soul, by which Ritter Wahn would conquer death, first storms out into the world as a rider, thus employing the Platonic image which was prevalent all over Central Europe and far beyond it. So Ritter Wahn rides forth, and would conquer heaven with the aid of materialistic thoughts — as people do who trust to the senses — thereby remaining entangled in delusion and Maya.

But when at death they enter the spiritual world, what happens is beautifully described by Julius Mosen — life is not exhausted, souls long to return to earth to carry out their further development. Ritter Wahn comes down to earth again. And as he sees the beautiful Morgana, the soul as it is stirred by everything earthly — just as was the flower-queen's daughter — and revealing its union with everything

that can only come to man through earthly schooling, there when united with the beautiful Morgana, when again united with the earth, death falls away from him. This means he passes through death in order to raise his own soul (represented by Morgana) ever higher, to purify and develop it further in each incarnation.

From images like these, which bear the stamp of many centuries, ideas enter into man and are aided by artists like Julius Mosen. They sprang in his case from a soul too great to live healthily in a body belonging to the age of materialism that was approaching, therefore, owing to the greatness of his glowing soul, he suffered a silent martyrdom. This was in the year 1831. All these thoughts lived in the soul of a man in the first half of the nineteenth century. They must rise again, but now so that they will kindle human powers, human forces. Yes, they will rise again This gives us some understanding of what is meant when we speak of a theosophical spirit, the spirit of Rosicrucianism which must enter into mankind.

We now divine that what is cherished in our movement has existed always. We fall into the illusion of Ritter Wahn if we imagine anything can prosper without active co-operation of this spirit.

Whence came the Rhapsodists of the seventh to the twelfth century; the men wandered through the world giving rise to thought-forms so that souls might comprehend things somewhat differently.

From what centre did they come? Where had they learnt how to present such pictures to the souls of men They learnt this in those temples, which we recognise as the schools of the Rosicrucians. The Rhapsodists were pupils of the Rosicrucians. Their teachers told them: — You cannot go forth to-day and speak to mankind in ideas as will be done later; to-day you must speak to them of the king's son, of the flower-queen, of the three mantles. By this means thought-forms are built up which will live in men's souls, and when these souls return they will understand what is necessary for them for their further progress.

Spiritual centres are continually sending their messengers out into the world, so that in every age that which lives in the depths of the spirit may be brought near to the souls of men.

It is a trivial point of view when people think they can construct such tales as I have been describing from fancy. Ancient legends which express the spiritual secrets of the world arise because the men who compose them have harkened to and been purified by those who impart these secrets; the whole form of the legends is constructed in accordance with these spiritual secrets. The spirit of all humanity — both of the Microcosm and the Macrocosm — lives in them.

The Rhapsodists were sent to spread their meaningful legends through the world from the same temples whence originates the special knowledge of to-day; knowledge that entering into men's hearts and souls makes the culture they demand possible. In this way the spirit that is deeply implanted in humanity passes on from epoch to epoch. And in this way the great Beings, who in pre-Christian times instructed individualities within the holy temples concerning the things they had brought over with them from earlier planetary conditions, strengthened this teaching by introducing into it the Christ so that their work might continue in accordance with this superlative Being – the Christ who had now become the great leader and guide of mankind!

When I tell you that the tales which have endured for so many centuries and called forth thought-forms in Western culture came from the same source, and expressed the same things – only in pictures – that we tell the world to-day concerning the Christ; you will realise how in the time following the Mystery of Golgotha the spiritual guides of humanity did in fact further aid support the teaching of Christ in their centres of learning. All spiritual guidance is connected with the Christ. When we are aware of this connection we catch a glimpse of the light we must have, and must make use of, more especially in respect of the things our souls longed for when they came into incarnation in the nineteenth century. If we allow those forms to affect us which can inform us regarding the longings of earlier days, we feel we can rely upon our souls and can say – those others waited so that we might accomplish what they longed for. What spirits like Julius Mosen had longed for, because they felt within them all that the messengers of the Holy Temples had related in countless pictures, so as to prepare souls for times to come; what these souls longed for is set forth in the words of Richard Rothe, who, when speaking of theosophy in 1847 at Heidelberg, says: – "Would that one day it might become really scientific, and produce clearly defined results, so that it might become popular and be generally accepted; for only in this way can it bequeath those truths to others who are unable to travel the path on which alone they could discover them for themselves."

In those days Rothe felt this longing – not only for himself but for his contemporaries – he found resignation in saying: – "All this lies as yet within the womb of the future which we have no wish to anticipate!" Those who knew the secrets of the Rosicrucians did not speak in 1847 so that these could be perceived in an external way. But what rests within the womb of the future comes to life when a sufficient number of souls are found who realise that knowledge is a duty. We dare not give back our souls unevolved to the Spirit of the Universe, for in that case we would have deprived the Spirit of something He had implanted in us. When souls are found who realise what they owe to the Spirit of the Universe because of their strivings to solve the secrets of the world, they will have fulfilled

the hopes cherished by the best men of an earlier age. These men looked to us who were to come after them and said: — "Once this knowledge becomes scientific it must become popular and lay hold of men's hearts."

But such hearts must first exist, they must be there | This depends on those who have joined our spiritual society realising: — "I must gain spiritual illumination, I must learn the secrets of existence |" It depends on each separate soul within our society, whether the longing I have described is to be but a vain dream of those who hoped for the best from us, or a worthy dream that we can realise for them.

When we perceive the emptiness in modern science, in art, and in social life, we feel there is no need to be lost in this desert, we can get out of it. An age has once more come round in which the Holy Temples speak, not now merely in images and parables, but in truths, which, though still regarded by many as theoretical, will become ever more and more a source of life, and will pour living sap into the souls of men.

Each one can determine with the best powers of his soul to receive this living sap into himself.

These are the thoughts we would impress on your souls at the present time, being the sum of all we have received concerning the true meaning of the spiritual guidance of mankind. When we allow such thoughts to work within our souls we have a lively stimulus for future endeavour, and we see how much of constructive force they contain that is quite independent of the actual words with which these thoughts have been expressed.

However imperfect my words may be, it is the reality that matters, not the way the thoughts are expressed, and this reality can live in every soul. For the sum of all truth dwells in each separate soul like a seed which can blossom when this soul accepts it.



Q & A

Questions raised during our initial discussion of this material. Answers were researched and recorded as supplemental to the core material in this document. - ed.

1. Question

Answer...

2. Question

Answer...

3. Question

Answer...

4. Question

Answer...

5. Question

Answer...

6. Question

Answer...

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-- ed.



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