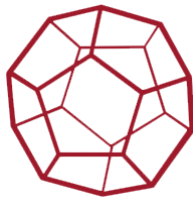


# Aspects of Human Evolution

GA 176



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GA 176

by

*Rudolf Steiner*

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## Summary

This volume goes deeply into questions of the soul's evolving, changing needs for development. Steiner shows how the natural development of the soul stops at about the age of 27. After that we no longer inwardly grow unless we bring it about ourselves. Steiner also explains that a comprehension of how we arrive at aesthetic assessments is dependent on an understanding of the higher members of the human being and their relationships to the lower members. This volume along with Karma of Materialism completes the entire German volume GA 176.



## Publisher's Note

This volume contains eight of the more than 6000 lectures given by Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) during the early part of this century. As with many of his lectures Steiner assumes a certain familiarity with his basic writings on the part of his listeners, a familiarity which can be gained by reading one or more of his introductory works. Chief among these are the four books: *The Philosophy of Freedom*, *An Outline Occult Science*, *Theosophy*, and *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*. The reader unfamiliar with the above works might be well advised to consider first reading one or more of them before attempting this volume both as a way of increasing his appreciation and comprehension of this work and in fairness to Steiner who explains in detail how he came to his knowledge in these four volumes.

The fourth lecture of this volume is unusual. In it Steiner responded quite specifically to several critics of his basic writings. Although in its content this lecture departs from the theme of the series reproduced in this volume, it is nevertheless retained here, first in the interest of historical fidelity and second because Steiner's responses to his critics do indirectly highlight and offer examples for several of the main ideas of the overall theme.

However, Steiner, himself referred to the content of the fourth lecture as a digression. With this in mind, the reader wishing to follow uninterrupted the content of the lecture cycle may elect to read directly on to the fifth lecture upon completing the third.



## Foreword

Suppose that a browser, knowing nothing about Rudolf Steiner, comes across this cycle of his lectures. From the place or the way the book is found, there may be no great surprise about references and statements which sound "mystical"—that word our age uses to pigeonhole anything appearing now to be factual. Yet complicating that impression would be Steiner's frequent use of the term "science of the spirit." Spirit and science together? That sounds like mixing two totally different spheres and then trading on the term science, which our age — at least until recently — has venerated as the supreme human achievement and unassailable touchstone of all decisions. How is the casual reader to know that Steiner himself was trained as a philosopher and had a profound interest in and respect for the triumphs of contemporary science?

Yet by no means all casual readers would raise a question about that. There are some who in their depths feel affronted by the excision—if not denial—of all spiritual factors practiced by the modern natural sciences—a viewpoint sheepishly followed by the humanities and even the arts. Such people really yearn for genuine experiences of the spiritual realms that all mankind prior to our era had as a precious, if not entirely understood, gift. These people, though often without the benefit of technical knowledge, can in varying degrees see through the pretensions and unwarranted assumption of a science that has debased its own ideals and brought the world to the brink of destruction. This situation did not escape Steiner's penetrating observation and he discusses in chapters one and seven of this series how even well-meaning politicians (of his day but nothing has changed in this regard since then) became tragically involved in this process. And again in chapter five he shows how even an honest and decent philosopher could not find a way out of the intellectual trap into which our age has fallen.

So who was this man who already in the teens of this century dared to suggest that the way out of our difficulties — and the only way, demanded by world evolution — is to begin dealing with science spiritually and with the spirit scientifically? To be sure, such a program was more daring and more radical during World War I than it sounds now. At the end of the 20th century there are certainly more people than there were then who can see the possibility, and understand the necessity, for such an attitude.

Generally, however, they have no clear idea of how it could be brought about. And the great majority of our contemporaries are undoubtedly still shut off from efforts in this direction by the very circumstances of the industrial age, with its all-pervading secularity. At least one segment of the American public has rebelled against this so-called secular humanism by demanding that science be bridled — a quite different solution from that proposed by Steiner. The basic situation is this: the public that Steiner had in mind in these lectures during World War I not only did not take hold of his solution but it has been succeeded by descendants who on the whole keep slipping farther and faster in the wrong direction: a passive, almost bemused attitude toward the excesses of a one-sided scientific mind-set that now, in combination with equally one-sided politics and one-sided economics threatens to bring disaster one way or another to the whole of mankind. Steiner already put this very succinctly in chapter seven by saying that "healthy human common sense ... is simply not there. This is the great secret of our time." Indeed, through its lack we see humanity plunge from one unnecessary crisis to another almost day by day.

Who was this man? The idea that any one person could be wise enough to know what to do about all this often raises hackles, especially among sophisticated academics. Do they take time to realize that Steiner expressly declines to offer pre-packaged concepts for instant satisfaction (chapter seven)? He can offer something only to those willing to put aside routine contemporary ideas and make an unprejudiced effort to reach his multi-dimensional level. This is not easy, even though his remarks are sometimes quite entertaining on the ordinary level, as in this cycle when he discusses dowsing. And the wide range of his interests and contacts can be grasped simply by using as a roster the footnotes prepared for this publication. Nevertheless, reading one of his lectures is, on the whole, rather like being *inside* a piece of sculpture and from there attempting to locate oneself in space: one would have to become aware of many different factors at once and combine them in a creative way. Whereas standing outside the same piece we could depend on our automatic internal spatial orientation, of which we hardly take any notice, to accomplish the same thing. In other words, we are led by him, or can be, to view not a new world, but the same world from totally new angles we did not know existed. But it takes some effort to try these out ourselves.

In this sense we can perhaps approach the basic thesis of this series, that the chronological age of mankind (as a whole) corresponds to the scale of years in an individual human being, but to establish it we have to work *backwards* and *down* from old age to youth. So humanity as such is

actually becoming younger, that is, over the millennia it reacts to the world collectively the way individuals do first at 56, then at 55, then 54 and so on. It may be an instinctive reaction to dismiss this as idle speculation but to do so is, in the long run, to stay put in the intellectual trap mentioned above. So far from being speculative fancy, this concept is a necessary facet of the complex philosophy and cosmology worked out in Steiner's literary books (as opposed to lecture cycles like this one which he never intended to be published). And it can acquire enormous significance in explaining, for example, how we got into our intellectual trap. For the basic reason why the world is moving faster and faster in the wrong direction is that too few people ever mature spiritually, that is, move beyond the attitude of the average person of age 27 (presently; next it will be 26, etc.), which they would have to do, if at all, by their own aroused, inner efforts to grasp the science of the spirit (in whatever form). In practical American terms this might mean looking beyond the prevailing extreme alternatives of agnostic secular humanism and fulminating fundamentalism in search of a true balance that retains what is valid in each and with that moving on to new tasks already being undertaken by the spiritually sane of our times — by definition those who exercise healthy common sense. To insist on the reality of both the spiritual realm and the scientific realm and their interweaving is actually the most practical idea of our troubled times.

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# Lecture 1

*29 May 1917, Berlin*

At present, the circumstances of life do not lend themselves to celebration of festivals in the usual sense. In these difficult times it would be best for us to investigate aspects of spiritual science which in some measure can help us understand the deeper-lying causes of the present situation. In view of this, I propose to speak about certain results of spiritual investigation which throw light on this question. Let us try to focus our attention on a certain aspect of mankind's evolution during post-Atlantean times up to the present.

We know from various subjects, discussed on earlier occasions, that it is possible in a certain sense to compare mankind's evolution as a whole with the development gone through by the individual, if for no other reason than that, at least at first sight, both appear as a progress taking place in time. In particular, I have been investigating, for years, the inner evolutionary conditions of post-Atlantean humanity. Much has come to light, especially this winter, which is of great significance also in relation to the question just mentioned.

From an external viewpoint it may seem that when human progress is observed over a certain length of time, one cannot but come to the conclusion that a certain section of mankind's evolution corresponds to the development of the individual between this and that given age. It would therefore seem that mankind's evolution as a whole follows a course similar to that of the individual human being. However, investigation shows that this is by no means the case. Furthermore it is also revealed that important secrets, particularly in relation to the present age, are connected with the fact that this is not true. Going back to the first post-Atlantean cultural epoch, which we can do with the help of concepts familiar to us from spiritual science, the epoch we usually designate as the ancient Indian, we may ask: Which age in the life of the individual human being corresponds to mankind's age in general in that ancient epoch? Spiritual investigation discovers something quite remarkable. I have often mentioned that today it is too lightly assumed that in former times, within the cultures that were then in existence, man's soul configuration was more or less as it is now. That assumption is quite wrong and has arisen because modern man, with

his materialistic-scientific outlook, is simply incapable of forming any idea of how man's soul, and in particular his inner life, has changed within a comparatively short period.

If we look at the human being as he is today, we notice that during a certain period of his development his physical body is the first to mature. His bodily organs develop both in their coarser and finer structure. Not only does the human being become larger, his organs become more perfect externally as well as internally. We see that up to a certain age the development of his spirit and soul is bound up with the development of the physical body; the two as it were take a parallel course. No educator can ignore this fact with impunity. We also know that this interweaving of the spirit and soul development with that of the body comes to an end at a certain age. Man is then considered fully developed. When we look at life, we cannot fail to notice that human beings, as early as possible, consider themselves a finished product with no need for any further learning. To suggest that they may read Goethe's *Iphigenia* or Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* after a certain age is considered by many to be asking too much. This is something one reads at school, it belongs to youth; in later life one no longer concerns oneself with such things! This may not be a general view but it is certainly very widespread, and a similar attitude can be observed in many other spheres of life. It is an attitude that has its origin in something quite fundamental. From a certain point in his life man is physically fully developed. At that moment his spirit and soul being ceases to be dependent on his bodily organs whose growth and development have come to an end. We are aware that from then on his spirit and soul become free of the body and develop independently. When we observe man as he is today we find that this moment occurs at a certain age — more will be said about this later — but one would be very much mistaken in believing that this occurrence took place in remotely the same way in the first postAtlantean cultural epoch.

During that ancient epoch man naturally passed through the ages of 6, 12, 20, 30, 40, 50 and so on, but through his whole life he experienced growing older differently from the way it is experienced today. During that epoch man felt, right up to a mature age, right up into the years from 48 to 56, the dependence of his spirit-soul being on his physical-bodily nature. He felt this to an extent which today is the case only in childhood and early youth. You must realize what this meant; it meant that while the body was growing man felt the soul's participation in the body's growth and development right up to the age of 35. After that he began to experience the soul's participation in the body's decline. He felt his soul's dependence

on the body's evolution. While at first the body would be in a condition of growth and development, it would gradually come into a condition of decline. Because modern man's spirit-soul being is comparatively independent of his bodily nature, he does not notice when the decline begins. In the first post-Atlantean epoch those who reached this age felt with the decline of the body a universal spirituality becoming free within them.

The fact that the bodily nature began to decline while the soul was still dependent on it caused the spirit to light up within man. Immediately after the Atlantean catastrophe this condition lasted right up to the age of 56. Only then one might say was man fully developed; only then did his spirit-soul being cease to be dependent on the bodily nature. That there were at that time echoes of inner spiritual vision was because man's spirit and soul participated in the bodily nature during its decline. This condition and quality of human life threw its light over the whole culture. Young people were aware, because it was common knowledge and experience, that when they grew old, when they reached a venerable age, divine secrets would reveal themselves in their souls. This was the reason that there existed in that first post-Atlantean cultural epoch a veneration, a worship of old age of which today we can have no idea unless we perceive it in the spiritual echoes remaining from that ancient time. After all the things already said I need hardly mention that those who died before they had reached that patriarchal age knew of a world other than the physical-material one. They knew: In that world, those who died young had other tasks to accomplish together with higher beings of soul and spirit. Thus everyone, also when they died before reaching old age, still had a satisfying view of life and the world.

The remarkable fact is that when these things are investigated one cannot speak of mankind becoming older; curiously enough one must say mankind becomes ever younger, that it goes back towards youth. Immediately after the Atlantean catastrophe man developed, in the way I have described, up to the age of 56, then followed the time when he did so up to the age of 55, then 54 and so on. When the first post-Atlantean cultural epoch came to an end, development lasted only up to the age of 48. At that point man had as it were to say to himself: I am now on my own, my bodily nature no longer contributes to the development of my soul and spirit. And, as we have seen, this now occurred much earlier than at the start of the ancient Indian cultural epoch.

We then come to the second, the ancient Persian epoch. This epoch corresponds to the phase the individual passes through between 48 and 42. In other words in this epoch man felt his spirit and soul being's development to be dependent on his bodily nature up into his forties. Only when he was beyond the forties did he experience that independence from the body which at the present time occurs at a much earlier age. This meant that in the ancient Persian epoch the soul did not participate for so long, nor as intensely, in the decline, the sclerosis of the organism. The soul did not participate for so long in those forces that arose from the declining organism and that could lead man into the spiritual world, illumining it for him.

After the ancient Persian cultural epoch followed the one we designate as the Egyptian-Chaldean epoch. Now mankind's age as a whole dropped to what corresponds in the individual to the years between 42 and 35. That meant that in the Egyptian-Chaldean epoch the fruit of development came to man of itself in the beginning up to the age of 42, then 41, later 40 and so on. After that he had to accomplish his own independent inner development.

These facts appear to have the greatest significance for the fourth, the Graeco-Latin epoch. In this epoch mankind as a whole developed so that the age of post-Atlantean humanity corresponded successively to that of the individual between 35 and 28. These are the years leading up to the middle of life. We must be quite clear about what occurred in the Graeco-Latin epoch. The individual human being within this epoch experienced, simply through the laws governing mankind's evolution, his spirit-soul being's dependence on the body's growth and development. But just at the time when the body's decline set in, when it began to become sclerotic — if I may use that expression, which of course is somewhat radical — the soul became free from the body. The first half of life made a person belong to the Graeco-Latin culture by virtue of mankind's evolution in general. During this epoch the evolution of the individual coincided so exactly with mankind's evolution as a whole that, at the moment when human beings began to experience the decline of the body, nothing more was revealed to man through it. That is why so much of Greek culture reveals youthfulness, vitality and flourishing growth. However, what can be revealed only through the bodily nature in its decline eluded the Greek. This meant that such revelations were lost to him unless he received spiritual instruction in the mysteries. Direct vision of the spiritual world was lost through human nature itself.

In the third epoch simply through his nature it was possible for man to see into the spiritual world, though in decreasing measure. It was possible for him through direct vision to know about the soul's immortality. In the GraecoLatin epoch man could indeed know that everything growing, flourishing, everything coming into being is permeated with soul and spirit. But the soul's independent life after death, or before it had entered physical life through birth, was no longer obvious to the Greek simply through human evolution as such. That is the reason for the well-known saying expressed by the Greek heroes: "It is better to be a beggar in the upper world than a king in the realm of the shades." ("It is better to be a beggar ..." Homer, *Odyssey*, eleventh book, verses 289-291; the speech of Achilles.)

The Greeks knew through direct vision that the "upper world" and man within it was permeated by soul and spirit. It was just because of this vision that the spiritual world as such eluded them. It is interesting that the eminent Greek sage Aristotle developed his ideas precisely on this fundamental view of the Greeks. The great Aristotle scholar Franz Brentano (Franz Brentano, 1838–1917, professor in Vienna 1874–1880; *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte*, Bd. I, 1874.) was right when he said that Aristotle's view of immortality was that after death man was no longer a complete human being. As a Greek, Aristotle had the view I have described, and he therefore presupposed that for a human being to be complete, body and soul must be together. Those like Aristotle who were not initiated in the mysteries said: If a man's arm is cut off, he is no longer a complete human being; if both arms are cut off, he is even less complete; if the whole body is taken from him as happens in death, then he is truly no longer a complete man. This view is certainly not true in the light of higher knowledge; it originated with the Greeks, even with those whose thinking, as in the case of Aristotle, had reached the highest eminence. After the soul has gone through death, man, according to Aristotle, is incomplete because he lacks organs that could bring him into communication with any kind of environment. Brentano rightly recognized that this was Aristotle's view of immortality.

Now bear in mind that during this epoch mankind in general passed through the ages which correspond in the individual to those between 35 and 28. If we take the first third of this time span we come to about the age of 33. The fourth post-Atlantean epoch began in the year 747 before the Mystery of Golgotha, and ended in the year 1413 after the Mystery of Golgotha. If evolution had continued as it had up to the fourth epoch, with mankind unavoidably becoming younger and younger, then man would

have experienced not just the shadow-like immortality which the Greeks visualized. His spirit-soul being would at an ever earlier age cease to be dependent on the body. This independence would happen long before his bodily growth and development had ceased, and before he had reached the middle of life. As mankind in general attained no more than the age of 34, then 33, 32 and so on, the body would gradually have overwhelmed him. Through his individual evolution he would no longer have been able to look up to any kind of spiritual world. That is why it is of such immense significance that at the end of the first third of the epoch which began in 747 B.C. the Mystery of Golgotha took place, and that just at this point in time Christ Jesus reached the age of 33 which at that time was also the age of mankind. At that point the death on Golgotha took place. Christ Jesus had evolved so that His age and that of mankind coincided at the moment when, through the Mystery of Golgotha, the possibility arose for knowledge of immortality to be obtained directly without any physical intermediary. This knowledge can be attained on earth only because of the fructification the earth received when the Christ Spirit united with the personality of Jesus, just when His age and that of mankind coincided at the moment in time when mankind was threatened with loss of all connection with the spiritual world.

It affects one deeply when, in considering mankind's evolution as such with quite different assumptions, one discovers during spiritual investigation the deep connection between mankind's earthly evolution and the age and death of Christ Jesus. I can think of little which must have a greater impact on the soul than knowledge of the placement of the Mystery of Golgotha within an important law of development governing the individual person and the evolution of humanity as a whole. We see how spiritual knowledge gradually explains and illumines the Mystery of Golgotha. And we can perhaps sense that as spiritual science continues to widen and develop conscientious investigations, it will throw light on many more aspects of this event. It is certain that as yet we on earth, even with the penetrating research of spiritual science, grasp the Mystery of Golgotha only to the smallest extent. The Mystery of Golgotha will be understood ever more and at ever deeper levels the further mankind progresses in spiritual knowledge. I venture to say that during my spiritual research, few moments have been more moving than when—let me put it in these words — there arose for me, out of the grey mist of the spirit, the recognition of the connection between mankind's age of 33 in the fourth post-Atlantean epoch and the age of 33 of Christ Jesus just when the death on Golgotha took place.

Continuing mankind's post-Atlantean evolution we come to our own, the fifth epoch. During this epoch the age of mankind in general corresponds to the ages of the individual between the 28th and the 21st year. This means that when the fifth post-Atlantean epoch began in 1413, mankind's evolution had reached the point when people felt their spirit-soul being's development to be dependent upon their bodily nature up to their 28th year. At that age the soul became independent. You will realize from this fact the necessity for man in this epoch to attain through conscious inner spiritual development what the soul no longer receives through its dependence on the physical-bodily nature. In this epoch man must attain insight out of his own individual being, he must be able freely and independently to grasp reality and carry this ability beyond the ages of 28, 27, 26 and so on. However, it has to be said that generally the present system of education, despite being a much discussed or perhaps I should better say fabled about subject, tends not to provide the individual with anything beyond what corresponds to mankind's present age of 27.

In the course of the fifth post-Atlantean epoch mankind's general age will drop to 26, then 25, etc. reaching 21 at the end of the epoch. So you see the necessity for science of the spirit, which will provide the soul with what it no longer receives through the body's development, and will support it in its independent development. At present we witness the phenomenon that, if their development does not go beyond what it can receive from the external world and ordinary history, people may live to be a hundred, but their age remains at 27. That means that whatever they express about their innermost views, observations, or ideals always bears the stamp of issuing from someone aged no more than 27.

I have concerned myself with the most varied personalities engaged in different branches of cultural and public life. I have indeed considered this aspect of research most thoroughly. I have attempted to discover what lies behind some of the more questionable phenomena that one meets with today. It has come to light that much of what is happening has its origin in the fact that people with influence in public life, no matter how old they are, act out of the mental disposition of a 27-year-old, in the sense I have described. Truly what I am about to say is not said out of bad feeling or animosity. The research into these things goes back to long before the war, as can be seen from my lectures.

I did research into a personality who is typical because as far as his soul disposition is concerned it must be said that, though he is considerably older externally, inwardly he is but 27 years old. In his activity in public life

he proves himself a typical representative of such a personality. There are many examples to choose from, but let us take this more distant one through whom much has come about in our time: Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States of America. I have taken great pains in investigating this man's soul disposition. He represents those human beings whose development gains nothing through the fact that man's soul has become free, has become independent of the bodily nature and should be self-reliant. In consequence their age remains the same as that of mankind, which at present is 27. It is really an untruth when such people claim to be 30, 40, 50 or more years old. As regards inner development they are no more than 27.

A friend of our movement who has suffered much through the events taking place at present heard the lecture I am now giving in Munich. He told me afterwards that this explanation of the peculiarity of present events was like a ray of light helping him to understand many phenomena. The abstract ideals of youth, the abstract discussions about freedom, indulging one's own pleasure while believing to have a world mission; all these things are characteristic of Woodrow Wilson. (Woodrow Wilson, 1856–1924, President of the United States from 1913-1921, professor of philosophy.) Not developing beyond the age of 27 explains his unpractical views, his inability to discover fruitful ideas that relate to reality as a creative force, his wishing to express only views that please people, that are intelligible in general to people who do not want any ideas more mature than those coming from a 27-year-old — these are also things that are characteristic of Woodrow Wilson. To take an example: his ideas about peace, which have swept through the world, are so impractical that they have contributed to war for his own country. All these things are closely related but they have their origin in the facts I have indicated. Spiritual research discovers deeper truths of human evolution which are not comfortable to hear. This no doubt accounts for them being so little appreciated. People are not consciously aware that such truths can be disagreeable, but subconsciously they are, and they fear them. The fear is subconscious and because people do not allow it to rise into consciousness it turns into hate, into antipathy against the deeper truths. What today calls forth so much antipathy towards spiritual science is subconscious hatred, and especially subconscious fear of the deeper truths which indeed are not, let us say, so digestible as those phrases so loved today such as "The best man in the right place," and the like. In the future man's ideas as well as his ideals must be far more definite, far more concrete; they must relate to reality, to facts as they are. I have spoken of this from the most varied standpoints. Ideas and ideals must spring from real knowledge, from true insight into



the meaning and direction of man's evolution. Man's evolution will indeed not prosper as long as people refuse to base what is called "idealism" on direct spiritual investigation. Arbitrary notions will not provide ideals that have any connection with reality.

The sixth epoch will follow our own. As mankind's general age will then correspond to the ages of the individual between 21 and 14, it will mean that man's soul will become free and independent of his bodily nature at those earlier ages. Imagine what it will then be like if man's free and independent soul does not unite with knowledge derived from spiritual investigation. A person may then be 30, 40, 50 years old, but if he has not taken his own development in hand, his age will in fact be no more than 17, 16 or 15. The all-important aspect of mankind's further evolution consists in the fact that as the earth progresses more of man's development is left to the individual himself. What will happen if this is not recognized? What will happen is that people will suffer dementia praecox, insanity of adolescence. You will realize how necessary it is to know about the fundamental facts of earthly existence and to be conscious of the dangers that threaten mankind. At present there is plenty of courage shown in external action, a fact which is by no means always sufficiently appreciated. But man's further progress will need courage of soul, the courage which will enable him to face truths which at first appear disagreeable if one's first love in life is ease and comfort, if all one strives for is knowledge that one finds, as the saying is, "elevating," i.e., one demands all truths to be pleasant ones. This is an attitude that is very widespread in our time. A dislike is taken to someone the moment he speaks about things that are uncomfortable, albeit necessary; one feels let down because he fails to uplift. But truth which has been recognized as such stands higher than words spoken merely because they deal with things that are pleasant and can be taken home to be enjoyed like a comforting beverage. The satisfaction derived from knowledge of life as it necessarily and truly is stands higher than that derived from ease and comfort.

These are things I wanted to say to help us understand our present age.



## Lecture 2

*5 June 1917, Berlin*

In the last lecture we began to consider aspects of mankind's post-Atlantean evolution which can provide a key to our present problems. Current events do indeed present a riddle to those who attempt to understand them merely by means of the materialistic concepts and ideas of our age. That we are in need of new ideas must be obvious from the many things we have considered. Concepts that sufficed in the past are no longer sufficient to understand present-day life which has become so much more complex. I have for years repeatedly emphasized in various lectures something which I believe to be of utmost importance for the present time.

I have repeatedly said in various places the following: If we survey the field and scope of thoughts and ideas, by means of which attempts are made to understand the world and attain a glimpse behind the scenes of external physical reality, we shall find that the most valuable of those ideas originated in the fourth post-Atlantean epoch. The fifth post-Atlantean epoch which began in 1413 has not produced any ideas that are fundamentally new. Certainly it has produced, in admirable fashion, an enormous amount of new facts and combinations of facts. However, they are understood in the light of the old ideas. Let us take an example: What Darwin and his successors have brought together, in order to demonstrate organic relationships, has been introduced into the concept of evolution; but the concept of evolution is in itself not new; it stems from the fourth post-Atlantean epoch. When concepts and ideas are taken seriously and their true nature and reality is understood, then it will be seen that this way of dealing with issues permeates all spheres of knowledge.

Only when Goethe brought the ideas from the past into movement can it be said that a step forward was made. He saw in the concept as such the possibility of transformation, of metamorphosis and thus introduced something quite new which as yet is not properly appreciated. Concepts of blossom, of fruit and so on he saw as transformations of the basic concept "leaf." (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1749–1832; *Naturwissenschaftliche Schriften*, edited by Rudolf Steiner (Rudolf Steiner Verlag, Dornach, Switzerland) 1982. Original edition by Joseph Kiirschner, 1883–1897.) To recognize a living mobility in concepts and mental pictures is something

new. It enables one to transform concepts within oneself so that they follow the manifold metamorphoses taking place in the phenomena of nature. I have for many years pointed out that this is Goethe's most important discovery, a discovery whose further development is to be found only in spiritual science. Spiritual science alone brings man new concepts enabling him to penetrate true reality.

It is of special importance that the concept of history should be widened. In our recent considerations we have in fact worked with a much extended concept of history. This enabled us more particularly to recognize how the constitution and whole disposition of man's soul has changed. Just a few centuries ago man's soul was fundamentally different from what, in conformity with human evolution, it is now. I drew attention to the fact that during the first, the ancient Indian epoch, man continued his bodily development right up to the ages between 56 and 48. I tried to illustrate this by saying that whereas today in the child and youth the development of the spirit-soul being takes its course parallel to the development of the physical body, in that ancient cultural epoch this continued right into the fifties of a person's life. Today man no longer notices when his body passes beyond the 30th year. All he is aware of inwardly is that in childhood his muscles become stronger and the nerve functions change. It is during this time when changes take place in muscles, nerves and blood that he notices the soul-spiritual element following a parallel development to that of the physical organism. Then comes the time when the soul and spirit cease to be dependent on the organism. However, in the ancient Indian epoch, the dependence persisted, and this is something we must consider in more detail.

Man was at that time, just as he is now, more or less consciously aware of becoming physically stronger during childhood, aware also that at the same time his life of will, of feeling and also his mental life became different. In other words, he was aware during childhood and youth of his soul's dependence on the growing, thriving, flourishing life of the organism. Then came the time when he reached the middle of life which occurs in his thirties; the 35th year must be regarded as the middle of life. Today man is not aware of going through the middle of life the way he is aware, for example, of going through puberty from 12 to 16. But in that ancient time man was aware of this; he sensed to a certain extent, that before he reached his thirties life had welled up within him, had grown ever stronger till it reached a climax and now had begun to recede. He sensed that growth had stopped, that the formation of nerves had come to an end and

that from now on he would remain as he was. Those who were particularly sensitive even felt their life forces become sluggish and recede; they felt ossification taking place and that they were becoming mineralized.

When man at that time reached his forties he felt that a decisive decline began, that the organic life was withdrawing. But he also experienced something which can be experienced no longer, namely his soul's dependence on the declining life of the body. Thus, in that ancient time man experienced going through three stages of development whereas now he experiences at most going through one.

How were the three stages experienced? Let us look quite carefully at the dependence on the thriving, flourishing life forces during the body's growth; let us establish initially that an individual felt himself to be thoroughly healthy— something very few people do today — so that he strongly experienced that the healthy, flourishing, thriving life welling up within him was carried by the spirit. After all, what grows is not the merely physical substances taken in as nourishment; it is the spiritual forces underlying the body that cause growth and development. One can look at one's origin as a human being and say: My body came into being through hereditary substances; the spirit united itself with the body and caused its growth and development. In that ancient time man's spirit-soul being felt itself within the body; its healthy dependence upon the body was felt to be brought about by God, and indeed by God the Father. Man at that time said to himself something like this: I am placed into the world with forces of growth, of thriving, and provided one pays attention and has a feeling for what takes place in the body, then the soul can sense in the growing and thriving the effect of the Father God. Man felt related to nature, that human beings grow and thrive just as plants and animals do. He felt related to natural existence and felt the Father God within himself. Thus you see that something which today can take place only under exceptional circumstances was in that ancient time experienced simply as part of life. Then began the period in the life of the individual when he passed through the middle of life and therefore through the culmination, the climax of the growing, thriving life forces, and then the time of decline began.

As we have seen, the growing, thriving life of the healthy body, upon which the spirit-soul being of man knew itself dependent, called forth the feeling "ex deo nascimur," "from God I am born." Man felt he originated from God, who also caused his further growth and development. When he passed beyond the middle of life, he could still detect during ordinary waking consciousness the thriving life forces. This was partly because he still

remembered his spirit-soul being's earlier dependence on the bodily nature and because he could observe growth and thriving of a similar kind in external nature. However, during lowered states of consciousness, such as dream or sleep and also during the state of atavistic clairvoyance, the astral body and *I* withdrew from the declining life forces which remained connected with the physical body. It is during sleep that the declining life forces are particularly important to man. In that ancient time those who reached the age when their life forces were declining perceived them particularly in such states of lowered consciousness. And when the physical body began to withdraw and become sclerotic, the soul began to live within the spirit of the whole cosmic environment. Thus in that ancient epoch, when man had passed the climax of the thriving life forces and the body's decline had set in, he perceived in waking consciousness the spiritual in all natural existence; in states of dream, of sleep, or of atavistic clairvoyance he perceived the spirit that pervades the whole cosmos.

Try to imagine these experiences: Man felt his awareness of the spirit-permeated, God-ensouled nature alternate with awareness of the spirit of the cosmos; one kind he experienced as ascending, the other as descending. Thus he was directly aware of the union of the spirit of the cosmos with the spirit of nature and was conscious that the spirit of nature is on earth and the spirit of the cosmos in the earth's environment. He knew that they are related, that they weave into one another and that during his life man passes from one to the other. When his life forces began to decline after having reached their climax, he experienced becoming permeated with the spirit of the cosmos, later known as the Christ.

At that time, during their forties and beyond, people experienced their spirit-soul being's dependence on their declining life forces, especially during dream, sleep and other states of semi-consciousness. If they lived beyond their forties, they became aware of the spirit itself, the spirit which is not linked to matter, but lives as spirit. From their forties onwards they perceived the Holy Spirit. Thus when we look back to that ancient time we find that people in the course of their life perceived directly the Father-God, the Christ-God—who had not yet descended to earthly existence — and the Holy Spirit. Such direct human experiences are the basis for the ancient religious traditions, to be found everywhere, of a divine Trinity.

We see in this how one truth complements another, which is something that must be recognized more and more as a feature of science of the spirit. If it were recognized, we would not hear remarks, such as those

made recently to a member of our movement, to the effect that what is said in our lectures is all very beautiful but lacks all foundation. Such a statement is just about as clever, or should I say stupid, as it would be had someone said, when Copernicus established that the earth circles the sun and consequently cannot be fixed on a base; Oh, but the earth lacks all foundation—planets and stars must be sitting on something! Just as planets and stars are self-supporting physically, so it should be recognized that the science of the spirit is an edifice whose individual aspects are mutually self-supporting.

We now come to the ancient Persian epoch during which, as described, man's natural development continued only in his forties, that is, to the ages between 48 and 42. You will realize that this meant the direct vision of the spirit in its purity faded, though there was still an awareness of it. Those who lived beyond the ages between 48 and 42 could still be aware of the Holy Spirit.

Then came the Chaldean-Egyptian epoch. Mankind's general age dropped to that between 42 and 35. Vision of the spirit in its purity clouded over. Towards the end of this epoch it was really only those initiated in the mysteries who could know about the pure spirit. In the mysteries everywhere one could, of course, learn through direct vision about the secret of the Trinity. But as far as ordinary life was concerned understanding of the spirit receded. However, in this third post-Atlantean epoch man was still strongly conscious that in the cosmos, in the heavens, an ascending and descending spirit lives. Consciousness of the cosmic Christ was general. Man was still strongly conscious of his connection with the world of the Gods.

As we come to the fourth post-Atlantean epoch all this changes. During this epoch mankind's age corresponded to that of individual man between 35 and 28. At the beginning of this epoch, which began in 747 B.C. and ended in A.D. 1413, it was still the case that when a person reached the same age as that of mankind, 35, he still had imaginative knowledge of the Christ Spirit. However, at the end of the first third of that epoch, when a third of Hellenism had run its course and modern chronology began, mankind's age was about 33. Man's dependence upon the flourishing, up-thrusting life forces no longer lasted beyond the point of their culmination though the dependence was still experienced much more strongly than was the case later in the fifth epoch. Man was still conscious of the Father God, but consciousness of the cosmic Christ gradually faded. Then came the event which replaced what was lost from consciousness. Just as mankind's age

dropped to that of 33, the cosmic Christ descended to the earth and entered the body of Jesus of Nazareth. The Christ force spread over the earth and, from another direction, bestowed upon man what formerly he had possessed as an immediate human experience through his spirit-soul being's dependence upon his physical-bodily nature. This is the immense significance of the Mystery of Golgotha. It explains the significance of what is understood by "the promise of the Holy Spirit." A time had begun in which the Holy Spirit must be attained from within, independent of man's bodily development, through the impulse initiated by Christ. The connection man formerly had with the spiritual world came about purely through the way his soul and bodily natures were interrelated; this now changed. What had filled man's consciousness thanks merely to normal evolution gradually vanished.

Then came the fifth post-Atlantean epoch. Mankind's age dropped to 28 and will drop to 21 during this epoch. As I have mentioned we live at the time when mankind's general age is about 27. Therefore (and this must be continually emphasized) it is now necessary that within the soul, forces are initiated which do not arise because bodily forces shoot into the soul. Now spiritual impulses, engendered independently, must be established in the soul, impulses which further the soul in its independence from the body. A healthy person leading a healthy life can sense the dependence on the Father God up to about his 30th year; that is, as long as the forces of growth are still thriving in his body, even if only those of his muscles. As you will realize, it is essential that, as the fifth epoch progresses, there should develop a healthy sense also for the divine spiritual element that withdraws from the forces of growth. A sense and feeling for this was still vivid in the fourth post-Atlantean epoch right up to the 15th century. In that epoch mankind's general age corresponded to the middle of life spanning the ages between 35 and 28. Already mankind's age is one year less; because of this, the bodily constitution of man makes him inclined toward materialism and atheism. The spread of atheism is due to man's bodily organism. It will spread ever more unless a spiritual counterbalance is created by impulses that originate purely within the soul, developed in complete independence of the body. Man becomes an atheist when he ceases to participate in the forces of growth and thriving, and therefore no longer experiences himself as a healthy, complete human being. That is why I have said that one can only be an atheist when one does not, in a healthy way, sense one's spirit-soul being's connection with the growing and developing bodily nature. Spiritual science recognizes atheism as an

illness that will increasingly take hold of man in the course of his normal evolution. This is because man will more and more lack the support provided by the bodily nature which enables him to grasp reality in general.

To deny or fail to recognize Christ must be regarded as a misfortune, a tragic destiny, for Christ — from the external world — comes to meet man full of grace. To fail to recognize the spirit must be regarded as soul blindness. To be an atheist is an illness; what is meant is, of course, illness in the widest sense. It is necessary to make these distinctions.

From what has been explained you can see that if one truly wants to understand the evolution of the human race, a completely new concept of evolution is needed. The Darwinian idea of evolution is dreadfully abstract; once its crudeness has been recognized it will be realized that along that path no progress is possible. Evolution follows, as we have seen, an ascending as well as a descending line. The view of today's superficial materialism is that evolution starts from a certain form of life which then progresses to ever higher stages, thus believing that there is a continuous trend towards ever greater perfection.

During post-Atlantean epochs man's evolution goes in the direction of his soul and spirit becoming ever more independent of the body. During the earlier epochs there burst into his soul and spirit, from his bodily nature, comprehension of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The first to fade was comprehension of the Holy Spirit, next that of the Son, and we are now at the stage when, in ordinary life, comprehension of the Father is fading. This fading comprehension of the Father has its origin in man's life of feeling, for as I said, man is at present more or less conscious of his soul-spirit's connection with the bodily nature. This is related to something else. Bear in mind that in general man's spirit-soul being receives less and less from the bodily nature, with the consequence that, if man wants to approach the spirit, he must do so along paths where there is no support from the bodily organism. This accounts for the fact, clearly perceptible to those able to observe such things, that man produces ever fewer concepts and ideas. The concepts and ideas at man's disposal in ancient times bubbled forth, so to speak, from his bodily nature, for all matter contains spirit and this the body simply handed over of itself. But now the body provides man with fewer and fewer concepts and mental pictures. So, expressing it somewhat drastically, he must now rack his brain more and more or, if he is too easy-going, not rack it. Either way he no longer finds concepts welling up within him; he must turn to spiritual knowledge if he wants to acquire them. Spiritual science provides mobile concepts which, in



contrast to the rigid, lifeless concepts understood by means of the physical body, must be understood by means of the ether body. Thus, in the course of normal evolution, man becomes ever poorer in concepts. The way he is naturally organized prevents him, if he refuses the path of spiritual knowledge, from delving into true reality.

This explains the present situation. It makes comprehensible what must be described, without levelling any criticism, as the cause for man becoming ever more obtuse without spiritual knowledge. These are things that must be faced in deep earnestness. The brain will gradually become more and more mineralized, it will become a blunt insensible instrument with which ideas capable of delving into reality can no longer be formulated. Only people who make no effort and feel no inclination to understand what is actually taking place in the world can pass these things by. Yet it is of utmost urgency that one should try to understand.

Provided one is not asleep, one cannot be unaware of the many curious things that occur. However, most people are asleep for they are aware only of what takes place on the surface, not of the effective impulses beneath. If one pays attention to what goes on there is much that seems inexplicable, for without spiritual insight one is helpless in face of these riddles. An event that illustrates this quite aptly took place recently in Austria. A certain Robert Scheu, a man of great idealism, has tried for decades to bring about what he visualized as a movement of a cultural-political nature. (Robert Scheu, 1873–1964, *Kulturpolitik*, Vienna, 1901.) He is concerned about the kind of issues often discussed in our circles. In his endeavour to discover new approaches to political issues, he gathered around him a group of intellectuals. His aim was that together they should discover policies that would ensure greater spiritual influence in people's lives.

This start to the project would have been commendable if by bringing intellectuals together, spiritual influences in people's destinies could be ensured. But what induced Robert Scheu to start this venture in the 1890s? The impulse arose within him from an indefinite feeling that things could not go on as they were; he felt some essential ingredient was missing in life which must be discovered. Needless to say he has not found what mankind so sorely needs. Like so many others who vaguely feel something is missing, he looks upon spiritual science as fantastic superstition. Such people consider themselves far too clever to be concerned with matters of this kind. However, Robert Scheu does feel very strongly that something is

lacking. He says the following: "My fundamental conviction, which I herewith repeat, is: As far as cognition, as far as mental activity is concerned, our time is far ahead of the times." (Ibid.)

A curious expression — what does he mean? He says nothing about the fact that thoughts have become blunted; he is only aware that today's intellectuals are clever in the sense that they can produce abstract ideas like clockwork, and are so sure of their judgments because of the transparency of their abstract ideas. That is why he says that "as far as cognition, as mental activity is concerned, our time is far ahead of the times." In other words, people are very capable of producing thoughts, but these thoughts are of the kind I have described, quite unrelated to reality. Thus one could also say: Our time is far behind the times. Scheu goes on to say: "As knowers we have become decadent, our thoughts are too rarefied." That is certainly true of modern man. We need only look at our literature or observe everyday life. Just think of all the intricate thoughts people spin out, but thoughts that are quite incapable of penetrating reality. Hence Scheu is right when he says: "As knowers we have become decadent, our thoughts are too rarefied, too translucent; we are still dominated by the Middle Ages. The reason is that the furnace in which thoughts ought to be recast does not function."

Scheu expresses himself with feeling in a strange way, but what he says is based on a true sense for what is lacking in our time. Indeed the "furnace" does not function in which thoughts, lost in nebulous abstraction, could become so inwardly strengthened, that they become able to unite with reality. He recognizes that thoughts have become abstract to the point of decadence and that a great number of people have poured our abstract ideas concerning socialism, social-democracy and liberalism with marvelous logic, especially in marxism. Combinations of such abstractions are also possible such as national liberalism, social liberalism and so on. We also have abstract ideas about conservatism. On the basis of all these abstractions — abstract because the furnace is missing that could transform them — one builds up parliamentary systems, representative systems and the network of ideas on which are based liberalism, social liberalism, social democracy, conservatism, nationalism and so on.

Robert Scheu has done what from his point of view is not a bad thing; he has attempted with the means at his disposal to replace the abstractions with reality. Instead of the abstract ideas he wants inquiries set up, maintaining that those who are knowledgeable about an issue should be the ones to judge what should be done about it. After all, whether one is a

liberal or conservative is of no great moment when it is a question of organizing the sale of oil or arranging art galleries. What matters in such instances is insight into oil distribution or knowledge about art. Robert Scheu did in fact arrange inquiries into various issues and saw to it that people who made the inquiries spoke about them. A very ingenious start.

He attempts to decide where what he calls the "furnace" is, or ought to be, located. He asks, "Should it be the parliament, the congress? Or should one look for it in the administration? And do the parties uphold the system of representation?" He further points out that "the system contains programs of fundamentally conflicting interests; the parties do not grasp the real issues of life to which they have a purely deductive approach. They are only interested in what constitutes means for enhancing the power of the party."

Here is someone who for once realizes that the rarefaction, the abstractness of thought — one could also call it dullness, obtuseness, for the thoughts have no contact with reality — have a direct effect on life. He links this problem with the problems of development in social conditions, whether under the system of representation or any other form of government. He is fully aware that no solution is possible by treating the problems in the old manner. He ponders the possibility of discovering from life itself what could bring order into the structure of social life; he has in fact done much in this direction. What is interesting is that he now looks back at his efforts and asks himself, "What did I actually attempt to achieve?" What he tried to do was to penetrate to the reality of the issues. However, he expresses this in today's abstract terminology by saying, "I replaced deduction with induction." These kinds of expressions one meets with everywhere. But Robert Scheu is not altogether satisfied with the result of this endeavour; that is why at the end of the article in which he presents the whole story he says, "I have come to the conclusion that my inductive approach to cultural and political life needs to be completed by a deductive approach. I realize the problem is like a tunnel that must be excavated from both ends if a breakthrough is to be achieved. The mental work necessary must be a joint effort of all Europeans of good will."

So you see that Robert Scheu comes to recognize that the problem must be approached from two sides. What he does *not* recognize is the source from which concepts and ideas, allied with reality, must be drawn. He comes to a standstill and does not really believe in his so-called inductive approach via all kinds of inquiries. In any case, to make inquiries is to

approach reality from one side only. The approach to the other, the spiritual side, would be the search for the spiritual aspect by means of spiritual knowledge.

Everyday practical life demands spiritual science. This is not suggesting anything out of the way or difficult; rather, it is a thought that essentially belongs to this very moment in mankind's evolution. Just imagine how fruitful spiritual science could be if people would overcome the prejudices which blind them to its reality. Without spiritual knowledge one only arrives at absurdities which deteriorate into all kinds of ridiculous situations. This becomes very obvious when one lives within the mobile concepts of spiritual science. Robert Scheu, for example, wants inquiries set up into the various branches of social life; he wants people who are knowledgeable to speak on the issues. One such issue he wants altered through an inquiry is the system of registration of domicile; just imagine what that would mean at the present time.

However, he does represent a striking example of the fact that people are beginning to feel that something is lacking, but cannot make the decision to turn to what is necessary. Yet I have always tried from the beginning to prevent spiritual science from becoming abstruse and sectarian. I have tried to let it flow into life in response to human requirements. Whenever my advice was sought I tried to give it in accordance with each person's individual need. It must be said, though, that the present materialistic way of life creates huge difficulties in applying such advice. It is understandable that a manufacturer would find it strange if told that science of the spirit could help him run his business better. Yet one could hope that it would work at some point.

A man came to me some years ago who said he wanted his scientific work to be enhanced by spiritual science. We spoke about his scientific work. He was wonderfully erudite; he had really mastered Babylonian and Egyptian archeology to a remarkable degree. I tried to work out with him where the threads could be attached to today's knowledge which would allow spiritual science to flow into his endeavors, so that at least a part of his science could be fructified by spiritual science. He had what modern science can say about the subject; from us he found what spiritual science can reveal about it. He had both — but he could not bring forth the will to penetrate and illumine the one with the other.

If one does not develop this will, one will never understand what is actually intended with spiritual science. One will rather be inclined to make the science of the spirit into merely one more doubtful mysticism so beloved by those who belittle earthly life. There are those who have the view that this life is worth nothing; one must rise to a higher life. One must rise from this world of the senses into a reverie — then a higher life will arise. Why bring up one's children properly here when one can rather think about one's prior incarnations? That brings one into the higher regions and so forth. That is not what is at stake here. What is essential is that, in the area where one stands, one can make science of the spirit fruitful. It can be made fruitful everywhere. Life demands it.

One would wish to have something more than words today to make that comprehensible. Who feels today what lies in words? Who really feels into words? Feeling with words — that is something that humanity has almost lost, at least in that portion of humanity to which we belong. Let me use an example. **[ This portion of Steiner's lecture used characteristics of German words unique within that language for those examples. An analogous substitution of the word "pretty" for "ziemlich" has been used in the following rendering for the English reader. The analogy is not direct, since "pretty" and "ziemlich" have diverging semantic roles and heritages; it is nevertheless imperfectly useful in grasping the speaker's train of thought. ]** When someone says, "You did your job *pretty* well" (ziemlich gut), who feels much more today at these words than "You *almost* did your job well" (fast gut)? "Pretty" (ziemlich) is "almost" (fast). We say one instead of the other. Place your hand on your heart and say you don't feel "almost" when someone says "pretty" (ziemlich) in that way! But "pretty" (ziemlich) is a word which has referred to activities and products which were done properly or decently (geziemend). Who feels anymore the "proper" (geziemend) in the "pretty" (ziemlich) in this case?

Or, who feels in the word "Zweifel" (doubt) the fact that it carries the "Zwei" (two), that one stands before something which divides into two? Who feels indeed the "zw, z-w"? (Pronounced as one would pronounce the letters "ts-v" in English. This sound has not carried over into English, although a similar combination of letters, today unpronounced, remains in the word "two" (German dialect "zwo" = "zwei" = "two").) But wherever the "zw" appears, you have the same sensation as in doubting (Zweifel), which divides the things in two. "Zwischen" (between) — there you have the same! "Zweck" (goal), "Zweifel" (doubt), "zwar" (indeed) — try to feel it! Feeling can lie in all speech relations. But our words have today become

an exceedingly worthless currency. Therefore one would really like to have something other than language to give a penetrating impression of what is necessary for today and what spiritual science could give. The way speech is used today deadens thinking even more than is happening anyway as an effect of natural evolution. The result is a chaos of obtuse thoughts written and printed everywhere.

One could sweat blood, as almost happened to me this morning when I picked up a book by Dr. Johann Plenge, professor of political science at the University of Munster in Westphalia. (Dr. Johann Plenge, 1874–1963, 1789 and 1914. *Die symbolischen Jahre in der Geschichte des politischen Geistes*, Berlin 1916.) This man claims to have unraveled a great contradiction which developed between the ideas of 1789 and 1914. He regards himself as an extremely important fellow, but let that pass. On page 61 of his book one comes across an astonishing sentence. I shall now be somewhat pedantic, but the pedantry refers to something subtle, and those who can feel it, will do so. The sentence on page 61 slugged me — excuse the expression. It says: "Imagine you were a future historian who one day hears about the world catastrophe of 1914." What is one to make of a sentence like that? He imagines a future historian who suddenly hears about the world war of 1914. So during his whole youth he has never heard of it, but only does so quite by chance when he is a writer of history! One really can no longer be living within living images to be able to produce something like that. He tried to characterize the nature and significance of ideas. He points to ideas that run through mankind's history, saying that ideas can emerge and again withdraw. In this way he attempts to discover the essence of ideas. He tries to show how ideas unconsciously emerge in primitive races and gradually become more conscious. During his attempts he comes up with the following: "A civilized nation in the making lives according to the example of an imagined ennobled humanity. The position of Homer in antiquity is the best example of such a formation of an idea-complex."

So, the position of Homer in antiquity is an example of the formation of ideas! One might just as well say that the role of a court advisor is an example of how an idea-complex is formed. It is impossible to think along with something like that if one wants to connect living images with one's concepts. When one is used to doing so from youth, sentences containing such affectations in words are experienced like a slap in the face. They remind me vividly of a professor who began a course of lectures by raising 25 questions. He is a professor of literature who has become very famous indeed. I shall not name him, for you would not believe me. Having put his

25 questions he said: "Gentlemen, I have placed before you a forest of question marks!" — So one had to imagine a wood composed of rows of question marks. Ask yourselves what sort of thinking it is when thoughts remain unrelated to reality, when a person does not live in his thoughts, and they result in nothing but verbiage.

This is a situation that is not uncommon; one comes across the strangest assertions. Plenge, for example, says, "Like the astronomer, so the true historian is able to forecast events." And then the good fellow proceeds to show how things developed in the period leading up to the catastrophe of the present war. Since he regards himself as a truly great historian, he should be well able to forecast such a catastrophe, but though he has written several books on external affairs, he has not done so. This troubles him; he therefore explains how he has done it after all. And how has he done it? He says, "Well, I have shown that because of the way things were developing one had to strive for peace with all one's strength and power; then I have shown that, as things were, only the war could come." No one can deny that to be an accurate prophecy! It is comparable to my having two coats and saying, Provided I will not wear this one tomorrow, I shall be wearing the other one. And he continues in the same vein, for when he speaks about how he faltered between forecasting peace or war he says — or rather he quotes himself (quotations are a peculiar feature throughout the book), "To make such a forecast one must let one's fantasy play with the idea of war." What a sentiment! To suggest that one should indulge in fantasy of war in the years leading up to the present catastrophe reveals an attitude of incredible irresponsibility.

As I said, quotations are a peculiar feature of this book by Plenge. The book is associated throughout with an article that appeared in a daily newspaper. The article is quite inoffensive, written by an unknown journalist who rebels against Plenge's "discovery" of the way ideas had changed by 1914. What makes the composition of Plenge's book peculiar is that on the first page one finds the newspaper article reproduced, or as much of it as Plenge found suitable for his purpose. He speaks about the article, quoting it again on page 21. So the article has now been read twice. He then continues and quotes part of it for a third time. Towards the end of the book, having quoted the article three times, he does so once again, So you have a book with a newspaper article quoted four times.

I chose such concrete examples in order to make clear how things really are and to show also what is necessary. I want to demonstrate that science of the spirit is what is needed, what must intervene in present affairs. The

things I have spoken about may seem like trifles; nonetheless they are closely connected with the great issues with which we started our considerations. This I ask you to bear in mind during these lectures.





## Lecture 3

*19 June 1917, Berlin*

Today, my task will be to contribute further to the fundamental theme in our quest to understand the problems of our time. It is justifiably required that man should be awake, and pay due heed to the many spiritual influences that affect and transform him over comparatively short periods of time, and also that he acquaint himself with what must be done to further the particular spiritual and cultural impulses at work in our time.

I have tried from various viewpoints to draw your attention to the greater post-Atlantean period, by describing wider aspects as well as details from it, because only our understanding of that period makes our own comprehensible. To allow the whole of mankind's post-Atlantean evolution to work upon us awakens understanding for our own time.

I want today to speak about that same period by bringing before you some different characteristic aspects. However, in order to understand what I want to describe I must ask you to bear in mind what has been said about humanity as such becoming ever younger and younger. I described how, immediately after the Atlantean catastrophe, mankind's age was 56 and that by now it has dropped to 27. This means that modern man develops naturally up to that age. After the age of 27 he develops further only if he cultivates impulses received directly from the spirit out of his own inner initiative. So let us turn our attention to how the 27 year old human being of today came to be as he is.

Let us look back once more to the time immediately after the great Atlantean catastrophe. I have pointed out how very different, compared with today, man's social feelings and in fact his whole social structure then were. I would like to draw special attention to the unique soul constitution of the first post-Atlantean people, particularly of those in the southern part of Asia, and also remind you of certain facts, already known to you from my writings, about that ancient Indian culture. There was at that time a complete absence of what modern man can hardly imagine a social structure without, namely the concepts of laws and rights. You will be aware of the immense importance attached to these and related concepts today. Things of this nature were never mentioned; they were unknown in the first postAtlantean epoch. It would have been impossible at that time

to imagine what might be meant by laws and rights, whereas we cannot visualize society without them. When guidance was needed concerning what ought to be done or left undone, or about arrangements to be made either in public or private life, one turned to the patriarchs, i.e., to those who had reached their fifties.

It was assumed, because it was self-evident, that those who had reached their fifties were able to recognize what ought to be done. They had this ability because people remained capable of development in the natural sense like children right into their fifties, by which time they had also attained in the same natural way a certain worldly maturity. No one disputed the fact that people of that age were wise and knew how life should be arranged and human affairs conducted. It would never have occurred to anybody to doubt that people who had developed normally into their fifties would know the right answers to life's problems. When a human being today, in the course of his natural development, reaches puberty, a change takes place in his inner being. In that ancient time inner revelations came to people in their mature years, simply because natural development continued until late in life, the consequence of which were the capabilities I have indicated. Thus, when advice was needed, one consulted the natural lawgivers, the elders, the wise ones.

Why exactly did they have this extraordinary wisdom? The reason they were so wise was that they experienced themselves at one with the spirit, more particularly with the spirits that live in light. Today we sense the warmth in our environment; we are aware of the air as we breathe it in and out; we sense a force in water as it evaporates to come down again as rain, but we experience this only physically, through our senses. The people of the first post-Atlantean epoch did not experience things that way. When they were in their fifties, they felt the spirit in warmth, in currents of air, in circulating water. They did not just experience the wind blowing but the spirits of wind; not just warmth but the spirit of warmth; when they looked at water, they saw also the water spirits. This caused them, when they had reached a certain age, to listen to the revelations of these elemental spirits, though only in certain states of wakefulness. What the elemental spirits revealed to them formed the basis for the wisdom they were able to impart to others. When people who had reached that age had gone through normal development, they were geniuses; in fact, they were much more than what we understand by genius.

Today a child's soul development reveals itself gradually up to a certain age while the body's development takes place. In those days something similar happened in old age when wisdom arose from the bodily nature itself. It came about because many not only developed naturally during the body's thriving growth, but continued to do so during its decline when it became sclerotic and mineralized. The body's forces of decline, its calcification, caused the soul and spirit to develop, and this was bound up with another aspect of evolution. If you imagine vividly what I shall now describe, you will find it easy to understand. People who had reached the age when the body began to decline, clearly perceived the beings of the elements. At night the normal senses enabled man to perceive not only the stars but also imaginations. He saw the spiritual aspect of the starry sky. I have often drawn attention to old star maps with their curious figures. These figures are not as modern science would have it — creations of fantasy — but originate from direct perception.

Thus the ancients, the wise ones, were able to give counsel and regulate the social structure through what they directly perceived. They had an intimate relationship with that part of the earth they inhabited because they perceived its spiritual content. They perceived spirituality in the water that issued from it, in the air surrounding it, in the climatic conditions of warmth and so on. But these interrelationships differed from place to place. In Greece they were different from those in India and different again from those in Persia and so on. As a consequence the wise ones, the sages, had perceptions that were related to the particular section of the earth which they occupied. The ancient Indian culture developed the way it did through the relationships prevailing in that part of the earth. Likewise there arose in Greece a culture specifically related to the elements in that part. These differences were experienced quite concretely.

Today something similar is experienced only in regard to the human being. We would regard it as grotesque were it suggested that the ear could be situated where the nose is or vice versa. The whole organism is so formed that the nose could only be where it is and likewise the ear. However, the earth itself is an organism, but for that there is no longer any feeling or understanding. When a culture develops, it must of necessity have a certain physiognomy through the influence of the earth's elemental beings. What developed in ancient Greece could not have been transferred to ancient India or vice versa. What is so significant about ancient times is that cultures developed which reflected the earth's spiritual physiognomy. Nothing of this is known to man today because, when he reaches the age when he could know, his natural ability to develop ceases. People do not

pause to wonder why it is that, when the white man immigrated to North America, the appearance of those who settled in the eastern part became different from that of those who settled in California. The expression in the eyes of the settlers in the east changed completely, and their hands became larger than they would have been in Europe; even the color of their skin changed. This applies only to the eastern part of America. The development of a civilization and its relationship to its part of the earth's organism is no longer taken into account. Man no longer knows what kind of spiritual entities, what kind of spiritual beings live in the elements of the earth. Man has become abstract; he no longer experiences things as they truly are.

What I have described applies to the first post-Atlantean epoch. Things changed in the following epoch, in the course of which mankind's age dropped to between 48 and 42. During this second post-Atlantean epoch the natural ability of the human being to develop lasted only into his forties. Therefore he did not attain the kind of wisdom he had attained in the first epoch. His soul-spirit being remained dependent on the bodily nature only in his forties. The ability to sense his relationship with the elements became weaker. However, the ability was still there, only weakened. People now became aware that when they were outside the body during sleep, they were in the spiritual world. They became aware of this once they had reached, their forties. They also became aware that when they awoke and plunged into the body once more, the spiritual world became dark. The teaching about Ormuzd and Ahriman, about Light and Darkness, originated from this experience. Man was aware that he was in the spiritual world during sleep, and he experienced the descent into the body as a descent into darkness. There was no longer the close dependence on the piece of land one inhabited; instead, there was an experience of participating in night and day. The constellations of stars were still seen pictorially through the faculty of imagination. This atavistic ability had remained from the time of Atlantis and enabled man to know that he had a living soul and that during sleep he was in a spiritual world which he could experience through imagination.

In the third, the Egyptian-Chaldean epoch, the ability to experience oneself so completely at one with the whole cosmos receded still further. In Persia it had been taught by Zarathustra, but had in general been known through tradition. During the Egyptian-Chaldean cultural epoch, in the course of normal evolution, man's sense perception became stronger while the old spiritual perception became weaker. As a consequence the main form of worship in the third epoch was a star cult. Earlier, in Persia there had been

no star cults; the spiritual world had been experienced directly through imagination and music of the spheres. In the third epoch things were more interpreted rather than seen directly; the pictorial aspect became fainter. A proper star cult developed because the stars were clearly seen.

Then came the fourth epoch when the surrounding spiritual world had faded from man's consciousness. Only the physical aspect of the stars was perceived; the world was seen more or less as we see it. I have already described how man experienced the world in ancient Greece. That the soul lives in the body and expresses itself through the body — of this the Greeks were aware, but they no longer felt to the same extent that the cosmos was the soul's true home. I have often referred to Aristotle who, because he was not initiated, could not perceive the spiritual aspect of the stars; instead he founded a philosophy of the world of stars. He interpreted what he saw physically. His interpretation was based on his awareness that man's soul resides in the body between birth and death. He was also aware in a philosophical sense, that the soul has its home in that outermost sphere in which, for Aristotle, the highest God held sway, while lesser Gods held sway in the nearer spheres. He also evolved a philosophy of the elements, of earth, water, air, and fire or warmth; it was, however, philosophy, not experience. No philosophy of the elements had existed before when they were still directly perceived and experienced. By the fourth epoch it had all changed; mankind had been truly driven from the spiritual world. The time had come when something had to intervene: the Mystery of Golgotha.

In these lectures I have pointed to the deep significance of the Mystery of Golgotha. I explained that by the time it took place mankind's age had dropped to 33; man's natural development proceeded only up to that age, and Christ, in the body of Jesus of Nazareth, experienced just that age. A truly wondrous coincidence! As I have described, immediately after the Atlantean catastrophe man remained capable of natural development right up to the age of 56, then 55, later 54 and so on. At the beginning of the second epoch this ability lasted only up to the age of 48, then 47 and so on. At the beginning of the third, the Egyptian-Chaldean epoch it lasted only to the age of 42, receding to the age of 36. The Graeco-Latin epoch began in the year of 747 B.C. when man retained the ability of natural development only up to the age of 35, then 34 and when it receded to the age of 33 then —because this age is below 35 when the body begins to decline — man could no longer experience the cosmic spirit's union with

the soul. Therefore, the spirit that is the Christ Spirit approached man from outside. You see how essential was the Christ Spirit's entry into mankind's evolution.

Let us look back once more to the patriarchs in ancient times who were, one might say, super-geniuses. They were consulted on all questions concerning the arrangement of human affairs because their natural inner development enabled them to embody the divine-spiritual element. The possibility of receiving higher counsel from human beings diminished ever more. When mankind's age receded to 33, Christ had to come from other worlds and enter the body of Jesus of Nazareth. Man had to receive from a different direction the impulse which through his natural evolution he had lost.

This allows us deep insight into the indispensable connection between mankind's evolution and the Mystery of Golgotha. Science of the spirit reveals Christ's entry into human evolution as an inherent necessity. The need for new insight and deeper understanding of the Christ Impulse can be seen at every turn.

I recommend you read the latest number of *Die Tat (The Deed)*, for it contains much of interest. You will find an article by our revered friend Dr. Rittelmeyer (Friedrich Rittelmeyer, 1872–1938, professor of theology, pastor in Nurnberg and Berlin, co-founder of the Christian Community.) and also one of the last articles written by our dear friend Deinhard before his death. (Ludwig Deinhard, 1847–1917, *Das Mysterium des Menschen im Lichte der psychischen Forschung*, Berlin 1910.) In this same number there is also an article by Arthur Drews which is significant because here he again discusses the role of Christ Jesus in the modern world. (Arthur Drews, 1865–1935, see: "Ist Jesus eine historische Perstinlichkeit?" in *Hat Jesus gelebt?*, Berlin and Leipzig 1910, and *Die Christusmythe*, Jena 1910 and 1911.) I have often spoken about Drews. He came to the fore in Berlin at the time when the attempt was made, from the so-called monistic viewpoint to prove, among other things, that Jesus of Nazareth could not be a historical person. Two books appeared concerned with what was called the "Christ Myth" to show that it cannot be proved historically that a Jesus of Nazareth ever lived.

This time Drews discusses Christ Jesus from an odd point of view. In the June number of *Die Tat* you will find an article entitled "Jesus Christ and German Piety." He builds up the peculiar idea of a piety that is German; this is just about as clever as to speak of a German sun or a German

moon. To bring national differences into these things is really as nonsensical as it would be to speak of the sun or moon being exclusively German; yet such absurdities attract large audiences these days. It is interesting that Drews, who would not dream of evoking Eckart, (Meister Eckart, 1260–1327, German mystic and preacher.) Tauler (Johannes Tauler, 1300–1361, German mystic and preacher.) or Jacob Boehme, (Jacob Boehme, 1575–1624, German pantheist mystic and philosopher.) here does evoke Fichte, (Johann Gottlieb Fichte, 1762–1814, German idealist philosopher.) although normally he would not do so even if philosophical matters were discussed. He takes the greatest trouble in his attempt to justify his idea of German piety, and also to show that, especially if one is German, the truth about Jesus Christ cannot be arrived at through theology or historical study, but only through what he calls German metaphysics. And says Drews, no historical Christ Jesus can be found through metaphysics.

Drews' whole approach is closely connected with what I have drawn to your attention in these lectures, that the only concept of God modern man can reach is that of the Father God. The name of Christ is interspersed in the writings of Harnack, (Adolf Harnack, 1851–1930, German Lutheran theologian.) but what he describes is the Father God. What is usually called the inner mystical path can lead only to a general Godhead. Christ cannot be found in either Tauler or Eckart. It is a different matter when we come to Jacob Boehme, but the difference is not understood by Drews. In Boehme the Christ can be found for it is of Him that he speaks. Christ is to be found neither in Arthur Drews' writings nor in Adolf Harnack's theology, but Drews is, from the modern point of view, the more honest. He seeks the Christ and does not find Him, because that is impossible through abstract metaphysics held aloof from historical facts. But the real facts of history can, as we have seen, enable us to understand the significance even of the age of Christ Jesus in relation to the Mystery of Golgotha. Drews fails to find Christ because he remains at abstract metaphysics, which is the only standpoint acceptable today. Certainly, the healthy person can through metaphysics find a general God but not Christ. It is an outlook that is directly connected with what I explained, that atheism is really an illness, the inability to find Christ a misfortune, not to be able to find the spirit a soul blindness. Drews cannot do otherwise than say, "What is discovered through metaphysics cannot honestly be called Christ; we must therefore leave Christ out of our considerations." Drews believes he is speaking out of the spirit of our time, and so he is inasmuch as our time

rejects spiritual science. He believes he is speaking the truth when he says that religion must be based on metaphysics, and therefore cannot, if it is honest, entertain any concept of Christ.

Let us now turn to the actual words with which Drews ends his extraordinary article: "Every historical tradition"— he means traditions depicting Christ historically — "is an obstacle to religion; as soon as the great work of reformation, only just begun by Luther, is completed, the last remnant of any faith based on history will be swept away from religious consciousness."

I have often mentioned that spiritual science seeks to establish a faith based on history because it provides a concrete impetus towards the spiritual aspect of evolution which leads as directly to Christ as abstract metaphysics leads to an undifferentiated God. Drews says, "German religion must be either a religion without Christ or no religion at all." That expresses more or less what I have often indicated, namely that the present-day consciousness is bound to remove Christ unless it comes through spiritual science to a concrete grasp of the spiritual world and thereby rekindles understanding of Christ.

Drews continues:

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*When one recognizes God and man to be essentially the same, [Imagine, to suggest, as is done here, that God and man are the same!] when every person is seen to have a natural tendency to become a "Christ"; i.e., to become a God-man, then there will be no room for a Jesus Christ. One can certainly draw attention to acts attributed to Christ in order to elucidate and illustrate certain religious procedures, as for example mystics have done. One can also refer to sayings of Christ to make one's own opinions clear, just as one can refer to words and doings of other outstanding individuals.*

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Here we have the peculiar situation that what is said never to have existed is yet referred to as if it had. On the one hand Drews sets out to prove that Christ never was, and on the other he says that it is permissible to refer to His words and deeds in order to elucidate one's own. He continues:



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*"German" religion of the God-man has no use for a historical redeemer or even for an exceptional human being who, like Jesus, haunts our liberal theologians. It needs no symbolic representative who only serves to confuse the issue. Such a symbol must be recognized as superfluous and even dangerous because it introduces into our "German" concept of religion not only an alien element which, however sublime, is nevertheless onesided, but also unacceptable Protestant ethics. It is this which has caused modern man's alienation from Christianity. Furthermore, such imposed ethics contradict the duties, so deeply felt at the present time, placed upon us by our own nature.*

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This is certainly a passage of which I can make no proper sense. How is one to come to terms with the way modern man thinks? That is something difficult to understand when one's own thoughts relate to reality. Drews continues:

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*All that is great and significant in the Gospels is not lost to mankind even if there never was a Jesus. The words attributed to him would then have come from some other source. In any case, our salvation cannot be dependent on whether there was a Jesus or not. Regarding Jesus as principle of salvation draws in its wake not only the whole dualistic metaphysics of Palestinian Judaism, which is incompatible with the modern spirit, but also makes religion inseparable from history. It introduces vague opinions and brings forward doubtful historical events as proof of external religious manifestations. The "German" religion of the God-man is not only a religion of freedom, but a religion of the most individual and deepest inwardness. It will no sooner have entered life than we shall be free both of external Church functions with their subsidiary demands, but also of Jesus Christ. As Fichte said: "It is through metaphysics, not history, that salvation is obtained! And metaphysics knows of no Jesus Christ."*

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It would be well if people become conscious of the fact that without spiritual knowledge modern education leads logically to such a conclusion. To present a different result would be a compromise and therefore dishonest. If this were recognized spiritual science would not be seen as something arbitrarily introduced at the present time, but as the answer to the deepest and truest needs of the human soul.

Since the year 1413 after the Mystery of Golgotha, man has lived in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch during which through human evolution he becomes ever more estranged from the spiritual world. We can find our connection with spirituality only through impulses that are no longer provided by man's bodily nature but are innate in the soul itself. People today succumb to the kind of abstractions I have described because as yet they are not sufficiently permeated by Christianity to sense the soul's necessity of union with the spiritual world. That is why nowadays all concepts, all ideas are abstract. Truly they go together — today's unchristian attitude and the unreality and abstraction of ideas. Indeed our concepts and ideas will remain unreal unless we learn to permeate them once more with the spirit, the spirit in which Christ lives. Through Him our concepts will again become as living and real as those of the ancient Indian patriarchs who through their personalities made concrete and effective what was instituted as rights and laws. Our rights and laws are themselves abstract. When a bridge is built and it collapses, one soon realizes that its construction was based on wrong concepts. In society such connections are not so easily detected; all kinds of incompetence may be practiced. The result reveals itself only in the unhappiness people suffer in times such as ours. When a bridge collapses, one blames the engineer who built it. When misfortune overtakes mankind because the inadequate concepts of those in charge are incapable of intervening in events, then one blames all kinds of things. However, what ought to be blamed, or rather recognized, is the circumstance that we are going through a crisis in which people no longer have any true sense as to whether a concept has any connection with reality or not.

I would like to give you an example taken from external nature to illustrate once more the distinction between concepts that are connected with reality and those that are not. If you take a crystal and think of it as a hexagonal prism, closed above and below by hexagonal pyramids, then you have a concept of a quartz crystal that is connected with the reality, because that is true of the crystal's form and existence. If on the other hand you form a concept of a flower without roots, you have an unreal concept, for without roots a flower cannot live, cannot have an existence in reality. Someone

who does not strive to make his thoughts correspond to reality will regard the flower torn off at the stem as just as real as the quartz crystal, but that is untrue. It is not possible for someone who thinks in accordance with reality to form a mental picture of a flower without roots. People will have to learn anew to form concepts that correspond to reality. A tree which has been uprooted is no longer a reality to which the concept tree corresponds. To feel the uprooted tree as a reality is to feel an untruth, for it cannot live, but withers and dies if not rooted in the earth. There you have the difference.

No one whose thinking corresponds to reality could suggest, as professor Dewar does, that it is possible to calculate by means of experiments how the world will end. (Professor Dewar, 1842–1923, chemist, lecturer at the Royal Institution in London.) Such speculations are always unreal. It must become habit to train one's thinking to correspond to things as they truly are, otherwise one's thoughts about the spiritual world will be mere fantasy. One must be able to distinguish the concept of a living entity from that of a lifeless one, otherwise one cannot have true concepts of the spiritual world. One's thoughts remain unreal if a tree without roots, or a geological stratum by itself — for it can exist only if there are other strata lying below as well as above — is regarded as true reality. Those who think the way geologists or physicists and especially biologists do are not formulating real thoughts. Biologists think of a tooth, for example, as if it could exist on its own. Today, spiritual science apart, it is only in the realm of art — though not in pure realism — that one finds any understanding for the fact that the reality or unreality of something can depend on whether that to which it belongs is present or not.

These examples are taken from the external physical world, but today other spheres, such as national economy and political science in particular, suffer from unreal thoughts. I have pointed out the impossibility of the political science outlined by Kjellen in his book *The State as a Form of Life*. (Rudolf Kjellen, 1864–1922, *Der Staat als Lebensform*, Leipzig 1916.) You know that I have great respect for Kjellen. His book is both widely read and highly praised, but if some aspect of natural science had been written about in a similar way, the author would have been laughed at. One may get away with writing in that way about the state, but not about a crocodile. Not a single concept in Kjellen's book is thought through realistically.

It is essential that man develop a sense for the kind of thoughts that do relate to reality; only then will he be able to recognize the kind of concepts and ideas capable of bringing order into society. Just think how essential it is that we acquire concepts enabling us to understand people living on Russian soil. Remarkably little is done to reach such understanding. What is thought about the Russian people, whether here or in the West or in Central Europe, is very far from the truth. A few days ago I read an article which suggested that Russians still have to some extent the more mystical approach to life of the Middle Ages, whereas since then in the West and in Central Europe intellectuality has become widespread. The article makes it clear that the Russian people should begin to acquire the intellectuality which other European peoples have had the good fortune to attain. The writer concerned has not the slightest inkling that the character of the Russian people is utterly different. People nowadays are not inclined to study things as they truly are. The sense is lacking for the reality, the truth, contained in things. (See also Lecture VI, p. 117 and Lecture VIII, p. 157.)

One of our friends made the effort to bring together what I have written about Goethe in my books with what I said in a lecture concerning human and cosmic thoughts. (Rudolf Steiner, *Human and Cosmic Thought* (Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1967).) From this material he produced a book in Russian, a remarkable book already published. (Boris Bugajeff (Andrej Bjelyi), 1880–1934. *Rudolf Steiner and Goethe in der Weltanschauung der Gegenwart*.) I am convinced it will be widely read in Russia by a certain section of the public. Were it to be translated into German or any other European language, people would find it deadly boring. This is because they lack the sense for appreciating the finely chiseled thoughts, the wonderful conceptual filigree work that makes this book so striking.

What is so remarkable about the Russian character is that as it evolves something will emerge which is different from what has emerged in the rest of Europe where mysticism and intellectuality exist, as it were, apart. In Russia a mysticism will appear which is intellectual in character and an intellectuality which is based on mysticism. Thus it will be something quite new, intellectual mysticism, mystical intellectuality and, if I may put it so, quite equal to its task. This is something that is not understood at all. It is there nevertheless, though hidden within the chaos of Eastern Europe, and will emerge expressing the characteristics I have briefly indicated.

These things can be understood only if one has a feeling for the reality inherent in ideas. To acquire this sense, this feeling that ideas are realities is one of the most urgent needs of the present time. Without it abstract

programs will continue to be devised, beautiful political speeches held about all kinds of measures to be taken which prove unproductive, though they need not be. Nor can there be any feeling for events in history which when followed up, can be an immense help when it comes to understanding our own time.

Let me give you a characteristic example. Concern about the problems facing mankind at the present time causes one to turn repeatedly to events that took place in the 18th century, particularly in the '60s of that century. At that time remarkable impulses were emerging in Europe. An attempt to understand them can be most instructive. As you know that was when the Seven Years War took place. England and France were deeply divided, mainly through their colonial rivalry in North America. In Europe, England and Prussia were allies; opposing them was the alliance consisting of France and Austria. In Russia a strong hostility prevailed against Prussia during the reign of Czarina Elizabeth. Therefore one should really speak of an alliance between Russia, France and Austria against Prussia and England. One could say that on a smaller scale conditions were similar to those of today; just as now there was then a danger of complete chaos in Europe. In fact, when the situation in the early 1760s is investigated, it is found to be not unlike the present one in 1917. But the remarkable incident I want to mention is the following.

I believe it was on January the fifth, 1762, that Czarina Elizabeth died; or to put it as the historians have done, her life, not very often sober, had come to an end; she had spent most of it inebriated. The Czarina Elizabeth was dead, and her nephew, her sister's son, stood before those authorized to place the crown upon his head. It was an extraordinary person who, on January the fifth 1762, prepared himself to be elevated to Czar. He was clad in his regiment's ceremonial uniform, consisting of green jacket with red collar and cuffs, yellow waistcoat and stockings, leggings to above the knee (he had already as Grand Duke made a habit of never bending the knees when walking as this, to him, seemed more dignified) long pigtail, two powdered coils, a hat with upturned brim, and as his symbol he carried a knobbed staff. As you know, his consort was Catherine, later to become Catherine the Great. History describes Czar Peter III as an immature young man. (Peter III, Czar of Russia 1762–1761.) It is extraordinarily difficult to ascertain what kind of person he actually was. Very probably he was very immature, even backward. He became Czar at a significant moment in the history of Europe. At his side was a woman who already as a seven year old girl had written in her diary that there was nothing she desired more than to become the absolute ruler of the Russian people. Her dream was to

become ruler in her own right. And she seemed to be proud that for the sake of direct succession she need never bear a child that was necessarily that of her husband, the Czar. When he became ruler, the war had been going on for a long time; everybody longed for peace. Peace would be a blessing if only it could be attained.

What happened next was that already in February — that is, soon after the feeble-minded Peter III had ascended to the throne of the Czars — all the European powers received a Russian manifesto. This event was very remarkable, and I would like to read to you a literal translation. The manifesto was sent to the embassies in Austria, France, Sweden and Saxony. Saxe-Coburg was at that time part of Poland. The document reads as follows:

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*His Imperial Majesty, who through good fortune ascended to the throne of his forebears, regards his first duty to be promotion and increase of the welfare of his subjects. It is therefore with great sorrow that he Witnesses the present war which has already lasted six years and is an immense burden to all the countries involved. Far from showing any signs of coming to an end, it is, to the misfortune of all the nations, spreading ever further the longer it lasts. The suffering of humanity through this calamity is all the greater because of the uncertainty concerning the outcome, which shows no sign of lessening. In these circumstances, out of humanitarian feelings and compassion for the useless spilling of innocent blood, his Imperial Majesty on his part wishes to put an end to this evil. He therefore finds it necessary to turn to Russia's allies reminding them that God's first commandment to sovereigns, namely the preservation of the people entrusted to them, must take precedence over all other considerations. They on their part would wish to secure the peace so necessary and valuable to them also, and at the same time to contribute as much as is possible to see peace established in the whole of Europe. To this purpose His Majesty is prepared to sacrifice the conquests made in this war by Russian forces. His Majesty hopes that the allies on their part will consider the return of peace a greater benefit than anything they could expect to obtain through a prolonged war and further bloodshed. Out of the best and deepest feelings his Imperial*

*Majesty advises all to devote their best forces to achieve so great and beneficial an objective. St. Petersburg, February 23, 1762.*

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I do wonder if anywhere today there is a true feeling for the fact that this manifesto is absolutely concrete, is based completely on reality. One should be able to sense that it is a document that carries the conviction of truth. However, the diplomatic notes sent in answer to the manifesto are all declarations written more or less in the same vein as are today's declarations concerned with the entente, especially the ones sent by Woodrow Wilson. Everything in these diplomatic notes is utterly abstract with no relation to reality, whereas what I just now read to you, written on the 23rd of February 1762, is in a style of a different order, and contains something quite remarkable, all the more so in view of the Czar's condition, which I described to you. There must have been someone with power behind the scenes, with a sense for the reality of the situation, who could cause this action to be taken. Later, when the abstract replies had reached Russia — replies containing the same kind of abstractions as those used today, like "peace, free from annexation" or "freedom for the people" — Peter, the feeble-minded, sent an answer delivered by the Russian envoy, Count Gallitzin, to the Court in Vienna on the 9th of April. Listen to what it contains:

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*The friendship which has existed between the Russian Imperial Court and the Prussian Royal Court ever since the time of Czar Peter I has lately suffered a setback merely through accidental changes in the constitution of Europe. The war which is a result of these changes can neither last forever nor destroy the advantage of a friendship which for many years proved to be a useful confederation and could be so again. His Imperial Majesty therefore proposes to the King of Prussia that they conclude not only a lasting peace, but a treaty of alliance in their mutual interest and to their mutual advantage.*

*Please note the stroke of genius in what follows:*

*The reason for these deliberations on the part of his Russian Imperial Majesty is obvious and needs no lengthy explanation, as it is easy enough to demonstrate that no good can come of*

*a general peace such as was concluded in Westphalia. Peace cannot be expected to last when there is an unending shifting of arms and such variety of intentions. Such a peace necessitates all conquered territories to be protected, as is the case in Westphalia. But now the matter hinges on pretensions which have only arisen out of the war. These can hardly be reconciled due to the eagerness early in the war to mobilize as many powers as possible with little consideration for possible consequences of hastily concluded treaties and amalgamations.*

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One cannot imagine a more ingenious diplomatic document. Think about it — if only somebody could recognize now that the pretensions made today have only arisen because of this war! The document continues:

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*The Russian Imperial Court alone has always insisted that, before a general congress is arranged, it is necessary that conflicting interests and demands are reconciled. It would appear that the Sovereign Court in Vienna also recognizes this, and therefore never directly answered the Russian Imperial communique. The Sovereign Court made only brief reference to points that were in its favor, passing over others in silence preferring, it would seem, to await possible fortunes with arms. ... The war that has since broken out between England and Spain only increases the general misery. Although it engages England at sea, it does nothing to lessen the war in Germany. Sweden is without hope and is suffering losses; her glory waning, she seems to have courage neither to continue the war nor to withdraw from it. The Sovereign Courts all appear to be waiting to see who will be the first to make a decisive move towards establishing peace. His Russian Imperial Majesty alone is ready to do so, through compassion and also in view of the complaisance shown by his majesty the King of Prussia. His Imperial Majesty wishes to take the necessary steps at the earliest possible moment, especially as this intention was communicated to all the Sovereign Courts as early as the 23rd of February, soon after the start of his reign.*

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Peace was established, and indeed as a result of what was initiated with this concrete document based on reality. It is of the greatest importance that a sense is developed for what history conveys, a feeling for the difference between concepts and ideas that are incapable of intervening in reality, and those that are themselves rooted deeply in reality and therefore have the power to affect it. One should not imagine that words are always mere words; they can be as effective as deeds if based on reality. It must be realized that mankind is going through a crisis. It is all-important that a new path, a new connection, be found to truth and reality. People are so alienated from what is real that they have lost the sense for truth and for the right way of dealing with things. It is important to see that the crisis we are in and the untruthfulness that abounds are related. Let me give you one small example: a periodical has appeared, calling itself *The Invisible Temple*, obviously a publication in which those inclined towards mysticism expect to find something very deep. "The Invisible Temple" — Oh, the depth of it! Subtitle? *A Monthly Magazine for the Gathering of Spirits*. (*Der unsichtbare Tempel; Monatsschrift zur Sammlung der Geister*, München 1916–1920, 5 volumes edited by the brothers Dr. Ernst and Dr. August Horneffer.) I will say no more on that point, but in one issue monists and theosophists are mentioned. Various foolish things are said, including a passage I will read. The periodical is the mouthpiece for a society which is at present led by Horneffer. (Ernst Horneffer, 1871–1954, professor in Giessen, followed Dr. Fritz Koegel as editor in the Nietzsche archives. See *Nietzsches letztes Schaffen*, Jena 1907.) The society claims it is going to renew the world.

This is the passage:

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*Monists and theosophists may go in different directions; they may vigorously fight and despise one another; yet in one respect they are strangely alike. Both lay claim to the word "science." Both insist that their pursuit is true science, and that everybody else's science is pseudo-science. You will find this stated in the writings of Haeckel as well as of Rudolf Steiner.*

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I request you to go through everything I have said or written and see if you can find anything of what is here maintained. But who today is prepared in a case like this to call something by its right name, and say that it is an outright lie, and a common one at that. That Horneffer should

write such things comes as no surprise. When he published Nietzsche's works, I had to point out to him that he did not have the faintest understanding of Nietzsche. What he had compiled and published was rubbish. So what he writes now is no surprise. But people take such things seriously, and thus it comes about that the worst, most stupid foolishness is confused and mixed up with the earnest striving of spiritual science, and worse still, what is-truth is called lies, whereas lies are accepted as truth.

It must be learned that a new link to reality has to be found. In the first post-Atlantean cultural epoch the patriarchs when they reached their fifties, received the spirit into themselves as part of their natural development. We may ask if this has in any way remained through the Greek epoch up to our own? The answer is that all that has remained is what we call genius. When the faculty of genius appears today it is still to some extent dependent on man's natural development. However, the men of genius appearing during the fifth cultural epoch will be the last in earth evolution. It is important to know that no genius will appear in the future. We must face the fact that as a natural gift the faculty of genius will disappear. Instead, a new quality of originality will appear, a quality that no longer appears as a gift of nature but must be striven for. It will arise through man's intimate union with the spirituality that reveals itself in the outer world.

A very interesting man, a psychologist, died in March, 1917. I have often spoken about Franz Brentano. (Franz Brentano, see note 2 to Lecture I.) He was not only the most significant expert on Aristotle, but a characteristic thinker of our time. I have mentioned before that he began a work on psychology. The first volume appeared in 1874; the second was to appear that same fall and further volumes later. But neither the one expected in the fall nor any later volumes appeared. I became thoroughly familiar with Franz Brentano's characteristic way of lecturing when I lived in Vienna. I have read every published line of what he has written, so I am well acquainted with the direction of his thoughts. Because I know him so well I am convinced that Franz Brentano's innate honesty prevented him from publishing further volumes. There are clear indications already in the first volume of his struggle to reach a clear conclusion regarding immortality of the soul. However, without spiritual science — with which he would have nothing to do — he could not get beyond the first volume, let alone the fifth, in which he planned to furnish proof of the soul's immortality. There was no room for science of the spirit in his outlook. He is, in fact, the originator of the saying so much quoted by 19th-century philosophers: "Vera philosophiae methodus nulla alia nisi scientiae naturalis

est" ("True science of the spirit can have no other method of research than natural science.") (Franz Brentano, *Das Genie*, a lecture held in the Center for Engineering and Architecture in Vienna, published in Leipzig, 1892.) He composed this sentence for his inauguration thesis when in 1866, having left the Dominican order, he became professor at the university at Wurzburg. Philosophy was already then rather scorned. The first time he entered the auditorium, where formerly a follower of Baader (Franz Xavier Benedikt Baader, 1765–1841, philosopher.) had lectured, he was met with slogans such as "sulfur factory" written on the walls.

Franz Brentano was a gifted man, and he worked out his chosen subject as far as it was possible for him to do. The reason he came to a standstill after the first volume of his intended work was his refusal to enter into spiritual science. His later writings are fragments. But one treatise, a rendering of one of his lectures, is extremely interesting. It is entitled *Genius*. Although he was a keen observer he was not someone able to ascend from physical observations to spiritual ones. The treatise is basically an attack on the idea of genius. He opposes the idea that from some unconscious strata of the soul could arise what is called genius. He argues that what comes to expression is just a quicker, more commanding grasp of things than is normally attained by ordinary people. As I said, Brentano's treatise is very interesting although he did not come to a spiritual-scientific viewpoint. He was a keen observer and for that very reason could not find, when observing life today, anything to justify the claim of genius. And because he was honest he opposed the idea.

The riddle of genius, among other things, remains inexplicable till one investigates the deeper aspects of mankind's evolution, unless one knows that in the future, what has been known as "genius" will be replaced in certain people by a new way of communion with the spiritual world. When they achieve this, they will receive impulses which will come to expression in the external world in ways that will be equivalent to what was created by geniuses in the past. To recognize that things were different in the past and will be different again in the future is to understand evolution rightly.

I know full well that one is ridiculed for saying such things, but they are the result of direct observation of concrete facts. They are also a contrast to the way people nowadays base their actions not on facts but on some idea with which they have become enamored. To give an example, a man concerned with healing got the idea that movement is good for certain illnesses, which is quite true. However, someone consulted him who had a complaint which the practitioner thought would benefit from movement. He

recommended that the patient take plenty of exercise, to which he got the reply: "Forgive me, but you must have forgotten that I am a postman." One must recognize that concepts are only the tool, not the reality, and also that one must never be dogmatic. I have sometimes referred to another unreal concept, frequently acted upon when it is said: "the best man in the right place!"— whereupon it is immediately found that one's nephew or son-in-law is the best man! What matters are the facts as they truly are, not the idea one is in love with. Unless a feeling for these things is acquired one will fail to learn what is to be learned from history, and fail also to recognize the real issues in things and events around one. And the possibility to find the Christ again will elude one.

We shall continue these considerations next week.



## Lecture 4

*26 June 1917, Berlin*

In order to relate to our anthroposophical movement certain current thoughts and opinions concerned with some special phenomena, I would like today to add to our considerations some incidental material.

I will begin by speaking about experiments that are being made at the moment; they have a certain interest for us. During our discussions I have often mentioned the natural scientist Moritz Benedikt; his main interests are anthropology and criminology, though his scientific investigations cover a great variety of subjects. (Moritz Benedikt, 1835-1920, criminologist and anthropologist.) Lately he has been intensely occupied with scientific investigations into dowsing, or water divining. The war has caused great interest in this subject. Dowsing consists mainly of the use of a fork-shaped rod, made of certain kinds of wood such as hazel. The rod is held in a special way by the prongs, and when it moves that indicates that there is either something metallic or water in the ground beneath.

Moritz Benedikt is certainly no dreamer, in fact very much the opposite; he is also someone who would emphatically reject anything to do with anthroposophy. Yet he has been completely absorbed in research into dowsing. His interest has been aroused partly because of war operations taking place in certain regions. His aim to set dowsing on a rational footing has led to experiments with certain types of people whom he calls "darkness-adapted." I will explain in a moment why he attempts' to establish that each human being is asymmetric, a twofold being in the sense that not only does the right side differ from the left, but the two sides are polar opposites. Forces in the left side relate to forces in the right as positive magnetism relates to negative, or positive electricity to negative.

Moritz Benedikt has discovered that when a person holds the divining rod by both prongs the forces in the left side of the body unite with those in the right side. Or, as he expresses it, the forces, by flowing together, form a common stream of emanation. When a person particularly strong in such forces walks over ground beneath which there is water, a change takes place in the forces of both sides of his body. This change is caused by emanations streaming upwards from the water below into the person. It is

interesting that Moritz Benedikt, himself a doctor, discovers that particularly susceptible persons can become so strongly influenced that they become ill by simply walking over ground under which there is water or a metal ore. Thus Benedikt found that if certain individuals walked over ground containing particular substances which they either ignored or knew nothing of, they could suffer illnesses such as melancholia, hypochondria or hysteria, illnesses of which doctors no longer know much more than their names. However, when the same individuals held the divining rod, they did not become ill. The rod causes the two streams of forces in the body to unite, and as it dips it diverts the force that would otherwise cause illness in some part of the body. So it is a case of streams of forces being diverted from the body through the rod.

The divining rod is a branch which has been carved into a fork, the way branches fork on a tree, and it is held by the two prongs. But how did Professor Benedikt arrive at his conclusions? He did it with the help of certain individuals whom he calls "darkness-adapted." He calls them this because when they observe other people in the dark, they see colors. Experiments have established that the colors thus seen on a person's left side are different from those on his right side. Benedikt had the help of two such persons in his experiments. It becomes clear that these colors seen in a dark room, so dark that there is no possibility of ordinary physical sight, are what Benedikt calls emanations. We would call them deep physical aura. In this way it was possible for Professor Benedikt, with the help of "darkness-adapted" persons to prove, not only that human beings are asymmetric; i.e., show different colors on the two sides of their body, but also that the whole color picture changes when the divining rod is held. The experiment can be carried out in a laboratory; all that is needed is a bowl with water or a piece of metal. Thus in a room that is made dark one can prove what causes the effect produced by the rod.

It is interesting to look at some of the passages in Professor Benedikt's latest publication. He says:

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*There exist, if only in a relatively small number, human beings who are darkness-adapted! A relatively large number of this minority see many objects in darkness as luminous, but without color. A few see objects not only as luminous but colored. Already Reichenbach declared that every human being drags about a huge covering of luminous substance (emanation). Such phenomena, both colored and colorless,*

*have since been strictly tested by me. A great many doctors and other educated people have been observed in my darkroom by two persons who are typically "darkness-adapted," engineer Josef Pora and civil servant Hedwig Kaindl. According to the result of these tests, there can be no justified reason to doubt the correctness of what is seen and described. The gentlemen who were tested could convince themselves that the two "darkness-adapted" persons saw these unexpected phenomena on the parts of the body whose specific color emanation they described. ... The people who are "darkness-adapted" and see colors will observe on a person's right side blue at the crown of the head down over the forehead and the rest of that half of the body; on the left side red is seen, or by some, for example by engineer Pora, an orange yellow. From the back the same division and the same colors are seen ... I will mention here that an enclosed electrical battery in the darkroom glowed red at the anode and blue at the cathode terminals, thus in colors analogous to those seen on the left and right side of the body. The emanations from the two polar halves of the body were united into a single stream through the rod and combined with the emanation from the substance below the rod; its deflection signified this union. (Moritz Benedikt, Ruten- und Pendellehre, Vienna and Leipzig, 1917.)*

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All this is very interesting. I must emphasize, so that there can be no misunderstanding, that what we are here concerned with has nothing to do with what I describe in my book *Theosophy* as the aura. (Rudolf Steiner, *Theosophy: An Introduction to the Supersensible Knowledge of the World and the Destination of Man* (Anthroposophic Press, Spring Valley, NY, 1985).) What I describe reveals man's higher soul and spirit. What Professor Benedikt discovers in his darkroom is something that exists below the threshold, that is, not above but below the threshold of man's ordinary consciousness. These emanations or radiations are not perceptible to ordinary physical sight. What is interesting for us is the fact that a modern natural scientist finds it acceptable not only to speak about but to investigate scientifically a subconscious aura. It is also interesting that Benedikt himself finds it necessary to indicate that an aptitude for using the divining rod is not an indication of a higher kind of human capability. On the contrary it is seen to be a talent connected with man's lower

organization and denied to those who are intellectually developed. It is shown that the ability of certain people to make the rod dip especially strongly is connected with lower soul impulses of a kind not perceptible to the ordinary senses, at least not in the normal way. That is why Professor Benedikt always needs "darkness-adapted" persons for his experiments.

Naturally this phenomenon comes up against opposition, but this is only to be expected; such things always create opposition. Professor Benedikt himself says on page twelve of his booklet:

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*The simple man instinctively recognizes dowsing as a fact; the academically educated person recognizes the generally held opinion. Thus for the former it is simply traditional knowledge and becomes irrefutable fact the moment he sees and feels the rod dip. The "intellectual" puts blinkers on and refuses to see what does not happen to fit into any compartment of his knowledge.*

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However, it all depends on what level someone wears his blinkers. Professor Benedikt takes his off when he investigates the aura connected with dowsing, but he puts them on when it comes to those higher realms investigated by anthroposophy. But other things of interest, based on his experiments, are published by Professor Benedikt. He says, for example:

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*We want to emphasize the significance these experiments have for the theory of color. The Newtonian theory that color effects originate exclusively from light which is reflected or transmitted through the prism is universally accepted without reservation by the guild of physicists, but it was challenged by Goethe. He maintained that the color impressions we receive from naturally colored objects and also from fabrics treated with natural color are due partly to the colored objects themselves. The proofs he offered were not sufficiently convincing to be generally accepted. ... With the help of the pendulum the theory of emanation dramatically confirms and*



*clarifies one of Goethe's views; in this connection it must be stressed that reflected light produces emanations similarly colored.*

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Thus you see that Benedikt, now that he has embarked on research into this border realm, comes as far as Goethe's theory of color. When one has been occupied, as I have, for more than three decades with justifying and defending Goethe's theory of color, then one is able to evaluate the extent to which there is a connection between the theory of emanation and Goethe's theory of color, and also whether there is a connection between the boneheaded materialistic theories that dominate modern physics and the rejection of Goethe's theory of color. However, what is interesting is that when someone ventures even slightly into the theory of color, he gets a little further in the direction of the anthroposophical view.

It is significant that when experiments are made with things like dowsing it is found that the simple man instinctively recognizes the phenomenon for a fact, whereas the scholar or academically trained person recognizes only the general opinion. It is significant because no age has been so dominated by opinions as ours, although it is always stressed that common sense should prevail. This is stressed especially in politics. But the fact is that healthy human common sense must today be striven for; it is simply not there. That is the great secret of our time. It must be striven for so that man can regain the connection with the spiritual world which in ancient times he had through atavistic clairvoyance. What he lost can be attained only along the path anthroposophy indicates.

I have mentioned that Professor Benedikt is a somewhat vain person which makes his books rather disagreeable to read, though it does not apply in this particular case. The frontispiece in his book is a photograph of himself, sitting in his darkroom making experiments with the pendulum. In his attempt to discover the interplay of forces between man and world, he arrives at physical auras. That is significant because even such physical experiments in this realm show that the accepted concept of space must be altered, must acquire a new foundation. Through such experiments it is shown, for example, that water is not just contained within the earth. Different emanations flow together when the water diviner walks over ground below which there is water; the rod dips because emanations rise from below and unite with emanations from the human being. In other words, water is not only under the ground; an element rises upwards from

it. You may remember my pointing out the great significance of Schelling's famous — or perhaps not famous — saying: "An object exists not only where it is present; rather, it exists wherever its effect is manifest." (Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, 1775–1854, see *Von der Weltseele*, 1798: "It is very true that a body only acts where it is; but it is equally true that it only is where it acts.") To comprehend such things is important. In my book *Riddles of Philosophy* you will find more about the significance of such concepts. (Rudolf Steiner, *Riddles of Philosophy* (Anthroposophic Press, Spring Valley, NY, 1973).) They enable one to see things as they truly are, rather than to cling to preconceived notions and opinions.

Though it is naturally not generally acknowledged, individual instances do factually prove that the anthroposophical way of looking at things can guide modern man's thinking in the right direction. When an issue is approached without prejudice, thinking is led towards anthroposophy. The war has drawn attention to dowsing; it has become important to discover just what there is beneath the ground in certain regions especially in regard to water. To find water becomes essential for those who must stay behind in those regions when other sources have become exhausted. Thus investigation into dowsing reveals — especially when account is taken of the lower aspect of man's nature — that he encompasses infinitely more than either modern philosophy or biology have ever dreamed of.

It is a strange fact that although individual instances demonstrate that anthroposophy points in the right direction, it continues to be treated in the peculiar ways I have indicated in recent lectures. Those who have been connected with our movement for a longer period will understand why I am obliged today to speak about a literary phenomenon which can be said to be typical of the ways in which the spiritual stream that is anthroposophy is currently treated.

A book has just been published by a professor at Berlin University, Max Dessoir, a hefty book entitled *Behind the Soul*. (Max Dessoir, 1867–1947, philosopher and psychologist. *Vom Jenseits der Seele*, Stuttgart, 1917. Further references to this book will be indicated in the text.) It contains a chapter which, in the typical way I have mentioned, deals extensively with anthroposophy. When I picked up the book, my first thought was that it was going to be very interesting to see how those concerned with modern philosophy would discuss anthroposophy, and especially so as the author is a professor at a university; in fact, I looked forward to reading the book. I expected opposition of course, that cannot be otherwise for reasons I have

mentioned. It is not surprising that modern philosophy is still opposed to anthroposophy; that does no harm provided the opposition is not defamatory or malicious. After all it is precisely through dialogue, through exchange of thoughts that something very positive can come about. However, as I studied this seemingly substantial book, I had to say that it was not in the least interesting. Everything he deals with, not only in the lengthy chapter on anthroposophy but elsewhere, shows that the author has not the slightest understanding of what anthroposophy is or the direction in which it points. It is quite extraordinary; he attempts to tell the reader about anthroposophy and does not come up with a single correct statement. His misinterpretations are typical of those usually made.

One's first reaction is to wonder how someone who must claim a degree of intelligence comes to present such a caricature. He must after all have investigated the subject since no decent person, you will agree, writes about something without first looking into it. On closer reading one comes to realize that he simply has no understanding of the subjects he writes about. Everything is unbelievably distorted — in fact, so distorted that anyone who takes such matters seriously is faced with an enigma. One cannot help asking how a person who must generally be regarded as clever (at least up to a point, or he would not be a professor at a university) comes to bungle an issue to such a degree.

However, when one has some experience of philology — and it is not in vain that I have worked with philologists for over six years at the Goethe-Schiller Archives in Weimar — then it is usually possible to put one's finger on the problem. I will start with a concrete example and clear up a particularly gross misunderstanding. Anyone who reads about post-Atlantean history in my books, for example in *Occult Science*, will know that I divide post-Atlantean time into seven consecutive epochs of which the fifth is the one we live in. (Rudolf Steiner, *Occult Science: An Outline* (Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1984). Further references to this book will be indicated in the text.) How often have I mentioned that we live in the fifth epoch of post-Atlantean times, the first epoch being the ancient Indian, the second the ancient Persian and so on. This you all know. Max Dessoir, having discovered these time divisions, writes:

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*By ancient India is not meant present India, for in general all geological, astronomical and historical designations are to be understood symbolically. The Indian civilization was followed*

*by the ancient Persian which was led by Zarathustra who lived much earlier than the historical personality of that name. Other epochs followed and we live in the sixth (p. 258).*

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Here you have one of those gross absurdities that occur when people report what I have said. But you will agree that the problem becomes worse when it is brought about by a professor whom one expects to be exact and correct in what he reports. What he writes here is certainly nonsense. If you turn to my *Occult Science*, you will realize how this inaccuracy came to be written. There it is said that the fifth cultural epoch was gradually prepared within the fourth, and that the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries of the fourth epoch were especially important in this preparation. The passage reads:

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*In the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries A.D. a new civilization-epoch was preparing in Europe. The actual beginning of it was in the fifteenth century, and we are still living in it now. Intended as it was by slow degrees to replace the fourth, the Graeco-Latin, this is the fifth post-Atlantean epoch. (pp. 218-219)*

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This passage Professor Dessoir reads with such care that by the fifth line he has forgotten what it is about — or perhaps filed it incorrectly in his card index — and as he looks again he reads the first line: "In the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries" the fifth epoch was being prepared; as he looks once more — as a professor he is very careful — his eye falls on the first line instead of the fifth, and he writes: "We live in the sixth epoch."

Such is this man's method when he sets out to explain the anthroposophical movement. It shows an unbelievable superficiality which remains undetected because one simply takes for granted that professors are responsible people. Those who read this passage without checking will accept it without question. It is not so terribly important that he says sixth instead of fifth, but it is an instance that provides us with the solution to the problem — an exact philological solution — which shows the man's irresponsibility.

Let us look further in order to find the measure by which to evaluate this publication. Dessoir writes the following:

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*If contemporary man is to attain a higher consciousness, he must begin by immersing himself, with all his powers, in a mental picture. Best suited for this purpose is a symbolic picture such as a black cross (symbol of the lower desires and passions which have been destroyed) whose intersection is surrounded by seven red roses (symbol of desires and passions which have been purified) ... (p. 255)*

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Anyone who reads this passage in Max Dessoir must ask if this anthroposophy is quite mad. How is that to arise which is symbolized as purified desires and passions if the black cross symbolizes that desires and passions have been destroyed? If all desires and passions are destroyed then what is there left to transform? So again what he has written is nonsensical. But you see, the passage is supposed to be a quotation. So let us turn to *Occult Science*. There we read:

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*Then, having entered right into the experience of the thoughts and feelings, we can re-cast them in the following symbolic picture. Imagine you see before you a black cross. Let this black cross be for you a symbol for the baser elements that have been cast out of man's impulses and passions. (p. 231)*

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Professor Max Dessoir audaciously alters this passage to "... symbol of lower desires and passions which have been destroyed," whereas it says: "baser elements that have been cast out of man's impulses and passions." This shows how carelessly he reads and how inexactly he quotes. In dealing with super-sensible knowledge it is all-important to be as conscientious as possible especially when quoting, yet the learned professor appears to go out of his way to be as slovenly and inaccurate as possible.

Faced, as one is, with a complete caricature of anthroposophy one comes to realize that this man is incapable of giving a proper rendition of it, not for lack of intelligence but for lack of ordinary scientific conscientiousness.

One comes to the conclusion that his main characteristic is superficiality. Let us look at another passage where he speaks about how clairvoyance can be attained:

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*The goal of all philosophy is attained by the soul through such inner work. One must be careful to distinguish body-free consciousness from dreamlike clairvoyance or hypnotic influences. When our soul forces have been strengthened the I can experience itself above consciousness. It is in fact possible already in the perception of color and sound to exclude the body's mediation. (p. 255)*

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Nowhere do I say that one can exclude the body's mediation when perceiving color and sound, but that does not prevent Professor Max Dessoir from writing that I do. It can hardly be expected that such a man should understand anything; even when he tries, he manages to misunderstand. For example, you will not find anywhere in my writings the expression "cell body." (Zellenkörper: The usual translation is "protoplasm." Protoplasm is often defined in biology as the living substance of a cell, or the cell material when considered apart from the cell membrane. "Cell body" is here used to clarify the confusion of terms in German.) That is a term that has no meaning in connection with what is said in *Occult Science* or indeed with anthroposophy in general. Nevertheless, Professor Dessoir says: "When through the submersion the spirit becomes free from the cell body it is still not free of all corporeality." This is because: "The functions of the astral body are varied. It contains the patterns according to which the ether body gives the cell body its form." (p. 256)

Nowhere do I speak of "cell body" but rather of physical body. By using such a term, everything I say concerning the physical body becomes meaningless. Thus you see that Dessoir has no understanding of the subject whatever. The following is a typical example:

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*The recuperation one experiences after sleep can be simpler and more straightforwardly explained without resorting to an astral body. Also, unlike Steiner, we do not need to "explain" the falling asleep of a limb as a separation of the ether body*

*from the physical body. (p. 256)*

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He puts the word "explain" in quotation marks. But let us turn to *<Occult Science* where we find:

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*When, for example, a man subjects an arm or leg to an unusual pressure, a portion of the ether body may become separated from the physical. We say then that the limb has "gone to sleep." The peculiar sensation it gives is in fact due to the severance of the ether body. (Here too, of course, materialistic thinking can deny the invisible within the visible, maintaining that the effect is merely due to the physical or physiological disturbances induced by the excessive pressure.) (p. 72)*

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You can see that it is not in the least denied that the physical pressure has an effect and causes the "falling asleep" of the limb. What is said is that the peculiar sensation that accompanies the experience is due to the separation of the ether body.

One wonders if such people are able to read at all. Are they capable of taking in a serious book on a spiritual subject in which every detail has been carefully considered? It is not without significance that people of this kind, capable of treating a serious contemporary work in this manner, fill the professorial chairs at universities. I had hoped to present to you today an example of how one might refute objections of an earnest nature, raised against anthroposophical issues. Instead I am obliged to show you that what we are up against are superficial people who falsify everything. Refuting serious objections would have given me great pleasure.

Dessoir finds, as one might expect, the passages in *Occult Science* dealing with the Saturn evolution particularly — how shall I put it — "lip-smacking." It is only natural that he is especially offended by a passage which he presents as follows:

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*Various kinds of spirits move in Saturn's environment, those of form (Exusiai), of personality (Archai), of fire (Archangeloi) and of love (Seraphim). Through the Angeloi processes of nutrition and excretion develop on Saturn, and through the Cherubim, at a later stage, a dull dreamlike consciousness. The clairvoyant can experience these conditions even today, for they are actually always present to a super-sensible perception which is akin to smell. (p. 258)*

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So the clairvoyant is supposed to be able to experience by means of super-sensible perception akin to smell! In other words "clairsmellers" smell Saturn, conditions! Now that is something to smack one's lips over, and Dessoir cannot resist saying: "That the 'odor of sanctity' and the 'stench of the devil' is not brought to bear on this amazes me." (p. 252)

One wonders if it would be at all possible to have a proper discussion with such a man should the occasion arise. But let us turn to *Occult Science* where this passage comes from; there it reads: "Inwardly (within Saturn) the dull human will manifests itself to the faculty of super-sensible perception by effects which could be compared to smell." (p. 125) Thus this passage speaks of effects which can be compared with smell. Dessoir finds it necessary to alter it to: "The clairvoyant experiences these conditions even today through a super-sensible perception which is akin to smell." (p. 258) In other words he turns a clear statement into nonsense, and then proceeds to criticize his own nonsense. Nor is it said by me that processes of nutrition and excretion begin on Saturn through the Angeloi. What I do say is that by the time the Angeloi appeared, processes of nutrition and excretion took place on Saturn. What is indicated is simultaneity; the Angeloi appear, and processes of nutrition and excretion begin. That these come about through the Angeloi is Dessoir's version.

Later he says: "The Christ or Sun-man taught seven great teachers." I have not been able to find to what that sentence is supposed to refer. In *Occult Science* it is clearly stated that the Sun humanity experienced the Christ as the higher "I" (p. 191) which is obviously something quite different than saying "the Christ or Sun-man." Dessoir presents things at times with great cunning. One gets the impression that his superficiality is deliberate, and he comes close to being slanderous. For example, he remembers that I speak about forces at work in the formation of the brain during early



childhood. You will find descriptions of this in certain lectures with which Dessoir is slightly acquainted; these lectures are published under the title *The Spiritual Guidance of Man*. (Rudolf Steiner, *The Spiritual Guidance of Man* (Anthroposophic Press, Spring Valley, NY, 1976), p. 22.) I describe that if one later remembers how all the wonderful wisdom which later arises in the brain could have been produced by one's own cleverness, then one comes to see how wisdom works from the unconscious in man during the first three years of childhood. The ingenious Max Dessoir, professor at Berlin University, quotes that as follows:

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*Particularly a person who has learned wisdom himself — this Rudolf Steiner confesses — will say: When I was a child I worked on myself with forces that entered me from the spiritual world, and what I am now able to give of the best within me must also stem from higher worlds. I cannot regard it as belonging to my ordinary consciousness. (p. 260)*

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Thus Dessoir gives the reader the impression that I maintain that everything I say is of my own making. Let us turn to *The Spiritual Guidance of Man*. There we read:

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*The idea thus gained of the guidance of humanity may be extended in many directions. Let us suppose that a man finds disciples — a few people who follow him. Such a one will soon become aware, through genuine self-knowledge, that the very fact of his finding disciples gives him the feeling that what he has to say does not originate with himself. The case is rather this — that spiritual powers in higher worlds wish to communicate with the disciples, and find in the teacher the fitting instrument for their manifestation.*

*The thought will suggest itself to such a man: when I was a child I worked on myself by the aid of forces proceeding from the spiritual world, and what I am now able to give, of my best, must also proceed from higher worlds; I may not look upon it as belonging to my ordinary consciousness. (p. 22)*

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That is the passage quoted by Dessoir. My continuation reads as follows:

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*Such a man may in fact say: something demonic, something like a "daimon" — using the word in the sense of a good spiritual power — is working out of a spiritual world through me on my disciples. Socrates felt something of this kind. (p. 22)*

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Thus the whole passage refers to Socrates. Max Dessoir, in bad taste — not to use stronger words — not only distorts completely what is said, but adds the following:

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*Because a certain individual possesses superior knowledge it is assumed that he is connected through tubes or wires to a spiritual world, thought of in materialistic terms. The objective spirit of which Hegel speaks is transformed into clusters of demons while a muddled religious thinking conjures up all kinds of phantoms. (p. 260)*

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Dessoir should read the chapter on Hegel in my *Riddles of Philosophy*, then he would have to recognize that what I say about daimons (Daimon (Greek) = "Deity") refers to Socrates, who used the term. (Steiner, *Riddles of Philosophy*, *ibid.*) In the *Riddles of Philosophy* I emphasize that it could never be used with reference to Hegel. I shall show why in this particular case Professor Dessoir is especially tactless. What he says amounts to slander even if it originates in superficiality mixed with all kinds of antagonistic feelings.

It is truly amazing that such distorted ideas can take hold of the brain of a modern professor. For example, I describe imaginative knowledge, which is experienced pictorially, as the first stage of super-sensible knowledge; just as one gains knowledge of physical things through abstract, shadow-like concepts, so one gains knowledge of facts belonging to higher worlds through imaginative knowledge. What Professor Dessoir makes of this is not very clear. When he reads that knowledge is gained by means of symbols, he thinks that the facts themselves are symbols. That is why he

says earlier that: "Ancient India is not the present India, for generally all geological, astronomical and historical designations are to be understood symbolically." (p. 258)

No one would think it possible for a sensible person to gain the impression from the description in *Occult Science* that ancient India is to be understood symbolically even though the concept does not coincide with that of modern India. Because he reads that imaginative knowledge, the first stage of higher knowledge, is symbolic he thinks that ancient India, the object of that knowledge, is itself only a symbol. This belief leads him to write, "Steiner has worked out a primordial past of earth evolution which for some reason he calls the Lemurian epoch and places it in a country that was situated between Australia and India. (Thus a concrete place, not a symbol)." (p. 261)

Thus you see that Dessoir presumes that the land of Lemuria is only meant allegorically and blames me as he finds it particularly offensive that I speak of it as real. So here he is not only superficial but stupid, though he regards himself especially clever when he ends by saying:

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*There are in these descriptions strange contradictions though also apparent logic. There is contradiction in saying that real facts and their mutual connections have evolved out of something merely visualized and symbolic. (p. 263)*

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So according to Dessoir, when knowledge is pictorial, it can depict only pictures, and he finds it contradictory that it depicts reality. Imagine if a painter found it contradictory that his painting depicted reality and confused the one with the other. In this case his superficiality amounts to stupidity.

This is an example of how the modern world presents anthroposophy. This fat book, written by a university professor, will naturally be widely read and discussed. People will read the chapter on anthroposophy and will of course not realize that what they are reading is a caricature. The announcement appearing in all the periodicals will most likely make them think that the matter has been justly dealt with. Such book announcements are usually composed by people close to the author. This particular one states that

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... the book deals with cabbalistic methodology, manifest not just in the actual cabbala, but also in Freudian psychoanalysis, in the unproductive cleverness of certain exponents on Faust, and also in theoretical speculations concerning Shakespeare and Bacon. All these secondary sciences are analyzed, their shallowness revealed. The false doctrines of Guido von List and of Rudolf Steiner are investigated just as thoroughly and relentlessly, thus throwing light on the obscure and questionable theories of faith healers and Theosophists.

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So there you have an example of modern scholarship. That is the way officialdom deals with a subject that seeks to serve truth. At times the superficiality of approach by the likes of Max Dessoir reaches hitherto unscaled heights. In his publication you will find this note: "Compare Rudolf Steiner's *Occult Science*, fifth edition, Leipzig 1913. I have in addition consulted a long list of his other publications." (p. 254)

I have shown — and my philological training stood me in good stead—that Max Dessoir knows none of my writings except *Occult Science*, *The Spiritual Guidance of Man* and "The Occult Significance of Blood." He has never read *Riddles of Philosophy*, to mention just one book. The long list of publications, apart from *Occult Science*, that he mentions consists of the two I have named. He continues: "Steiner's first production, *The Philosophy of Freedom* (Berlin 1894) is merely a prelude to the actual doctrine" (p. 254). First production! My first book was published in 1883, some eleven years before this so-called first production. That is the kind of thing one is up against.

I shall, of course, write a brochure about this chapter, and also about the rest of Dessoir's book. That must be done because it is a question of putting on record for once the glaring superficiality of a so-called learned publication by demonstrating it. One must formally show that the man is incapable of observing even rudimentary standards of propriety. Nor is it a simple matter of refuting sentence by sentence what is said; before that all the distortions must be demonstrated. Dessoir actually sets the pattern for his whole approach to the subject in his opening remarks. I am aware that of course no one will find anything wrong with those remarks. He says: "Dr.

Rudolf Steiner is an altogether strange personality. He comes from Hungary where he was born on the 27th of February 1861, and has arrived in Weimar via Vienna." (p. 254)

Well, the only time I have spent in Hungary was the first eighteen months of my life. I do not actually "come" from Hungary but from Lower Austria and I descend from an old German family. My father was an official on the Southern Austrian railway, operating between Wiener-Neustadt and Gross-Kanizsa which at that time was part of Cisleithania. He was employed at a station on the Hungarian line, at Kraljevec where I happened to be born and where I lived for eighteen months. In Kürschner (Kürschner is the name of the German publishing house that has been publishing an annually updated encyclopedia of literature, philosophy, and literary history with writers' names, dates of birth, etc. since 1873. This encyclopedia is generally known by the name of its publisher as "Kürschner.") it naturally reads: "born in Hungary," and that is Dessoir's source of information. I know that people who are always ready to excuse lack of conscientiousness will say: Well, how could the man know otherwise when it is printed in Kürschner. However, a German professor of philosophy should not have such an easygoing attitude. It is true that Kürschner gives the place of birth, but it is well known that someone can be born in one place but originate from quite another. Nowadays that often happens as people are becoming more and more intermingled.

I mentioned that Max Dessoir is acquainted with the lecture "The Occult Significance of Blood." His quotations from it are quite ingenious. If you look at that lecture, you will find that I proceed with the greatest caution when I explain how things were in earlier times. One of the things I explain is how the blood used to affect man's memory to a much greater extent. I emphasize that these things are difficult to describe; often one can make only approximate comparisons. Needless to say Max Dessoir completely ignores these introductory remarks. If you look up the passages to which he refers in "The Occult Significance of Blood," you will see with what care and caution everything is described. But Max Dessoir deliberately quotes so as to give the maximum adverse impression. He first remarks: "The astral body is supposed to come to expression partly in the sympathetic nervous system, partly in the spinal cord and brain." (p. 261) He then quotes this sentence: "The blood absorbs the pictures coming from the external world and made inward through the brain." He then remarks further: "This colossal disdain for everything factual is combined with the equally

unprovable and incomprehensible assertion that prehistoric man remembered, in the pictures received by his blood, not only his own but his ancestors' experiences." (p. 261)

It is inexcusable to hoax the reader by abbreviating what has been explained with great care in such a way that it is rendered meaningless. This hoax is particularly damaging as it presents things in a defamatory way. Yet what is the good professor quoting? Simply the fact that what is inherited from his forebears through the blood man experienced under earlier and different conditions as memory. This Max Dessoir finds particularly objectionable; yet I would like to draw your attention to one of Dessoir's own assertions which is most interesting. He explains how it comes about that very ancient views still persist, views such as those held by superstitious country folk, by faith healers, or by Guido von List and anthroposophists. This he attempts to explain by saying:

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*Already from such examples can the conclusion be drawn that primitive thought forms continue to live in occult research. Admittedly this theory of a residue does not in itself provide a conclusive refutation of occultism. The truths grasped in the youth of a people could have become lost from our cultural field, but this is refuted by the facts drawn on for support. And a memory of primitive man's thoughts and views would explain why modern man has difficulty in freeing himself from them. After all, our blood has run through our veins for many centuries. Its pulsebeat is not always regular; it often becomes arrhythmical as it once was. (p. 11)*

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In other words, when Dessoir finds in anthroposophy that our ancestors' blood runs in our veins and constitutes a kind of memory, then that is a matter for ridicule, but when he himself finds the idea useful, then it is acceptable! This is typical of Max Dessoir, Professor at Berlin University.

Those acquainted with my writings on Goethe will know of a strange book which I have always emphatically rejected, *Sphinx locuta est* by F.A. Louvier. (Ferdinand August Louvier, *Sphinx Locuta est. Goethe's "Faust" und die Resultate einer rationellen Methode der Forschung*. 2 volumes, Berlin, 1884, p. 122.) It is a dreadful book which sets out to explain Goethe's Faust by means of cabbalism. Dessoir speaks first about

cabbalism itself; what he says about it would lead us too far as he does not understand it at all. In dealing with modern cabbalism he brings up Louvier's *Sphinx locuta* est which contains juicy bits for him to get his teeth into. This is what he has to say:

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*Spiritual forces appear in various places as allegoric figures. The earth spirit — truly the most obscure figure — is the spirit of the whole Faust plane (for earth represents "plane" or "glade"). Gretchen represents naivety, the black poodle negative proof and so on. With this in mind let us look at the scene: 'At the Gates.' When Faust symbolizes speculating reason, he resides in the head. Thus the brain represents the city and the dark cavern of the gate represents a mouth from which come audible utterances of the spirits escaping into the open. These are represented by various strollers, but not heard at this point; they are described in detail in the second part as the harbinger's wand. The poem as such is represented by soldiers. The castle (seat of thought) and maidens (feelings) must yield to the poem (soldiers). The trumpets (tones) in the poem are sounded to indicate both joy and destruction ... The middle class girl (Agathe) represents folksong, and the beloved, one of the soldiers, unites with the folksong (Agathe); thus words and song form a pair ... At the side of the folk-song (Agathe) appears a 'Student' representing the ballad called curly head, and with them a second student representing the refrain ... Apart from the figures already mentioned there also appear the following audible utterings coming from the gate (mouth): request, command, distortion, chatter, consent, quarrel, question, politics, promise and apology. (p. 222)*

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Thus Louvier, who sees the whole Kantian philosophy represented in Goethe's *Faust*, provides Dessoir with plenty to make fun of. Dessoir goes on to ridicule Edwin Bormann and his Shakespeare-Bacon theory, (Edwin Bormann, 1851–1912, *Der historische Beweis der Bacon-Shakespeare Theorie*, 1897.) demonstrating what nonsense they have produced by means of cabbalism. He then cites, in very bad taste, three poems by Stefan George. (Stefan George, 1868–1933, German poet.)

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*(Steiner quotes Dessoir's comparison of these poems in order to criticize Dessoir's-method. The complete text, deleted in the text, is included here:*

*Then he goes on to Stefan George. Here he has the tasteful style of characterizing Stefan George by quoting three of his poems. It is not necessary to go into all of that. It would take an hour to demonstrate Max Dessoir's distortions to you completely; but we will go into one of them, where he compares three poems. It is not necessary to be a fan of these poems, but I want to show you the system Max Dessoir uses. So, please, don't take it as if I were a proponent of Werfel's poems—that is not the point here.*

*Entrückter, leichter Himmel fiber dem Ort!  
Du weißt von der Seebader goldenen Fetzen.  
Du weißt von Prinzen  
Und herbstlichem Halali.  
Ihr Knabenbaume  
Zuckt von den Schultern  
Das letzte Netz,  
Das braune.  
Den Schatten werfet auf mich,  
Hier sitze ich  
Und lese den iibermitigen  
Namen im Stein.  
Nun bist du bei meiner Großmutter, Kind,  
O unterirdisches Fest,  
Das niemand denken will!*

*As I said, one could hold something against this poem; but Dessoir has the tasteful touch, and compares it with the following poem. This, which I will now read, is the first of the poems:*

*Der blasse Adelknabe spricht:  
Du Dunkelheit, aus der ich stamme?  
Ich glaube an alles noch nie Gesagte,  
Ich bin auf der Welt zu allein and doch nicht allein genug.  
Du siehst, ich will viel!*



*Wir bauen an dir mit zitternden Händen.*

*That is the first poem; then comes Werfel's poem, then comes the third. That I will also read now:*

*Vielleicht, da ich durch schwere Berge gehe—  
Du Berg, der blieb, da die Gebirge kamen,  
Mach mich zum Wachter deiner Weiten,  
Denn, Herr, die großen Stadte sind:  
Da leben Menschen, weiß erblihte, blasse,  
O Herr, gib jedem semen eignen Tod!  
Herr, wir sind armer denn die armen Tiere,  
Mach' Einen Herrlich, Herr, mach' Einen groß  
Das letzte Zeichen laß an uns geschehen*

*The middle poem, that I read to you first, is really Werfel's; but to interpret it Dessoir tastefully takes a volume of Rilke's poems, and does not quote them as written but includes only their first lines as they stand in the table of contents! He makes poems by putting their first lines together, and compares them with Werfel's poem. That is the tasteful way in which he tries to characterize modern verse. He wants to say: Werfel's poem also arises, if one takes the first lines of Rilke's *Stundenbuch* (Prayer-Book) and writes them consecutively to construct a poem. That is how he does it.*

*Franz Werfel, 1890–1945, Austrian poet.*

*Rainer Maria Rilke, 1875–1926, German poet.)*

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After that he brings up race-mysticism as expounded by Guido von List. (Guido von List, 1848–1919, *Carnuntum, historischer Roman aus dem vierten Jahrhundert nach Christus*, 2 volumes, Berlin, 1889.) I knew Guido von List when he was still a reasonable person and had written his novel *Carnuntum*. But our only connection was when he sent me an essay in the early 1880s when I was still publishing *Lucifer Gnosis*. (*Luzifer-Gnosis*: a periodical edited by Rudolf Steiner from 1903–1908. Essays which he wrote for the journal may be found in *Luzifer-Gnosis*, GA 34, Dornach, and in

*Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment* (Anthroposophic Press, Spring Valley, NY, 1985).) I returned the essay, as it was amateurish and quite unsuitable.

Dessoir goes on to speak about Christian Science. You know how much connection I have had with that! My relation to Christian Science can be summed up in the few words I usually said, when asked about it, after public lectures. Dessoir uses similar words as his own, but you know it is what I have always answered to questions about Christian Science, It is utterly materialistic; furthermore, this so-called Christian Science has no right to call itself Christian. Dessoir says:

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*For it is clear that the whole teaching is irreconcilable with the spirit of Christianity; a teacher that wants to eradicate all suffering cannot take the Gospels as precedent. Christianity proclaims with awesome solemnity the truth that sin and pain necessarily belong to human nature. These are not illusions of imperfect human reasoning, but facts. Hence the need for God's mercy and the sacrificial death of Jesus. Christian Science is not Christian. (243)*

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He goes on to describe the theosophical movement as neo-Buddhistic. Well, I could write a book about spiritualism and, based on Dessoir's own descriptions of how he has attended all kinds of spiritualistic meetings, devote a chapter to Max Dessoir, linking him with spiritualism. That would be as justifiable as the way he here links anthroposophy with theosophy, especially in the following tasteless passage:

The occult researcher of this "universal brotherhood" opposes violently the modern or pseudo-theosophists, by whom are meant the anthroposophists rallying round their master Rudolf Steiner. However, their opposition shall not prevent us from looking into this movement as well. (p. 240)

Another thing that must be pointed out is Dessoir's unscrupulous mixing things together so that they become related to issues with which they have nothing to do, as is done throughout a book. For example, you find the following:

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*There is always a danger that such societies could wield a certain influence especially in our uncertain times. One consolation is that race-mystics, faith healers and theosophists mutually despise and fight one another. (p. 240)*

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I ask you, my dear friends, have I ever fought anyone unless I was first attacked? What is said here is an example of the untruthfulness that permeates the book. You can test for yourself whether any of those mentioned have been attacked by me. Race-mysticism I have never opposed because I consider it too silly to be worth the effort. I have never said anything about faith healing except what is conveyed by the two passages just mentioned.

Dessoir is certainly a special case. I cannot today go into all the things he maintains to have experienced in various spiritualist sessions. These experiences have enabled Dessoir to write a book which is simply an elaboration of all kinds of sensations. The question is how a person comes to write a book that is really quite mad. Going through the remaining chapters one comes to the sad conclusion that the man, who is supposed to be a specialist writing about his special subject, knows nothing about it. How can a professor of philosophy such as Max Dessoir come to write a passage like the following:

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*A musically cultivated person will succeed at every moment, during an opera, to grasp as a unity: the text, the music — which itself is highly complex — and the acting, despite the fact that these three components may be quite independent of one another (p. 35).*

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Someone with any knowledge of what Aristotle, for example, says about the collaboration between the senses in the normal human being could not deliver such verbiage. So it amounts to this, that a university professor, supposedly a specialist in his field, has not read let alone studied even the simpler aspects of his subject. It is truly astounding.

Here among ourselves we can for once discuss these things freely. I shall of course be completely objective in my official refutation. I shall point objectively to the facts and refrain from using the sharp words I have employed today. It must be put to the test whether there are still people who at least become indignant when their attention is forcibly drawn to such a "cultural" publication.

Dessoir brings up another peculiar matter. He speaks about consciousness; there exists, he says, a "borderline," even a "surface area" of consciousness. To illustrate it he comes up with the following:

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*Let us resort again to an easily understandable picture: from the centre of the circle [he means the circle of consciousness] "... a complex of ideas slide to the periphery and become engulfed, yet remain partially definite and coherent. To give an example: when I lecture on familiar subjects there can come into that region incidental thoughts and ideas, so that one's attention is drawn to other things. Nevertheless I continue speaking without conscious participation, as it were, in what I am saying. It has happened that I have become surprised by a sudden quiet in the hall, and have to make clear to myself that it is because I have stopped speaking! Thus habitual opinions and trains of thought can be continued "unconsciously" especially when they, as it were, move along not very vividly, while the speech connected with them, likewise continues without difficulty along well practiced paths (p. 34).*

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Well, I might have known! I am quite sure that not even in this circle have I ever continued speaking without being conscious of doing so, and participating in what I was saying. Dessoir's statement really amounts to an extraordinary self-revelation. One wonders to whom else this condition applies, but that I shall not pursue. He obviously considers it applies to everybody. As he at times gives lectures without participating in what he is saying, one can perhaps assume that he also continues to write page after page without participating in what he is writing—that would indeed explain a few things. But in fact the whole book appears to have been written in a state of semi-consciousness. Perhaps the professor wrote it in a kind of trance and that is the explanation for the insidious superficiality.

When one is committed to establishing a spiritual movement in the modern world, one certainly meets with things that are neither easy to bear nor to deal with. I found it necessary today to draw your attention to two of the ways in which anthroposophy is received. On the one hand I wanted to give a brief description of how someone who takes only a few steps in the right direction moves toward anthroposophy. On the other hand I wanted to show-how anthroposophy is dealt with by those who are officially appointed to represent scientific and philosophical viewpoints and are consequently taken seriously. Well, anthroposophy will struggle through on its own. But let us be clear that in a man like Max Dessoir we are dealing with someone who, apart from being utterly superficial, is also rather ridiculous.

After this digression I hope next time we can proceed and enter more deeply into our present considerations.



## Lecture 5

*3 July 1917, Berlin*

As you may have realized, a basic feature of the various considerations in which we have been engaged in recent weeks is the effort to gather material that will help us understand the difficult times we live in. Such understanding can only come about through a completely new way of looking at things. It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that a healthy development of mankind's future depends upon a new understanding taking hold in a sufficiently large number of human beings.

I should like these discussions to be as concrete as possible, in the sense in which the word, the concept "concrete," has been used in the lectures of past weeks. Great impulses at work in mankind's evolution at any given time take effect through this or that personality. Thus it becomes evident in certain human beings just how strong such impulses are at a particular time. Or, one could also say that it becomes evident to what extent there is the opportunity for certain impulses to be effective.

In order to describe certain characteristic aspects of our time I have here and elsewhere drawn attention to a man who died recently. Today I would like once more to speak about the philosopher Franz Brentano who died a short time ago in Zürich. (Franz Brentano, see note 2 to Lecture I.) He was certainly not a philosopher in a narrow or pedantic sense. Those who knew him, even if only through his work, saw him as representing modern man, struggling with the riddle of the universe. Nor was Brentano a one-sided philosopher; what concerned him were the wider aspects of essential human issues. It could be said that there is hardly a problem, no matter how enigmatic, to which he did not try to find a solution. What interested him was the whole range of man's world views. He was reticent about his work and very little has been published. His literary remains are bound to be considerable and will in due course reveal the results of his inner struggles, though perhaps for someone who understands not only what Franz Brentano expressed in words but also the issues that caused him such inner battles, nothing actually new will emerge.

I would like to bring before you what in our problematic times a great personality like Franz Brentano found particularly problematic. He was not the kind of philosopher one usually meets nowadays; unlike modern

philosophers he was first and foremost a thinker, a thinker who did not allow his thinking to wander at random. He sought to establish it on the firm foundation of the evolution of thought itself. This led to his first publication, a book dealing with Aristotle's psychology, the so-called "nus poetikos." (Franz Brentano, *Die Psychologie des Aristoteles*, in particular his ideas of "nus poetikos." "The nus poetikos is the light that illuminates phantasms, and makes the spiritual within the empirical visible for our spiritual eyes," from a supplement on the "Activity of the Aristotelian God"; Mainz, 1867, p. 172.) This book by Brentano, which is long out of print, is a magnificent achievement in detailed inquiry. It reveals him as a man capable of real thinking; that is, he has the ability to formulate and elaborate concepts that have content. We find Franz Brentano, more especially in the second half of his book about Aristotle's psychology, engaged in a process of thinking of a subtlety not encountered nowadays, and indeed seldom at the time the book was written. What is especially significant is the fact that Franz Brentano's ideas still had the strength to capture and leave their mark in human souls. When people nowadays discuss things connected with the inner life, they generally express themselves in empty words, devoid of any real content. The words are used because historically they have become part of the language, and this gives the illusion that they contain thought, but thinking is not in fact involved.

Considering that everywhere in Aristotle one finds a distinct flaring up of the ancient knowledge so often described by us as having its origin in atavistic clairvoyance, it is rather odd that people who profess to read Aristotle today should ignore spiritual science so completely. When we speak today about ether body, sentient body, sentient soul, intellectual soul, consciousness soul, these terms are coined to express the life of soul and spirit in its reality, of which man must again become conscious.

Many of the expressions used by Aristotle are no longer understood. However, they are reminders that there was a time when the individual members of man's soul being were known; not until Aristotle did they become abstractions. Franz Brentano made great efforts to understand these members of man's soul precisely through that thinker of antiquity, Aristotle. It must be said, however, that it was just through Aristotle that their meaning began to fade from mankind's historical evolution. Aristotle distinguishes in man the vegetative soul, by which he means approximately what we call ether body, then the aesthetikon or sensitive soul, which we call the sentient or astral body. Next, he speaks of orektikon which corresponds to the sentient soul, then comes kinetikon corresponding to

the intellectual soul, and he uses the term *dianoetikon* for the consciousness soul. Aristotle was fully aware of the meaning of these concepts, but he lacked direct perception of the reality. This caused a certain unclarity and abstraction in his works, and that applies also to the book I mentioned by Franz Brentano. Nevertheless, real thinking holds sway in Brentano's book. And when someone devotes himself to the power of thinking the way he did, it is no longer possible to entertain the foolish notion that man's soul and spirit are mere by-products arising from the physical-bodily nature. The concepts formulated by Brentano on the basis of Aristotle's work were too substantial, so to speak, to allow him to succumb to the mischief of modern materialism.

Franz Brentano's main aim was to attain insight into the general working of the human soul; he wanted to carry out psychological research. But he was also concerned with an all-encompassing view of the world based on psychology. I have already drawn your attention to the fact that Franz Brentano himself estimated that his work on psychology would fill five volumes, but only the first volume was published. It is fully understandable to someone who knew him well why no subsequent volumes appeared. The deeper reason lies in the fact that Brentano would not — indeed according to his whole disposition, he could not — turn to spiritual science. Yet in order to find answers to the questions facing him after the completion of the first volume of his *Psychology* he needed spiritual knowledge. But spiritual science he could not accept and, as he was above all an honest man, he abandoned writing the subsequent volumes. The venture came to a full stop and thus remains a fragment.

I would like to draw attention to two aspects of the problem in Brentano's mind. It is a problem which today every thinking person must consciously strive to solve. In fact, the whole of mankind, insofar as people do not live in animal-like obtuseness, is striving, albeit unconsciously, to solve this problem. People in general are either laboring in one direction or another for a plausible solution, or else suffering psychologically because of their inability to get anywhere near the root of the problem. Franz Brentano investigated and pondered deeply the human soul. However, when this is done along the lines of modern science one arrives at the point that leads from the human soul to the spirit. And there one may remain at the obvious, and recognize the human soul's activity to be threefold in that it thinks; i.e., forms mental pictures, it feels and it wills. Thinking, feeling and willing are indeed the three members of the human soul. However, no satisfactory insight into them is possible unless through spiritual knowledge a path is found to the spiritual reality with which the human soul is



connected. If one does not find that path — and Franz Brentano could not find it — then one feels oneself with one's thinking, feeling and willing completely isolated within the soul. Thinking at best provides images of the external, spatial, purely material reality. Feeling at best takes pleasure or displeasure in what occurs in the spatial physical reality. Through the will, man's physical nature may appease its cravings or aversions. Without spiritual insight man does not experience through his thinking, feeling and willing any relationship with a reality in which he feels secure, to which he feels he belongs. That was why Brentano said: To differentiate thinking, feeling and willing in the human soul does not help one to understand it, as in doing so one remains within the soul itself. He therefore divided the soul in another way, and how he did it is characteristic. He still sees the soul as threefold but not according to forming mental pictures of thinking, feeling and willing. He differentiates instead between forming mental pictures, judging or assessing, and the inner world of fluctuating moods and feelings. Thus, according to Brentano, the life of the soul is divided into forming mental pictures, judgments, and fluctuating moods and feelings.

Mental pictures do not, to begin with, lead us out beyond the soul. When we form mental pictures of something, the images remain within the soul. We believe that they refer to something real, but that is by no means established. As long as we do not go beyond the mental picture, we have to concede that something merely imagined is also a mental picture. Thus, a mental picture as such may refer to something real or to something merely imagined. Even when we relate mental pictures to one another, we still have no guarantee of reality. A tree is a mental picture; green is a mental picture. To say, The tree is green, is to combine two mental pictures, but that in itself is no guarantee of dealing with reality, for my mental picture "green tree" could be a product of my fantasy.

Nevertheless, Brentano says: When I judge or make assessments I stand within reality, and I am already making a judgment, even if a veiled one, when I combine mental pictures as I do when I say, The tree is green. In so doing I indicate not only that I combine the two concepts "tree" and "green," but that a green tree exists. Thus I am not remaining within the mental pictures, I go across to existence. There is a difference, says Brentano, between being aware of a green tree and being conscious that "this tree is green." The former is a mere formulation of mental pictures, the latter has a basis within the soul consisting of acceptance or rejection. In the activity of merely forming mental pictures one remains within the soul, whereas passing judgment is an activity of soul which relates one to the environment in that one either accepts or rejects it. In saying, a green

tree exists, I acknowledge not merely that I am forming mental pictures, but that the tree exists quite apart from my mental picture. In saying, centaurs do not exist, I also pass judgment by rejecting as unreal the mental picture of half-horse, half-man. Thus according to Brentano, passing judgment is the second activity of the human soul.

Brentano saw the third element within the human soul as that of fluctuating moods and feelings. Just as he regards judgment of reality to consist of acknowledgments or rejections, so he sees moods and feelings as fluctuating between love and hate, likes and dislikes. Man is either attracted or repelled by things. Brentano does not regard the element of will to be a separate function of the soul. He sees it as part of the realm of moods and feelings. The fact that he regards the will in this way is very characteristic of Brentano and points to a deeply rooted aspect of his makeup. It would lead too far to go into that now; all that concerns us at the moment is that Brentano did not differentiate will impulses from mere feelings of like or dislike. He saw all these elements as weaving into one another. When examining a will impulse to action, Brentano would be concerned only with one's love for it. Again, if the will impulse was against an action, he would examine one's dislike for it. Thus for him the life of soul consists of love and hate, acknowledgment and rejection, and forming mental pictures.

Starting from these premises Brentano did his utmost to find solutions to the two greatest riddles of the human soul, the riddle of truth, and the riddle of good. What is true (or real)? What is good? If one is seeking to justify the judgment of thinking about reality or unreality, the question arises, Why do we acknowledge certain things and reject others? Those we acknowledge we regard as truth; those we reject we regard as untruth. And that brings us straight to the heart of the problem: What is truth? The heart of the other problem concerning good and evil, good and bad, we encounter when we turn to the realm of fluctuating moods and feelings. According to Brentano, love is what prompts us to acknowledge an action as good, while hate is the rejection of an action as evil. Thus ethics, morality, and what we understand by rights, all these things are a province of the realm of moods and feelings. The question of good and evil was very much in Brentano's mind as he pondered the nature of man's life of feelings fluctuating between love and hate.

It is indeed extremely interesting to follow the struggle of a man like Brentano, a struggle lasting for decades, to find answers to questions such as What right has man to assess things, judging them true or false,

acknowledge or reject them? Even if you examine all Brentano's published writings — and I am convinced that his as yet unpublished work will give the same result — nowhere will you find him giving any other answer to the question What is true? In other words: What justifies man to judge things except what he calls the "evidence," the "visible proof"? He naturally means an inner visible proof. Thus Brentano's answer amounts to this: I attain truth if I am not inwardly blind, but able to bring my experiences before my inner eye in such a way that I can survey them clearly, and accept them, or by closer scrutiny perhaps reject them. Franz Brentano did not get beyond this view. It is significant indeed that a man who was an eminent thinker — which cannot be said about many — struggled for decades to answer the question What gives me the right to acknowledge or reject something, to regard it as true or false? All he reached was what he termed the evidence, the inner visible proof.

Brentano lectured for many years in Vienna on what in Austrian universities was known as practical philosophy, which really means ethics or moral philosophy. Just as Brentano was obliged to give these lectures, so the law students were obliged to attend them, as they were prescribed, compulsory courses. However, during his courses Brentano did not so much lecture on "practical philosophy," as he did on the question How does one come to accept something as good or put something down as bad? Due to his original views, Franz Brentano did not by any means have an easy task. As you know, the problem of good is always being debated in philosophy. Attempts are made to answer the question: Have we any right to regard one thing as good and another as bad? Or the question may be formulated differently: Where does the good originate, where is its source, and what is the source of the bad or evil? This question is approached in all manner of ways. But all around Brentano, at the time when he attempted to discover the criterion of good, a peculiar moral philosophy was gaining ground, that of Herbart, one of the successors of Kant's. (Johann Friedrich Herbart, 1776–1841, German philosopher.) Herbart's view of ethics, which others have advocated too but none more emphatically than he himself, was the view that moral behavior, in the last resort, depends upon the fact that certain relationships in life please us, whereas others displease us. Those that please us are good, those that displease us are bad. Man as it were is supposed to have an inborn natural ability to take pleasure in the good and displeasure in the bad. Herbart says, for example: Inner freedom is something which always, in every instance, pleases us. And what is inner freedom? Well, he says, man is inwardly free when his thinking and actions are in harmony. This would mean, crudely put, that if A thinks B an awful fellow but instead of saying so flatters him, then that is not an expression

of inner freedom. Thinking and action are not in the harmony on which the ethical view of inner freedom is based. Another view on ethics is based on perfection. We are displeased when we do something we could have done better, whereas we are pleased when we have done something so well that the result is better, more perfect than it would have been through any other action. Herbart differentiates five such ethical concepts. However, all that interests us at the moment is that he based morality on the soul's immediate pleasure or displeasure.

Yet another principle of ethics is Kant's so-called categorical imperative, according to which an action is good if it is based on principles that could be the basis for a law applying to all. (Immanuel Kant, 1725–1804, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Critique of Practical Reason*, and *Critique of Judgment*, available in various editions and translations in English. — from *Critique of Practical Reason*, Part 1, section 7, the Categorical Imperative: "Act so that the principles underlying your will at any time could also be a principle for a universal law." Compare also his *Foundation for a Metaphysics of Morals*, second section.) Nothing could be more contrary to morality! Even the example Kant himself puts forward clearly shows his categorical imperative to be void of moral value. He says: Suppose you were given something for safekeeping, but instead you appropriated it. Such an action, says Kant, cannot be a basic principle for all to follow, for if everybody simply took possession of things entrusted to them, an orderly human society would be an impossibility. It is not difficult to see that in such a case, whether the action is good or bad cannot be judged on whether things entrusted to one are returned or not. Quite different issues come into question.

All the modern views on ethics are contrary to that of Franz Brentano. He sought deeper reasons. Pleasure and displeasure, he said, merely confirm that an ethical judgment has been made. As far as the beautiful is concerned, we are justified in saying that beauty is a source of pleasure, ugliness of displeasure. However, we should be aware that what determines us when it is a question of ethics, of morality, is a much deeper impulse than the one that influences us in assessing the beautiful. That was Brentano's view of ethics, and each year he sought to reaffirm it to the law students. He also spoke of his principle of ethics in his beautiful public lecture entitled "Natural Sanction of Law and Morality." (Franz Brentano, *Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis*, a lecture held on January 23, 1889, at the Vienna Law Society; published in Leipzig, 1889.) The circumstances that led Franz Brentano to give this lecture are interesting. The famous legislator Ihering had spoken at a meeting about legal concepts being fluid, by which he meant that concepts of law and rights cannot be understood

in an absolute sense because their meaning continually changes in the course of time. (Rudolf von Ihering, 1818–1892, jurist. His views were expressed in a lecture "über die Entstehung des Rechtsgefühls," given several years before Brentano's (see above note) at the Vienna Law Society.) They can be understood only if viewed historically. In other words, if we look back to the time when cannibalism was customary, we have no right to say that one ought not to eat people. We have no right to say that our concepts of morals should have prevailed, for our concepts would at that time have been wrong. Cannibalism was right then; it is only in the course of time that our view of it has changed. Our sympathy must therefore lie with the cannibals, not with those who refrained from the practice! That is, of course, an extreme example, but it does illustrate the essence of Ihering's view. The important point to him was that concepts of law and morality have changed in the course of human evolution which proves that they are in a state of flux.

This view Brentano could not possibly accept. He wanted to discover a definite, absolute source of morality. In regard to truth he had produced "the evidence" that what lights up in the soul as immediate recognition is true, i.e., what is correctly judged is true. To the other question, what is good, Brentano, again after decades of struggle, found an equally abstract answer. He said: Good and bad have their source in human feelings fluctuating between love and hate. What man genuinely loves is good; i.e., what is worthy of love is good. He attempted to show instances of how human beings can love rightly. Just as man in regard to truth should judge rightly, so in regard to the good he should love rightly.

I shall not go into details; I mainly want to emphasize that Brentano, after decades of struggle, had reached an abstraction, the simple formula that good is that which is worthy of love. Instead, it has to be said that Brentano's greatness does not lie in the results he achieved. You will no doubt agree that it is a somewhat meager conclusion to say, Truth is what follows from the evidence of correct judgment; the good is what is rightly loved. These are indeed meager results, but what is outstanding, what is characteristic of Brentano, is the energy, the earnestness of his striving. In no other philosopher will you find such Aristotelean sagacity and at the same time such deep inner involvement with the argument. The meager results gain their value when one follows the struggle it cost to reach them. It is precisely his inner struggles that make Franz Brentano such an outstanding example of spiritual striving. One could mention many people, including philosophers, who have in our time tried to find answers to the questions, What is truth? What is the good? But you will find their answers,

especially those given by the more popular philosophers, far more superficial than those given by Brentano. That does not alter the fact that Brentano's answers must naturally seem meager fare to those who have for years been occupied with spiritual science. However, Brentano had also to suffer the destiny of modern striving man, lack of understanding; his struggles were little understood.

A closer look at Brentano's intensive search for answers to the questions, What is true? What is good? reveals a clarity and comprehensiveness in outlook seldom found in those who refuse spiritual science. What makes him exceptional is that without spiritual science no one has come as far as he did. Nowhere will you find within the whole range of modern philosophical striving any real answers concerning what truth is or what the good is. What you will find is confusion aplenty, albeit at times interesting confusion, for example in Windelband. (Wilhelm Windelband, 1848–1915, German philosopher.) Professor Windelband, who taught for years at Heidelberg and Freiburg, could discover nothing in the human soul to cause man to accept certain things as true and reject others as false. So he based truth on assent, that is, to some extent on love. If according to our judgment of something we can love it, then it is true; conversely, if we must hate it, then it is untrue. Truth and untruth contain hidden love and hate. Herbartians, too, judge things to be morally good or morally bad according to whether they please or displease, a judgment which Brentano considered to be applicable only to what is beautiful or ugly.

Thus there is plenty of confusion, and not the slightest possibility of reaching insight into the soul's essential nature. All that is left is despair, which is so often all there is left after one has studied the works of modern philosophers. Naturally they do pose questions and often believe to have come up with answers. Unfortunately that is just when things go wrong; one soon sees that the answers, whether positive or negative, are no answers at all.

What is so interesting about Brentano is that, if only he had continued a little further beyond the point he had reached, he would have entered a region where the solutions are to be found. Whoever cannot get beyond the view ordinarily held of man will not be able to answer the questions What is true? What is false? It is simply not possible, on the one hand to regard man's being as it is regarded today, and on the other to answer such questions as What is the meaning of truth in relation to man? Nor is it possible to answer the question What is the good? You will soon see why

this is so. But first I must draw your attention to something in regard to which mistaken views are held both ways, that is the question concerning the beautiful.

According to Herbart and his followers, good is merely a subdivision of beauty, more particularly beauty attributed to human action. Any questions concerning what is beautiful immediately reveal it to be a very subjective issue. Nothing is more disputed than beauty; what one person finds beautiful another does not. In fact, the most curious views are voiced in quarrels over the beautiful and the ugly, over what is artistically justified and what is not. In the last resort the whole argument as to whether something is beautiful or ugly, artistic or not, rests on man's individual nature. No general law concerning beauty will ever be discovered, nor should it be; nothing would be more meaningless. One may not like a certain work of art, but there is always the possibility of entering into what the artist had in mind and thus coming to see aspects not recognized before. In this way, one may come to realize that it was lack of understanding which prevented one from recognizing its beauty. Such aesthetic judgment, such aesthetic acceptance or rejection, is really something which, though subjective, is justified.

To confirm in detail what I have just said would take too long. However, you all know that the saying "taste cannot be disputed" has a certain justification. Taste for certain things one either has or has not; either the taste has been acquired already or not yet. We may ask, why? The answer is that every time we apply an aesthetic evaluation to something we have a twofold perception. That is an important fact discovered through spiritual investigation. Whenever you are inclined to apply the criterion of beauty to something, your perception of the object is twofold. Such an object is perceived in the first place because of its influence on the physical and ether bodies. This is a current that streams, so to speak, from the beautiful object to the onlooker, affecting his physical and ether bodies regardless whether a painting, a sculpture or anything else is observed. What exists out there in the external world is experienced in the physical and ether bodies, but apart from that it is experienced also in the *I* and astral body. However, the latter experience does not coincide with the former; you have in fact two perceptions. An impression is made on the one hand on the physical and etheric bodies and on the other an impression is also made on the *I* and astral body. You therefore have a twofold perception.

Whether a person regards an object as beautiful or ugly will depend upon his ability to bring the two impressions into accord or discord. If the two experiences cannot be made to harmonize, it means that the work of art in question is not understood; in consequence, it is regarded as not beautiful. For beauty to be experienced the *I* and astral body on the one hand, and the physical and ether body on the other must be able to vibrate in unison, must be in agreement. An inner process must take place for beauty to be experienced; if it does not, the possibility for beauty to be experienced is not present. Just think of all the possibilities that exist, in the experience of beauty, for agreement or disagreement. So you see that to experience beauty is a very inward and subjective process.

On the other hand what is truth? Truth is also something that meets us face to face. Truth, to begin with, makes an impression on the physical and ether bodies and you, on your part, must perceive that effect on those bodies. Please note the difference: Faced with an object of beauty your perception is twofold. Beauty affects your physical and ether bodies and also your *I* and astral body; you must inwardly bring about harmony between the two impressions. Concerning truth the whole effect is on the physical and ether bodies and you must perceive that effect inwardly. In the case of beauty, the effect it has on the physical and ether bodies remains unconscious; you do not perceive it. On the other hand, in the case of truth, you do not bring the effect it has on the *I* and astral body down into consciousness; it vibrates unconsciously. What must happen in this case is that you devote yourself to the impression made on the physical and ether bodies, and find its reflection in the *I* and astral body. Thus, in the case of truth or reality you have the same content in the *I* and astral body as in the physical and ether bodies, whereas in the case of beauty you have two different contents.

Thus the question of truth is connected with man's being insofar as it consists of the lowest members, the physical and ether bodies. Through the physical body we participate only in the external material world, the world of mere appearance. Through the ether body we participate solely in what results from its harmony with the whole cosmos. Truth, reality, is anchored in the ether body, and someone who does not recognize the existence of the ether body cannot answer the question Where is truth established? All he can answer is the question Where is that established which the senses reflect of the external world; where is the world of appearance? What the senses reflect in the physical body only becomes full reality, only becomes truth, when assimilated by the ether body. Thus the



question concerning truth can only be answered by someone who recognizes the total effect of external objects on man's physical and ether bodies.

If Franz Brentano wanted to answer the question What is truth? he would have been obliged to investigate the way man's being is related to the whole world through his ether body. That he could not do as he did not acknowledge its existence. All he could find was the meager answer he termed "the evidence." To explain truth is to explain the human ether body's relation to the cosmos. We are connected with the cosmos when we express truth. That is why we must continue to experience the ether body for several days after death. If we did not we would lose the sense for the truth, for the reality of the time between death and new birth. We live on earth in order to foster our union with truth, with reality. We take our experience of truth with us, as it were, in that we live for several days after death with the great tableau of the ether body. One can arrive at an answer to the question What is truth? only by investigating the human ether body.

The other question which Franz Brentano wanted to answer was What is the good? Just as the external physical object can become truth or reality for man only if it acts on his physical and etheric bodies, so must what becomes an impulse towards good or evil influence man's *I* and astral body. In the *I* and astral body it does not as yet become formulated into concept, into mental picture; for that to happen it must be reflected in the physical and etheric bodies. We have mental pictures of good and evil only when what is formless in the *I* and astral body is mirrored in the physical and ether bodies. However, what expresses itself externally as good or evil stems from what occurs in the *I* and astral body. Someone who does not recognize the *I* and astral body can know nothing about where in man the impulse to good or evil is active. All he can say is that good is what is rightly loved; but love occurs in the astral body. Only by investigating what actually happens in the astral body and *I* is it possible to attain concrete insight into good and evil. At the present stage of evolution the *I* only brings to expression what lives in the astral body as instincts and emotions. As you know, the human "I" is as yet not very far in its development. The astral body is further, but man is more conscious of what occurs in his *I* than he is of his astral body. As a consequence man is not very conscious of moral impulses, or, put differently, he does not benefit from them unless the astral impulses enter his consciousness. As far as the man of today is concerned, the original, primordial moral impetus is situated in his astral body, just as the forces of truth are situated in his ether body. Through his

astral body man is connected with the spiritual world, and in that world are the impulses of good. In the spiritual world also holds sway what for man is good and evil; but we only know its reflection in the ether and physical bodies.

So you see it is only possible to attain concepts of truth, goodness and beauty when account is taken of all the members of man's being. To attain a concept of truth the ether body must be understood. Unless one knows that in the experience of beauty the ether and astral bodies distinctively vibrate in unison — the I and physical body do too, but to a lesser degree — it cannot be understood. A proper concept of the good cannot be attained without the knowledge that it basically represents active forces in the astral body.

Thus Franz Brentano actually came as far as the portal leading to the knowledge he sought. His answers appear so meager because they can be properly understood only if they are related to insight of a higher order. When he says of truth that it must light up and become directly visible to the eye of the soul, he should have been able to say more; namely, that to perceive truth rightly one must succeed in taking hold of it independently of the physical body. The ether body must be loosened from the physical body. This is because the first clairvoyant experience is that of pure thinking. You will know that I have always upheld the view, which indeed every true scientist of the spirit must uphold, that he who grasps a pure-thought is already clairvoyant. However, man's ordinary thinking is not a pure thinking, it is filled either with mental pictures or with fantasy. Only in the ether body can a pure thought be grasped, consequently whoever does so is clairvoyant. And to understand goodness one must be aware that it is part and parcel of what lives in the human astral body and in the *I*.

Especially when he spoke about the origin of good, Franz Brentano had an ingenious way of pointing to significant things; for example, that Aristotle had basically said that one can lecture on goodness only to those who are already habitually good. If this were true, it would be dreadful, for whoever is already in the habit of being good does not need lectures on it. There is no need to instruct him in what he already possesses. Moreover, if those words of Aristotle's were true, it follows that the converse is true also, that those not habitually good could not be helped by hearing about it. All talk about goodness would be meaningless; attempts to establish ethics would be futile. This is also a problem to which no satisfactory solution can be found unless sought in the light of spiritual science.

In general it cannot be said that our actions spring from pure concepts and ideas. But, as those who have studied *The Philosophy of Freedom* will realize, only an action that springs from a pure concept, a pure idea, can be said to be a free action, a truly independent action. (Rudolf Steiner, *The Philosophy of Freedom* (Anthroposophic Press, Spring Valley, NY, 1964).) Our actions are usually based on instincts, passions or emotions, only seldom if ever on pure concepts. More is said about these matters in the booklet *Education of the Child in the Light of Spiritual Science*. (Rudolf Steiner, *Education of the Child* (Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1965).) I have also elaborated on it in other lectures.

In the first two seven-year periods of life — the first lasting up to the change of teeth, to about the seventh year, the second lasting till puberty — a human being's actions are predominantly influenced by instincts, emotions and the like. Not till the onset of puberty does he become capable of absorbing thoughts concerning good and evil. So we have to admit that Aristotle was right up to a point. He was right in the sense that the instincts towards good and evil that are in us already during the first two periods of life, up to the age of 14, tend to dominate us throughout life. We may modify them, suppress them, but they are still there for the whole of our life. The question is, Does it help that with puberty we begin to understand moral principles, and become able to rationalize our instincts? It helps in a twofold manner, and if you have a feeling and sense for these things, you will soon see how essential it is that this whole issue is understood in our time.

Consider the following example: Let us say a human being has inherited good tendencies, and up to the age of puberty he develops them into excellent and noble inclinations. He becomes what is called a good person. At the moment I do not want to go into why he becomes a good person, but to examine more external aspects. His parents we must visualize as good, kind people and so, too, his grandparents. All this has the effect that he develops tendencies that are noble and kind, and he instinctively does what is right and good. But let us now assume that he shows no sign, after having reached puberty, of wanting to rationalize his natural good instincts; he has no inclination to think about them. The reason for this we shall leave aside for the moment. So up to the age of 14 he develops good instincts but later shows no inclination to rationalize them. He has a propensity for doing good and hardly any for doing bad. If his attention is drawn to the fact that certain actions can be either good or bad he will say, It does not concern me. He is not interested in any discussions about it; he does not want to lift the issue into the sphere of the intellect. As a grown

man he has children — whether the person is man or woman makes of course no difference — and the children will not inherit his good instincts if he has not thought about them. The children will soon show uncertainty in regard to their instinctive life. That is what is so significant.

Thus, such a person may get on well enough with his own instincts, but if he has never consciously concerned himself about good and evil, he will not pass on effective instincts to his children. Furthermore, already in his next life he will not bring with him any decisive instincts concerning good and evil. It is really like a plant which may be an attractive and excellent herb, but if it is prevented from flowering no further plants can arise from it. As single plant it may be useful, but if the future is to benefit from further plants, it must reach the stages of flower and fruit. Similarly a human being's instincts may, unaltered, serve him well enough in his own life, but if he leaves them at the level of mere instincts, he sins against posterity in the physical as well as spiritual sense. You will realize that these are matters of extreme importance. And, as with the other issues, only spiritual science can enlighten us about them.

In certain quarters it may well be maintained that goodness is due solely to instincts; indeed, that can even be proved. But anyone who wants to do away with the necessity for thoughtful understanding of moral issues on this basis is comparable to a farmer who says: I shall certainly cultivate my fields, but I see no point in retaining grains for next year's sowing — why not let the whole harvest be used as foodstuff? No farmer speaks like that because in this realm the link between past and future is too obvious. Unfortunately, in regard to spiritual issues, in regard to man's own evolution, people do speak like that. In this area great misconceptions continuously arise because people are unwilling to consider an issue from many aspects. They arrive at a onesided view and disregard all others. One can naturally prove that good impulses are based on instinct. That is not disputed, but there are other aspects to the matter. Impulses for the good are instincts active in the *I* and astral body; as such they are forces acting across from the previous life. Consequently one cannot, without spiritual knowledge, come to any insight concerning the way human lives are linked together either now or in the course of man's evolution.

If we now pass from these more elementary aspects to some on a higher level, we may consider the following: On the average, people living today are in their second incarnation since the Christian chronology began. In their first life it was sufficient if they received the Christ impulse from their immediate environment in whatever way possible. In their present, or

second incarnation that is no longer enough; that is why people are gradually losing the Christ impulse. Were people now living to return in their next incarnation without having received the Christ impulse anew they would have lost it altogether. That is why it is essential that the impulse of Christ find entry into human souls in the form presented by spiritual science. Spiritual science does not have to resort to historical evidence but is able to relate the Christ impulse directly to the kinds of issues we are continually discussing in our circles. This enables it to be connected with the human soul in ways that ensure it is carried over into future ages when the souls incarnate once more. We are now too far removed from the historical event to absorb the Christ impulse the way we did in our first incarnation after the Christ event. That is why we are going not only through an external crisis, but also an inner crisis in regard to the Christ impulse. Traditions no longer suffice. People are honest who say that there is no proof of historical Christ. But spiritual knowledge enables man to discover the Christ impulse once more as a living reality in human evolution. The course of external events shows the necessity for the Christ impulse to arise anew on the foundation of spiritual science.

We have been witnessing so very many ideals on which people have built their lives for centuries suffering shipwreck in the last three years. We all suffer, especially the more we are aware of all that has been endured these last three years. If the question is asked, What has suffered the greatest shipwreck? there is only one answer: Christianity. Strange as it may seem to many, the greatest loss has been to Christianity. Wherever you look you see a denial of Christianity. Most things that are done are a direct mockery of Christianity, though the courage to admit this fact is lacking. For example, a view widely expressed today is that each nation should manage its own affairs. This is advocated by most people, in fact by the largest and most valuable part of mankind. Can that really be said to be a Christian view? I shall say nothing about its justification or otherwise, but simply whether the idea is Christian or not. And is it Christian? Most emphatically it is not. A view based on Christianity would be that nations should come to agreement through human beings' understanding of one another. Nothing could be more unchristian than what is said about the alleged freedom, the alleged independence — which in any case is unrealizable — of individual nations. Christianity means to understand people all over the earth. It means understanding even human beings who are in realms other than the earth. Yet since the Mystery of Golgotha not even people who call themselves Christian have been able to agree with one another even superficially. And that is a dreadful blow, especially in regard to feeling for and understanding of Christianity. This lack has led to grotesque incidents

like the one I mentioned, of someone speaking about German religion, German piety, which has as much sense as speaking about a German sun or a German moon.

These things are in reality connected with far-reaching misconceptions about social affairs. I have spoken about the fact that nowadays no proper concept of a state exists. When people who should know discuss what a state is or should be, they speak about it as if it were an organism in which the human beings are the cells. That such comparisons can be made shows how little real understanding there is. As I have often pointed out, what is lacking, what we need more than anything else, are concepts and views that are real and concrete, concepts that penetrate to the reality of things. The chaos all about us has been caused because we live in abstractions, in concepts and views that are alien to the reality. How can it be otherwise when we are so estranged from the spiritual aspect of reality that we deny it altogether? True concepts of reality will be attained only when the spirit in all its weaving life is acknowledged.

There was something tragic in Franz Brentano's destiny right up to his death — tragic, because he did have a feeling for the direction modern man's spiritual striving should take. Yet, had he been presented with spiritual science he would have rejected it, just as he rejected the works of Plotinus as utter folly, as quite unscientific. (Plotinus, 204-270, neo-Platonic philosopher.) There are, of course, many in the same situation; their spirit's flight is inhibited through the fact that they live in physical bodies belonging to the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. This provokes the crisis we must overcome. Such things do, of course, have their positive side; to overcome something is to become stronger.

Not till the concrete concepts of spiritual science are understood and applied can things be done that are necessary for a complete revision of our understanding of law and morality, of social and political matters. It is precisely spirits like Brentano that bring home the fact that the whole question of jurisprudence hangs in the air. Without knowing the super-sensible aspect of man's being, such as the nature of the astral body, it is impossible to say what law is or what morality is. That applies also to religion and politics. If wrong, unrealistic ideas are applied to external, material reality, their flaws soon become apparent. No one would tolerate bridges that collapse because the engineer based his constructions on wrong concepts. In the sphere of morality, in social or political issues wrong concepts are not spotted so easily, and when they are discovered, people do not recognize the connection. We are suffering this moment

from the aftereffect of wrong ideas, but do people see the connection? They are very far from doing so. And that is the most painful aspect of witnessing these difficult times. Every moment seems wasted unless devoted to the difficulties; at the same time one comes to realize how little people are inclined nowadays to enter into the reality of the situation. However, unless one concerns oneself with the things that really matter, no remedy will be found. It is essential to recognize that there is a connection between the events taking place now and the unreal concepts and views mankind has cultivated for so long. We are living in such chaotic times because for centuries the concepts of spiritual life that were at work in social affairs have been as unrealistic as those of an engineer who builds bridges that collapse. If only people would develop a feeling for how essential it is, when dealing with social or political issues, indeed with all aspects of cultural life, to find true concepts, reality-permeated concepts! If we simply continue with the same jurisprudence, the same social sciences, the same politics, and fill human souls with the same religious views as those customary before the year 1914, then nothing significant or valuable will be achieved. Unless the approach to all these things is completely changed, it will soon be apparent that no progress is being made. What is so necessary, what must come about is the will to learn afresh, to adjust one's ideas, but that is what there is so little inclination to do.

You must regard everything I have said about Franz Brentano as an expression of my genuine admiration for this exceptional personality. Such individuals demonstrate how hard one must struggle especially when it concerns an impulse to be carried over into mankind's future. Franz Brentano is an extremely interesting personality, but he did not achieve the kind of concepts, ideas, feelings or impulses that work across into future ages. Yet it is interesting that only a few weeks before his death he is said to have given assurances that he would succeed in proving that God exists. To do so was the goal of his lifelong scientific striving. Brentano would not have succeeded, for to prove the existence of God he would have needed spiritual science.

Before the Mystery of Golgotha, before mankind's age had receded to the age of 33, it was still possible to prove that God exists. Since then mankind's age has dropped to 32, then 31, later 30 and by now to 27. Man can no longer through his ordinary powers of thinking prove that God exists; such proof can be discovered only through spiritual knowledge. Saying that spiritual science is an absolute necessity cannot be compared to a movement advocating its policies. The necessity for spiritual science is an objective fact of human evolution.

Today I wanted to draw your attention once more to the absolute necessity for spiritual science and related philosophical questions. However, it will be fruitful only if you are prepared to enter into such questions. What mankind is strongly in need of at the present time is the ability to enter into exact, clear-cut concepts and ideas. If you want to pursue the science of the spirit, anthroposophy, theosophy — call it what you will — only with the unclear, confused concepts with which so much is pursued nowadays, then you may go a long way in satisfying egoistical longings, gratifying personal wishes. You will not, however, be striving in the way the present difficult times demand. What one should strive for, especially in regard to spiritual science, is to collaborate, particularly in the spiritual sense, to bring about what mankind most sorely needs. Whenever possible turn your thoughts, as strongly as you are able, to the question: What are human beings most in need of, what are the thoughts that ought to hold sway among men to bring about improvement and end the chaos? Do not say that others, better qualified, will do that. The best qualified are those who stand on the firm foundation of the science of the spirit. What must occupy us most of all is how conditions can be brought about so that human beings can live together in a civilized manner.

We shall discuss these things further next time.





## Lecture 6

10 July 1917, Berlin

Today I would like to continue looking at certain elementary issues on which to build the more comprehensive view to be discussed today and in the next lecture.

It is natural that a person, who during his life begins to sense his *I*, begins as it were to awaken consciously in his *I*, should want to reach insight and clarity about it and its relation to the world. There is at the present time a strong longing and also a widespread striving to attain such insight. As people experience this longing for clarity about their own self, they encounter the many pitfalls and hazards bound up with the quest for self-knowledge. People tend to assume that they are seeking a more or less simple entity. The assumption that the human *I* is fairly uncomplicated has caused much disillusionment and made people turn to the kind of guidance to be found in the writings of Ralph Waldo Trine and others, a guidance sought by many today because of the belief that by delving into their inner being they will come to know themselves better and gain more insight and security in life. (Ralph Waldo Trine, 1866–1958. *In Harmonie mit dem Unendlichen*, 1897.) What they actually experience is that self-knowledge is diminished rather than enhanced by embarking on such a path. If they endure this disillusionment which is already hard to bear, the pitfalls and hazards become all the greater.

It is well to be clear, at least in principle, why self-knowledge is so difficult to attain. There is no simple straightforward path along which self-knowledge can be sought. The self, the *I*, can be discovered, or at least sought, through thinking, through feeling, and through the will. In each case something is discovered which one can claim as the *I*. Whether the attempt is made to reach the experience in the realm of thought, in the realm of feeling, or else to attempt it through the will, one always gets the impression that through these soul powers one must be approaching one's inner being.

A person may at first try a path by means of his life of thought, i.e., attempt to depict the *I* to himself. Especially people who are philosophically inclined have in recent years become convinced that this is a secure path. They will say: That which I look upon as *I* remains from birth to death the

same entity. If I look back in memory over my life, I find that I am always the same. However, this statement is contradicted daily for every normal human being, as I have often pointed out. Between going to sleep and waking the ordinary person has no means of knowing how things concerning the *I* really are. He has no external observation of the *I* during sleep. The *I* he depicts to himself he can only relate to the times he was awake; during sleep the chain of his life's external events is broken. This is easy enough to see. Therefore, he who believes that the *I* lives in his thoughts, in such a way that he can actually find it there, must recognize that it is blotted out every time he sleeps, at least as far as his consciousness is concerned. Something which plunges into darkness and becomes imperceptible every night cannot be regarded as having a secure existence.

Thus the person who seeks his *I* along the path of thought may, in a philosophical sense, have a clear enough picture of his *I*, but it will not offer him much satisfaction. Even if he fails, through simple reflection, to recognize that the mental picture of his *I* vanishes every night, it cannot give him any feeling of real security. His inner being as a whole, appearing more substantial than mere ideation, soon makes him aware of the unsatisfactory nature of the merely depicted *I*. What is found along this path in one's search for the *I* is, so to speak, too rarefied. But why is that the case?

You must realize that it is by no means easy to find the kind of ideas that will truly express and illumine the facts of spiritual life. The reason is simply that our speech, our language causes the greatest difficulty. One often feels as if entangled in a linguistic web when pondering and struggling to find adequate words. The drawback of the merely philosophical approach is the difficulty one has in getting free of the restrictions imposed by language. And quite apart from that struggle there is the feeling of dissatisfaction with what speech is able to convey, particularly when seeking the *I* through the mental activity of forming thought pictures. You will soon experience this when you study philosophers who have much to say about the *I*. You get the feeling that their thoughts are too rarefied, too thin, and you are left with a feeling of unreality and insecurity. There are people who believe that because one is able to think the *I*, this thought is in itself a guarantee that the *I* will go through the portal of death into the spiritual world. But one's life of feeling tells one that if the *I* is extinguished every night, then it is feasible that it is also extinguished at death. This feeling is one of the pitfalls that leaves one feeling insecure. But what causes it?

One learns to know the true nature of the I that is merely glimpsed in ordinary thought life when one becomes able to compare it with the I that can be discovered through spiritual science. This I is not extinguished in sleep even if ordinary consciousness is. It must be conceded that from a certain aspect — please note, only from a certain aspect — there is a measure of truth in what is said by 'some philosophers such as Ernst Mach: that the I cannot be saved for it is something unreal. (Ernst Mach, 1838–1916, Austrian physicist and epistemologist, belonged to the school of empirical positivism, *Beitrage zur Analyse der Empfindungen*, Jena, 1886.) They maintain that all the many experiences we have our whole life long string together like pearls, and because they do we derive from them the picture of the I, but this is not a reality. Such philosophers regard the I as a mere thought and see no reason why a thought should be regarded as having real existence. Yet in our mental life we know of no other I than the rarefied entity which is extinguished every time we fall asleep. This I is only like a picture in the mind. The question we must ask is: In the light of spiritual science just what is this mental picture of the I?

Spiritual science reveals that the mental picture we commonly have of our *I* is not at all identical with the one we find through spiritual science. This discovery is of the greatest significance. The *I* of which we form a mental picture is deprived in the present incarnation of inner effective life. Purely on the basis of this *I* we could not in truth say, I exist now, at this moment in time. The mental picture we have of our *I* is no guarantee that we exist now, in the present. There is a constant danger that somehow a combination of mental pictures is conjuring up the *I*. That is the uncertainty; that is why we feel that what we are faced with is a mere picture and no reality. Why do we experience our inner self in this way? Because the *I* of which we form a mental picture contains already forces for our next incarnation. In this life it must necessarily exist in the form in which we encounter it. When we depict the *I*, we are dealing with a force belonging not to this life, but a force that will only evolve in our next incarnation. It is comparable to a plant which, if it could sense the seed within would say, This seed is in reality not me; it is the plant that will grow only next spring. In a similar way there lives in what we depict as our *I* the force that will evolve in our next incarnation. It has to exist the way it does, for if we wanted it to become more in the present incarnation, then it would unfold too soon and could not remain seed-like till our next life. Thus, the *I* we depict in thoughts must remain weak; it cannot be active now, for it has to retain the seed-like forces for the next incarnation.

You will realize the significance of this fact. When spoken of in this abstract manner, its immense importance may not be immediately evident. What we are talking about is something shadowy, belonging to the next incarnation. While it cannot develop in this life, it can be enriched so that it loses its shadowy character; otherwise it remains unsatisfactory and is experienced as a mere point, as it were, beyond which no progress is possible. However, the problem is how one sets about enriching this *I* that is felt to be no more than a point.

Nothing is achieved by merely brooding within oneself, for all we arrive at is what in this incarnation is a mere point, a seed for the next life. No matter how forcefully, how mystically one broods inwardly, or what beautiful precepts one sets oneself, the *I* is not reached. In the way in which this *I* that we depict in thought lives within us in this incarnation, it does not really belong to us. For the duration of this incarnation it actually belongs to the world. From what we see inwardly as a thought picture of our *I*, the world will prepare for our next incarnation what will then be active within us. That is why this *I* can become enriched only through our experiences of the world. When asked by our friends to write something in their album, I have often, in cases where it was appropriate, written: "To find yourself, seek in the world; to find the world, seek in yourself."

In order to find oneself; i.e., in order to provide one's thought life with a richer, more living content than is possible in ordinary life, one must widen one's observation, and deepen one's experience of the world. However, in this respect ordinary sensory observations are of no help, for they also belong to the present incarnation. They are also dependent on the physical body which is laid aside at death. We must make observations of a different kind, must become able to enter into the more subtle aspects of life. We can enrich the thought picture of our *I* only by being aware of more than the obvious aspects of life. We must cease to think in the abstract manner so much preferred nowadays. To enrich the *I* one must make efforts to seek out the more hidden connections in life. I beg you not to misunderstand this remark. To seek out life's hidden connections would today be regarded as a useless pursuit because people are not striving to enrich the *I*. All modern people are concerned about are the kinds of thoughts that either depict external events or are useful for some action. But these things have a connection only with the present incarnation. In order to enrich the *I* we must make it an end in itself to seek out life's hidden connections. It must become an intimate pursuit of which we expect no other result than that it should enrich our inner life; i.e., enrich the thought picture of our *I*.

Certain things are expected of man at the present time and it is important that he should concern himself with events in life which, though seemingly remote and unconnected, nevertheless belong together. It is important that we ponder the kind of deeper connections that must be sought, as it were, beneath the surface of life's events. To someone who is concerned only with superficial aspects, such connections will seem strange. Yet it will be found that we enrich the thought picture of our *I* the more we succeed in discovering riddles in life which, though remote, speak strongly to our life of soul. Such connections are not as easy to explain or point out as it is to point out and explain the obvious reason a stone becomes warm when a sunbeam falls on it. But the more we contemplate life's hidden connections, the stronger becomes the feeling that we are growing together with the thought picture of our *I*, that we are growing together with the inner life that will carry it over to the next incarnation.

What kind of connections do I mean? I mean quite real, concrete ones, except that we normally pay them no attention. I will give you an example: A clergyman once met a gypsy woman with her child, which was dirty and unkempt. Since the outbreak of the World War gypsies have practically disappeared but those who know them will also know that they are people who care very little about many things, one of which is cleanliness. Gypsy children are usually covered in layers of dirt, but apart from cleanliness these children are deprived of a great many other things. The clergyman, being a kind person, wanted to save this forlorn child. He told the mother that he would set aside a sum of money for the child's care and education so that he could grow up into a respectable person. The clergyman's intention was really the very best. The gypsy woman, whose normal life was one of beggary, would naturally gladly have accepted a gift. Nevertheless, her answer was not only significant but a refusal. Her exact words were that she would neither educate her child nor allow him to be educated, because her way of life made for more happiness than all scientific knowledge, all the repute and mutual esteem and all other so-called advantages of culture. This incident was reported by the man who met the gypsy woman himself, Fercher von Steinwand. (Johann Fercher von Steinwand (actually Johann Kleinfurher), 1828–1902. *Zigeuner. Begegnisse and Betrachtungen*, 1859 in Gesamtausgabe seiner Werke, Vienna 1903, third volume, page 365ff.) You will know of him from my book *The Riddle of Man*. (Rudolf Steiner, *Vom Menschenrätsel* (Verlag der Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, Dornach), 1984, GA20.) In his fine article about gypsies he describes the event. And it is something which those who like myself know gypsies and how they live can well believe. Many gypsies do hold such views. They really are convinced, as the gypsy woman said,

that all culture, all education and learning, all the respect and esteem sought by other people, make one far less happy than the basic elementary life of the gypsy, the life of a child of nature.

The gypsy woman's answer is most revealing. One can, of course, accept it as simply a fact of life; most people do. But one can also discover in such opinions the kind of hidden connections in life of which I spoke. It may occur to someone — as it did to Fercher von Steinwand — that someone else's opinion is in a strange way related to that of the gypsy woman. This someone is a man from a background of culture and learning who nevertheless posed the question whether culture makes human beings happy or less happy in life. He submitted his answer in a long, learned treatise, but in essence it was the same as the one given by the gypsy. The man was Rousseau and the treatise in which he voices the same opinion as the gypsy was awarded a prize by the Academy of Science in Paris. (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1712–1778, French philosopher. The prize-winning work for the Academy in Paris is entitled, *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, 1750.) Here you see a strange connection between widely disparate phenomena. The conviction felt by the gypsy Rousseau elaborates in a scientific paper that made him famous and influential. The sentiment, the viewpoint, was the same in both cases, the only difference being that the gypsy woman did not write a scientific treatise about it and was not awarded a prize by the Academy of Science.

This kind of thing happens quite often in life but is not noticed. If a habit is made of examining, from different points of view, issues normally looked at from one standpoint only, one discovers surprising points of reference as in the case of Rousseau and the gypsy. Life is extraordinarily many-sided, and entering into its various aspects means enrichment and strength for the *I*, in the sense that has been explained. If one seeks out such connections which are not normally noticed, then the *I* which we have only as a picture grows stronger. To be aware of this fact is of immense importance. In one's search for such hidden connections in life one is contemplating the world rather than brooding within oneself. Furthermore, it will be discovered that one's thinking, i.e., forming mental pictures — an activity connected with the *I* — becomes more mobile, more alive. As a consequence many more things occur to one than before, which is of great importance, because much dissatisfaction with life, and even ill health, is caused by the fact that so few things occur to us. We draw our thoughts as it were into a rather narrow circle, whereas if we attain the ability to view our experiences in life from many vantage points, seeking connecting threads between distant events, we strengthen our *I* and become better able to cope with life. That

is why all education that introduces only one-sided thoughts and views is harmful. I will give you an example which comes into the same category as the previous one.

Many people embrace so-called pantheism, which as you know I have always rejected. Such people will say: We seek the spirit everywhere. Spirit! Spirit! Everything is spirit and with that they are satisfied. Nowadays this is often called panpsychism because people will have nothing to do with theism. I have often commented on it by pointing out that one would not get very far if this approach was applied to the physical world. It corresponds to someone walking through a meadow and instead of naming the individual flowers as lilies or tulips and so on, just saying "flowers, flowers," which is an abstraction of them all. So too is it an abstraction to speak of nothing but spirit, spirit and ever more spirit, and yet reject knowledge of real individual spirits. When one speaks about Angels, Archangels and Archai as of individual beings with their own defined spiritual existence just as one speaks of individual beings in the physical world, it is rejected. However, there is a tendency in man to think in a pantheistic way, to simplify everything, always to seek abstractions. That is why the example connected with the gypsy is so interesting, for it illustrates that looking everywhere for abstractions is in a way a gypsy-like trait.

The person who had the experience with the gypsy woman came across another gypsy who, with good appetite, was eating meat from an animal he had found lying dead in a field. Gypsies think nothing of eating dead animals they happen to find, nor do they suffer any ill effects. The person who found the gypsy eating, wanted to impress upon him that one does not eat animals that are found dead, only animals that have been slaughtered. And here the gypsy showed his inclination for abstractions saying: Well, the animal I am eating was slaughtered by God. — So you see, like pantheists he applies the concept of God to everything. Naturally if one's view, one's thinking is pantheistic it must be assumed that an animal found dead must have been slaughtered by God, and there can be no objection to eating what God has slaughtered.

Wider, less obvious connections can be found between one's experiences in life; they vitalize the thought picture of our *I*. There are, of course, those who will say: Surely, all that is required is the ability to combine facts. Yet, that is very abstract. What I mean is something much more alive, something that relates to the ability to combine facts as a living organism relates to a machine.

When we make the effort to enrich our *I* by bringing together and relating disparate events, we become aware of a force which lives in us already but belongs to our next incarnation. It is easy to be deluded into thinking that the *I* is enriched by brooding within oneself. That is an illusion. We enrich it by entering into aspects of life that lie beneath the surface, and by truly fostering the ability to ponder and reflect about life, instead of being merely engrossed in ourselves. One must take hold of life lovingly and be willing to seek out the relation between remote events for no other purpose than to enrich the *I* and make it stronger. The attempt can be made with the most ordinary situations in life; opportunities are there all the time. Try to let everyday experiences reverberate in such hidden connections. One must of course remain realistic and not read into such connections things they do not contain or try to become more knowledgeable through them. That is not the purpose; what matters is their effect on us, enabling us to experience a force which lives in us in this life in the form of a thought, whose reality will become evident only in our next incarnation.

When we become conscious of such hidden connections the possibility arises for us to become aware not only of the fact that the thought picture of our *I* is the foundation of our next incarnation, but also of how it exists between death and new birth. This requires a greater awareness of how we adapt to life, indeed of how people in general adapt to and deal with life. Here again, the more obvious aspects are not the most important for the attainment of the inner sensitivity that enables us to become aware of the way we exist between death and new birth. The insight one seeks to attain of the beings and events of the spiritual world must be sought in subtler ways than is customary today. Life in the physical world is completely different from life in the spiritual world. It is not really surprising that, just as they are, our ordinary thoughts, feelings and will impulses cannot be applied to the spiritual world, which requires a much more delicate approach.

To strengthen and enrich our life of thought, efforts must be made to discover hidden connections between events, as I have described. But for the awareness of the *I* as it lives between death and new birth; in fact, for awareness of the realm in which we are between death and new birth, it is necessary that these connections are related to human beings themselves. Indeed, life provides plenty of opportunity for such hidden connections to be discovered. And if they are noticed and treated with the necessary sensitivity, one will soon find one is on the right path. Unfortunately,



because the words one must of necessity use are too often taken in a materialistic sense, a certain difficulty arises when the attempt is made to explain things of this nature. I shall illustrate what is meant by an example.

What I want to explain can best be observed in the case of people who through their whole disposition have what could be said to be a dreamlike inner life; not that they are complete dreamers, but their soul life has a dreamlike quality. This quality is more pronounced in people living in countries towards the eastern hemisphere. The further west one goes, the less do human beings reveal in themselves those subtle connections which point to the hidden spiritual realm I have indicated. That is why the Western Europeans, who have to resort to connections of a cruder nature, find it so extraordinarily difficult to understand the soul characteristics of the Russians. And such understanding is more essential now than ever before. It could be said that Russians are a fraction less awake than Western or even Central Europeans. That is why what we are now speaking about is easier to relate to the inner life of a Russian than to the inner life of a Western European. It does of course relate to people in the West, but it is not so easy to detect there. (See Lecture III, p.)

A German writer, Eduard Bernstein, has an interesting description of an incident which I would like to use as an example of what I want to illustrate. (Eduard Bernstein, 1850–1932, *Memoirs of a Socialist* Part 1: *From the Years of my Exile*, Berlin, 1918, published in German.) He will surely not be pleased to know that I regard the experience he describes as mystical. Nevertheless it is a good example of those hidden connections in life which materialists regard as mere chance. Eduard Bernstein relates that, in London, he used to be a frequent guest at the house of Engels, the friend of Karl Marx. (Karl Marx, 1818–1883, German socialist, founded dialectical materialism with Friedrich Engels, 1820-1895.) Engels' household was a hospitable one, where many people often met, where in fact an international group would frequently gather. It was here that Bernstein met Sergius Kratschinsky, a writer who had adopted the name Stepniak, by which he is quite well known. Bernstein's description of Stepniak is most interesting; to begin with, he mainly describes the more external aspects saying that Stepniak was

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*a powerfully built man with an impressive head; in looks he corresponded exactly to the picture we normally have of a Slay. He was sensitive, of a somewhat dreamy disposition. Yet in Russia he had been very much a man of action, not only*

*prominently involved in the liberation from prison of Peter Krapotkius, but also in the successful attack on Msenzow, the police dictator of St. Petersburg. In England he was the soul of the society "Free Russia," founded for the purpose of collecting money to support Russian freedom fighters. On their behalf, he had repeatedly undertaken lecture tours in England and one across America, where he had been particularly befriended by the American humorist Mark Twain. Stepniak was a respected figure in certain literary circles in England having made a name also as a novelist.*

*At Engels' parties or at any other gathering he was usually quiet and seldom spoke unless one addressed him directly. However, it was obvious that he greatly appreciated his friendship with Engels and like coming to his parties. A friendship also sprang up between Stepniak and myself.*

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It so happened that at a meeting of the society "Free Russia," attended by both Bernstein and Stepniak, a quarrel broke out. It was one of those quarrels that easily breaks out among people with a deep emotional commitment to life's greater issues. The quarrel concerned the relationship between Russians and Poles. In such a situation it is a safe bet that the average Central European will side with the Poles. A fierce disagreement ensued in which Bernstein and others spoke up for the Poles, Bernstein defending them against the Russians. As a consequence of this quarrel Stepniak no longer came to the society. And for many years Bernstein heard nothing of Stepniak, who had severed all connection with people in the society. Then after a long time Bernstein received a letter from someone not connected with the society, inviting him to a party on one of the following evenings. The writer of the invitation said he was aware that Bernstein was not on good terms with Stepniak, so he was to come only if he did not mind meeting the latter. Bernstein did not mind; in fact, he welcomed the opportunity to meet Stepniak again. And so the two men met once more.

One may, of course, not find it so remarkable that two people who used to like seeing one another meet again after several years. It may be regarded as a mere chance meeting, and it is only natural that materialists should do so. However, Bernstein's whole description of the mood in which the meeting took place that evening makes it clear that, especially for

Stepniak, it was an occasion of very great significance. They spent the evening in a happy mood. Before parting Stepniak said how pleased he was that they had found one another again and how much he looked forward to them spending time together. Two days later Bernstein read in the paper that Stepniak was dead. It appeared that on the day after their meeting he had been reading a book while out walking, had crossed a railway line and been hit by a train. It was absolutely clear that it was an accident; there was no question of suicide.

Thus another chance! But you see, such events are in reality no mere chance. I have chosen a striking example to illustrate the kind of connection one must look for in life. If one is to discover links that are less obvious, one must seek the kind of event in which connections are hidden and which involved the inner life of human beings. Once it has been recognized that there is a deeper aspect of our life of soul which is prophetic, then one can no longer consider such events as mere chance. This aspect comes to expression chiefly in our mental life when tinged with feeling, and when it is somewhat dreamy. In such instances it points to the future to a remarkable degree. All dreams are in fact prophetic; when you dream you always dream the future. But because you cannot formulate mental pictures of future events you clothe the dream in pictures of past ones, and draw them like a veil over the inner experience. There is a deep connection between what we dream of the future and the clothes we put on it when we awake. This is because of karma, and because the future is linked to the past. What we become conscious of, we clothe in pictures from the past, i.e., in images with which we are familiar. Though we are aware of only a fraction of our dreams, we dream the whole time between falling asleep and waking. When someone is in a dreamy state during waking life, it is not without effect on his karma.

Anyone who really understands what I have indicated concerning life's hidden connections will recognize in this incidence a definite picture of how karma works. Had Stepniak not been the sensitive and dreamy person he was, then the effect produced by the connection between his conscious life and the hidden current of his karma would have been less effective. It would not have been strong enough to bring about, on the last evening, practically at the last hour, the meeting I have described. The more our ordinary abstract mental pictures are obscured by a state of dreaminess the stronger our power to attract karmic connections. Naturally, it is also possible in ordinary life to take note of things and adjust one's actions accordingly. But here we are concerned with a person of a dreamy

disposition who, not in full consciousness, but while in a dreamy state brings about — just before going through the portal of death — the opportunity that enables him to meet the other person once more.

Such fine, more delicate connections must be recognized for what they are — namely, a source of enrichment for man's inner life, an enrichment that provides the striving human being with a perspective on life between death and new birth. One must become more attentive to finer details in the present life and seek out threads between events in which human beings themselves are involved. Certainly these things must not be understood materialistically. What I have said must not be taken to mean that Stepniak brought about the meeting with Bernstein through some kind of inner force of attraction. That would be a materialistic and completely wrong interpretation. These things must not be regarded in such a crude manner as though they could be proved by natural-scientific means. When dealing with such delicate issues one must not expect to be able to pin them down as if they were something material, but be satisfied if one thing or another becomes clearer through the description of such hidden connections. To become accustomed to observe life in accordance with such delicate relationships is to enrich the life of soul. All relationships dealt with in spiritual science are basically of this delicate nature. That is why the study of spiritual science enriches life.

Thus, when we seek out the kind of connections I described earlier, in which human beings are less directly involved, we enrich and strengthen the shadow-like I, which we bear within us as a seed that will evolve only in our next incarnation, whereas connections in which human beings are directly involved, enrich life by awakening sensitivity and awareness for the region we pass through between death and new birth. It is a strange fact that many a person who is well able to seek out such connections fails to notice them because they are interpreted materialistically. Many important passages in Goethe's works can be understood only if it is recognized that Goethe does not want to be pinned down in a materialistic sense. One has to realize that his style when writing such passages was his way of describing events which, as it were, take their course beneath the surface of life.

It is a mistake to believe that the *I* can be enriched in a way that leads to enhanced self-knowledge by delving into oneself in the crude manner described, for example, by Waldo Trine. The opposite is true; to become strong one must strive to become free from oneself. That is why those who advise people to seek within themselves instead of leading them away from

themselves are basically bad guides to self-knowledge. The aim should rather be to seek within the world those hidden connections between events which must be sought with effort, as they are not the kind one is apt to stumble across.

Just as one encounters pitfalls in regard to the *I* that lives in us as thought picture, so are there pitfalls in regard to the *I* that lives in the will. In ordinary life we know it no better than the *I* we depict in our thinking. That such is the case is shown by the fact that people, for example Theodor Ziehen, to whom I referred recently, simply ignore the will. (Theodor Ziehen, 1863–1950, philosopher and psychologist.) They cannot discover the will in modern man, and this has a certain justification in the sense I have indicated in public lectures at various places. Franz Brentano ruled out the will altogether and differentiated in the soul the activity of forming mental pictures, the making of judgments, and the feelings fluctuating between love and hate. (Franz Brentano, see note 2 to Lecture I.) Consequently he did not deal with the will, not even in his work on psychology. And it is true to say that when one looks at the human being as he is in his present incarnation, one does not find the will as such. According to the modern view the will is what brings man satisfaction or disappointment, pleasure or pain and so on. In other words, all that one finds in place of the will are moods and feelings; the will itself remains hidden.

Let us say you lift your hand; you may be aware of a certain mental picture or a feeling in so doing, but what actually occurs within the body when the hand lifts, of that you are completely unaware. Nowhere can one find the will in man today. But why? Because the will is not in him. The *I* that lives in the will is not within present-day man. What is effective in him is something that works across from his previous incarnation. What comes from the *I* of his previous life acts in him now, as will. When I say, I am, I live within the seed of my next incarnation; when I say, I will, I live in what acts across from my previous incarnation.

It is of great importance to become aware of these facts, not least because they explain why it is so easy to be misled in this area. When a person says, I will this or that, and carries out an action, will flows into him from his previous incarnation, whereas his satisfaction or dissatisfaction in life depend upon himself as he is now, and the circumstances of his present incarnation. You will realize what mysterious connections we are dealing with. However, in ordinary life they are felt as if they were jumbled together. People believe the *I* is a kind of substantial something hidden in

their inner being and that they express this something at different times variously as: "I think," "I was," "I am," "I will." But things are not like that. When I say, "I am," I rely on a force which I have within me, the way this year's plant has within it the seed that will develop only next year. Thus when I say, "I am," I am within a force which becomes a human being in a future incarnation. When I say, "I will," I act out of a force that was in me in a former life on earth.

When this has been grasped one realizes that it is only as far as our life of feeling is concerned that we are — as the philosophers express it — in *modus praesens*, in the actual present. The only soul force that is fully real in our present life is that of feeling. Our being is interwoven with time in a threefold manner; there exists in us something that works across from the previous incarnation, what we feel now, and something whose effect carries over into the next incarnation. Just as this year's plant grows from the dried seed of the previous year, so does our will, which gradually flows into the world, issue from the I that was the dried seed in the previous incarnation, whereas the seed for the incarnation to come is what we now think of as the I. That is why I could write in the article that appeared in the April 1916 issue of the Bern periodical *The Realm*: "Our path through the spiritual world can be traversed when we discover what thinking and willing encompass," because neither thinking nor willing live in us as something belonging exclusively to the present life. (In the April edition of 1916, the first volumes of Reich (*Realm*), a journal founded by Alexander Freiherr von Bernus (Lindau 1880), a quarterly produced in Munich and Heidelberg. 1st vol, 1st edition (April 1916), pp. 106-123; and, vol. 1, 3rd edition (October 1916), pp. 420-432.) Rather, they point through their spiritual connection from a former life on earth across to a future one. Feeling, on the other hand, we experience now directly in its spiritual reality, which is why feeling cannot be developed through inner initiative; we can only guide it, whereas thinking and will can be transformed through concentration and meditation.

Many people will ask: How do I attain a closer relationship with the being we speak of as the Christ? One cannot give a simple formula as answer. The whole of spiritual science deals with issues which, through their very nature, lead to the realm in which Christ lives. As you all know, only once, at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, did Christ walk on the earth as a physical human being. Only then was it possible to know Him as one can know a physical person in physical surroundings. If today one wants to draw near to Christ one must seek Him in the form in which He now lives within the earthly sphere. He must be sought in life's finer, more intimate

connections like those of which we have spoken today. Schooling oneself to seek out such delicate connections between remote events enables one to raise oneself into that region of consciousness in which the Christ can be truly experienced. What I have just said can of course also be taken in a crude materialistic sense. Someone could say I am implying that one cannot comprehend the Christ with the ordinary thinking that one applies to physical objects. People who speak like that are really expressing the opinion that things only qualify if they can be depicted in one's mind the way one depicts natural objects. This is the attitude of the materialist; no possibility exists to kindle in him awareness of the spiritual.

Let us for a moment imagine a being so constituted that it could be detected only in dreams. No physical sense could perceive it, nor could it be grasped by ordinary thinking. A person who wanted to gain knowledge of such a being would have to develop the art of dreaming, otherwise the being would not exist for him. It would not be the being's fault if he could not perceive it but his own, due to his inability to do so. People make arbitrary demands concerning the qualities something should possess, and if they are lacking, it is dismissed as unreal. It must be realized that in order to be able to be aware of and perceive things which are not of the same nature as external objects, a different thinking must be developed; in fact, an altogether different inner attitude. The important thing is to recognize that we must adapt ourselves to approach such beings, not the other way round.

One could wish that the words could be found which would enable people to overcome their materialistic outlook and discover the subtler aspect of life. Even the most worthwhile people do not find it easy to enter into the kinds of things I have explained today. Such matters are ridiculed and regarded as the product of fantasy, to which we could reply, Very well, regard it as fantasy, but the point is that the beings and things of which we are talking are so constituted that, unless you have the power of fantasy, you cannot become aware of them. They reveal their true reality only to those who possess fantasy. As I said one wishes the words could be found that make clear how necessary it is, especially in our time, to entertain such subtle thoughts in one's mind. Such concepts may be subtle, but they make the soul strong, so strong that it becomes able to comprehend the true essence of things. The soul discovers that it can penetrate far deeper into the real connections of things than is possible with a thinking that is schooled solely on the mental pictures derived from today's materialistic, natural-scientific outlook.

Today one finds that even those with eminent minds have forgotten how to engender the necessary subtlety. In the last lecture I made it clear that I have the highest regard for Franz Brentano, not least because he did, through his study of Aristotle, develop subtlety of thinking up to a point. As I said he could not accept spiritual science. This was due to many things, but principally it was because he still lacked the necessary mobility of thinking to penetrate to the spiritual aspect of things. One must at least strive to attain it. When people read my *Theosophy* or the second part of *Occult Science*, one can often discover from what emerges just why their thinking stumbles. (*Theosophy*, see note 3 to Lecture IV.) (*Occult Science*, see note 7 to Lecture IV.) The same can be said in regard to Brentano. I would indeed have found it incomprehensible that a sensitive and astute thinker like Brentano should be unable to find the way, had I not succeeded in discovering an exact instance that reveals just where the difficulty lies. There are others, of course, but let me give you an example.

Brentano said: Whatever the soul consists of, as far as the substance in which it lives is concerned, it must be capable of individualization, for one can divide certain lower creatures, and each part will continue life with the same characteristics the creature had before being divided. You will know that this is possible with certain lower worms; they are unaffected if divided, and live on as two separate worms. From this Brentano concluded that an independent soul must be present in each separate piece. In other words, if a worm is divided in two and both parts continue to live, there must be a soul in each. He further concluded from this that the soul and the body must be one unity. He made a comparison which convinced him that his view was right. He compared the event of the worm with a triangle saying that the triangle divides into two triangles if a line is drawn through it. So he compared two concepts: that of dividing a worm in two and that of dividing a triangle in two, and let one explain the other. He considered the two concepts to be of equal simplicity and able to explain one another. But is it a valid comparison? For Brentano it was an important issue. But does it stand up to scrutiny? It does not. Let us say you have here a triangle; if you draw a line through it in a certain way, it does indeed divide into two triangles. Each half is a triangle just as the worm when divided becomes two worms. However, if you divide the, triangle differently, one of the parts becomes not a triangle but a quadrangle. In other words, only under certain circumstances do you get two triangles.



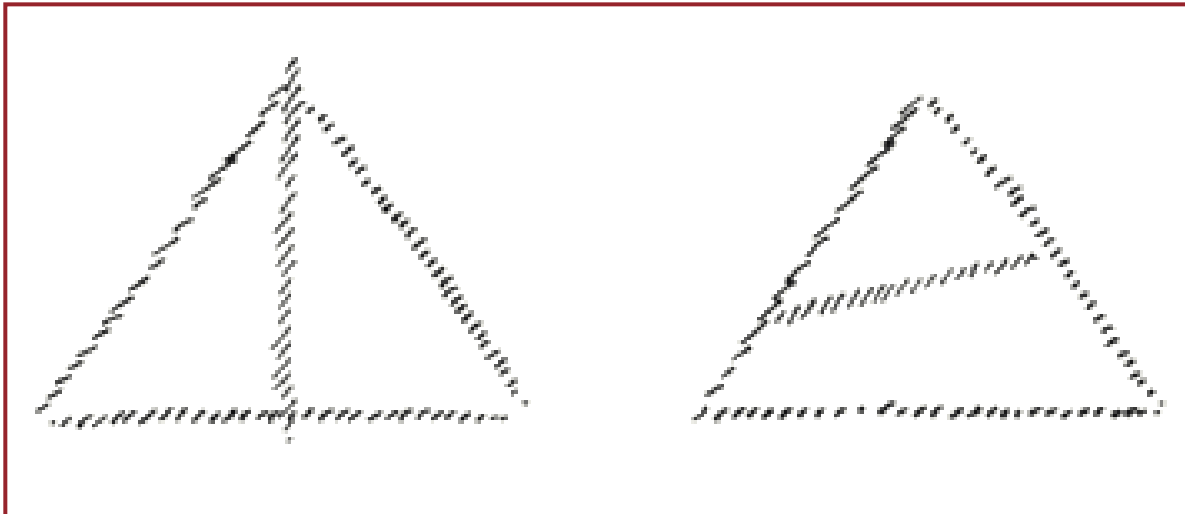


Diagram 1

An intelligent, astute man makes a comparison, but it is invalid; his thinking is not sufficiently mobile, not sufficiently alive to find a valid one; he stumbles, with serious consequence. Had he not been misled into thinking that dividing a worm in two could be compared to dividing a triangle in two, he would have stayed on the right course. Dividing a worm into two parts has nothing whatever to do with two souls. One and the same group is effective in both parts. One could compare it with someone looking at his image in a mirror. If the mirror is broken in two, he has two images; yet he himself remains whole. Not the person but the mirror has become divided. Likewise the worm soul cannot be divided; it endures as does the person who sees two images of himself in the mirrors. Thus one and the same soul is present in the two parts of the worm; that is the true concept corresponding to the reality. That concept Brentano could not reach; his thinking was not mobile enough and had become deluded by a false comparison. Had he made the comparison correctly, he would have noticed as he divided the triangle that the mere act of dividing does not guarantee that the result will be two triangles. In order to get that result something else must be added, namely, the concept triangle, which is to be applicable to both parts after the division. Without the concept the result may require two different concepts; i.e., that of quadrangle as well as that of triangle. The comparison could have been valid if it had occurred to him that he had to use one and the same concept for both parts, and that it was this concept that guaranteed the division would result in two triangles. It did not occur to him, consequently he did not recognize that one and the

same worm soul was effective in both pieces of worm, effective in the sense that it looked into the parts from outside, like someone looking into two mirrors.

The need for greater subtlety of thinking is evident in all spheres of life. We shall not progress unless thinking becomes more alive and mobile so that it will cease to cling to crude externalities. There never have been more obstacles to making thinking more alive. For that very reason it is all the more necessary to promote science of one spirit. Only by working with subtler concepts does thinking become active and mobile. Through their very nature, the concepts of spiritual science have the power to strengthen the human I. What is longed for today may be satisfied by other means. But only spiritual science can give the human being real inner strength by awakening in him lucid concepts that are not so readily available, concepts which, just because they do not depict life's external aspects, make us inwardly strong, which means capable of recognizing the reality, the essence of things.

We shall continue next time to look at important issues from a wider perspective.



## Lecture 7

*17 July 1917, Berlin*

Let us now consider the implication of certain concepts we have obtained in our recent studies. Today, in the lecture to follow, I shall speak mainly about the nature of truth and the nature of the good. These issues we have been concerned with recently. But let us first look at something that belongs to those interconnections we spoke about last time and which to modern history must seem very strange. We saw in the previous lecture that it is possible to gain definite concepts as to how a present life on earth is connected with the preceding life on earth as well as with the one that will follow. I described that the *I* insofar as we are aware of it in the will acts across from our previous life on earth, and that insofar as we form a thought picture of the *I* this thought, with all it contains, is so delicately woven that it acts across to the next earth life. I compared it with the way in which the seed in this year's plant becomes the life in the plant of next year. We must regard as seed for our next life on earth every web of thought at the center of which is the *I*. So you see, when we enter our life on earth we do so with conditions determined by our previous life; but also, of course, with what comes as a result of the last life having been worked on between death and new birth. This can be said to be one group of concepts we have gained.

Let us now make a great leap to another group of concepts we also obtained recently, concerned with the course of man's lives on earth. Those considerations culminated in the insight we gained into the secret of mankind's present age. I described how man, after the Atlantean catastrophe, entered upon the ancient Indian epoch, at the beginning of which mankind's age was 56. What this signifies was also described. It means that at that time the individual human being continued to be capable of natural development right up to the age of 56 in a way possible now only in childhood. Up to that age man's soul and spirit went through a development parallel to that of his physical body. This now happens only in childhood when the development of soul and spirit is bound up with the growth and development of the body. This interdependence ceases when we reach the age that was indicated. The soul and spirit then become more independent and man's inner development no longer continues of itself.

The most important aspect of this is that we do not go through the middle of life, when the body begins to decline at the age of 35, still dependent on the body. Consequently we are not conscious of the Rubicon which we cross at that time. We do not experience what was experienced in the first post-Atlantean epoch, namely, the body's decline, its becoming sclerotic and calcified and the spirit becoming free of the body. At that time this took place in the course of natural development, without effort on man's part. As we know, during that epoch the age of mankind receded from 56 to 55, 54 and so on, so that at the end of the epoch his natural development continued only up to the age of 49. In the following, the ancient Persian epoch, mankind's age receded from 49 to 42. During the third, the Egyptian-Chaldean epoch, it receded from the age of 42 to that of 35, in the Graeco-Latin epoch from the age of 35 to 28. This means that the Greeks and Romans remained capable of natural development up to that period in life which is bounded by the ages 28 and 35. I then placed before you the stupendous mystery that, as mankind's age had receded to 33, Christ Jesus, aged 33, united Himself with mankind. That moment the Mystery of Golgotha took place. This revelation is so wondrous that one is at a loss to find words to express the awe felt by the soul able fully to experience this fact so steeped in mystery.

The age of mankind continues to recede. As you know, since the fifteenth century we have been living in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch. When it began, the age of mankind was 28 and by now has dropped to 27. This means that up to that age our soul and spirit are still in some way dependent upon our bodily-physical nature. After that age our natural development ceases; we can make no further progress merely through what our environment provides. If we are to progress, we must have an inner incentive to do so, and today that can only come from spiritual knowledge, as I have often explained. The impulse must arise from our feeling for what is spiritual in the world, from our knowledge of the spiritual aspect of things. In the last resort that can only arise through the Christ impulse. It is simply a fact that modern man, concerned only with what nature and society can provide him with, i.e., what the world can make of him, will remain a 27-year-old even if he lives to be a hundred. If he is to progress in his inner life, he must himself engender the impulse to do so; nothing more arises through the body's participation in his development. Thus through natural development modern man becomes 27 years old, and that is what is so characteristic of today's culture. Our culture, our civilization cannot be understood, especially in relation to earlier ones, unless this fact, verified by spiritual science, is kept firmly in mind.

This is something that is closely connected with the first group of spiritual facts of which we reminded ourselves today. As you will realize from the last lecture, we go through a certain evolution during the time between death and new birth; what is particularly at work then are the will impulses from the previous incarnation. What is accomplished between death and new birth we bring with us; it becomes experience in this life. However, the strange fact is that in the human being of today the reciprocal action between the astral body and the *I* that is soul and spirit on the one hand and the ether body on the other comes to a halt at the age of 27. We are so conditioned during life between death and new birth that we prepare and organize our new ether body in such a way that when it comes to live in the physical body, the *I* and astral body can still be active in it. At the beginning of the Graeco-Latin epoch, about 747 B.C., this vivifying effect of astral body on the ether body came to a halt when the person reached the age of 35, at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, at the age of 33. It now stops at the age of 27. This means that today, according to the evolution he has gone through before birth or conception, a person can through what nature itself provides and what he gains from society keep his ether body mobile up to the age of 27, so mobile that the astral body, with which the ether body is in reciprocal activity, can imbue it with fresh concepts and ideas, vivifying it enough to engender new feelings and perceptions. Our mental pictures of the world, our ideals can be enriched up to the age of 27 simply through the experiences that come to us. After that age it does no longer happen of itself; progress will only come about through our own inner impulses.

Many soul conditions, many inner dissatisfactions in life suffered by modern man are due to the comparatively early cessation of the reciprocal effect between astral and ether body, and consequently also the physical body. There is, especially in early life, a lively reciprocal activity in the lower region between the soul, i.e., the astral body, and the ether body. Then it ceases, and unless we quicken our conceptual life in the way described in the previous lecture, we can absorb only shadowy concepts. These concepts must not attain their full reality or they would constantly lame us. They would be like a plant seed that insisted upon growing into a complete plant straight away. Our concepts and mental pictures must remain seeds until the next incarnation. If upbringing and self-discipline did not modify this tendency, we would in fact always want more than life of itself could give us. Many people do suffer from this "wanting more than life can give." Life can provide us only with concepts that will mature in our next incarnation. They must consequently remain shadowy in this one unless through inner impulses of the kind described in the last lecture, we enrich

and stimulate our mental pictures, in fact our whole inner life. If we could recognize that we are nurturing the seed for our next incarnation, i.e., see life in a much wider perspective, we would attain much greater inner contentment. This is directly connected with what Pascal and later Lessing expressed and what has often since been emphasized, the fact that in seeking truth, we are in a certain sense satisfied. (Blaise Pascal, 1623–1662. *Penseés*, in many English editions. From the German edition of Ewald Wasmuth, Heidelberg, 1954, pp. 240-241: "We not only know God and ourselves through Jesus Christ; but life and death we know only through him as well. Without Jesus Christ we would not understand our life, our death, God, or ourselves.") A passage which Pascal before him discussed at great length, Lessing expressed in a simpler, paradigmatic form, saying: "If God held truth in one hand and the striving after truth in the other, I would choose striving after truth." (Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 1729–1781. The verbatim quote is: "If God held in his right hand all truth; and, in his left, the ever active drive for truth, even with the condition that I would eternally and always err, and said: 'Choose!,' I would fall humbly on his left and say, 'Father, give! The pure truth is for you alone!,' " *Eine Duplik* (1778), in *G.E. Lessings Sämtliche Schriften*, Leipzig, 1897.) These words contain a great deal. They imply that while incarnated in a human body we will always have the feeling that we do not attain complete truth. Truth lives in concepts, in mental pictures and these are interwoven with the *I*; while in a human body, we can have only the truth which is seed for a next incarnation. It must not be fixed but live and move in our striving. Before incarnation our ether body is so constituted that it contains the truth. However, incarnating causes truth as a whole to be reduced to a copy, a picture of truth, and it is this picture which is seed for the following incarnation.

Inner contentment we attain only when we can feel ourselves as a member of humanity as a whole. In practice it is not attained unless we develop the kind of living concepts of which we spoke last time. These concepts are not derived from the surface of life's events; they must be sought in the connections between them. No human being today will achieve inner contentment unless he takes a vivid interest in the world around him, but an interest directed towards the spirit and the spiritual connections in the environment. Those who merely want to brood within themselves will find in life only what makes us into the kind of 27-year-olds that correspond to the evolution we went through between the previous death and the birth of the incarnation we are in.

Man has to discover out of his own initiative his bonds with the environment. This is why in our age man encounters obstacles to freedom. He must kindle in himself interest for those spiritual aspects of life that cannot be discovered merely through sense observations; they must be sought in wider, more hidden connections, in ways I explained in the previous lecture. Much in what has just been said can help explain, not only our stand towards truth in our time, but also towards the good — the ethically and morally good. In the next lecture we shall go into more detail. Today we shall concern ourselves more with something that follows from these facts and can explain much that will help us understand our present time.

The spiritual scientist must deal with the facts he discovers differently from the way the natural scientist deals with his. From our considerations over the years you will realize that the spiritual scientist arrives at his discoveries through the faculties of imagination, inspiration and intuition. This means he is engaged in cognition that goes beyond the confines of the immediate sensory world into that realm of the spiritual world which reaches beyond what is perceived through physical senses. This realm is at the same time the spiritual background from which everything sense perceptible is governed. The science of the spirit gains its observations such as the fact that humanity becomes younger and younger from the spiritual realm accessible to the human faculty of knowledge. The age of the human being is receding the way I explained from that of 56 to the age of 27 in our present time, and 27 is the age where we remain unless we take our own progress in hand. These facts can be discovered only through spiritual science. They cannot be found through ordinary ethnology or anthropology, nor of course, through ordinary historical research into the course of events since the Atlantean catastrophe with the methods of natural science. All these things can be derived only from the spiritual world. You will understand that the spiritual investigator with his spiritual knowledge will have a somewhat different attitude to events than the natural scientist, and not only to external events and processes but to history and social procedures. How does the natural scientist set about his research? He has before him the objects and phenomena to be investigated, and he formulates his concepts and mental pictures accordingly. The concept, the mental picture, is the second; the law that governs what is investigated is what he discovers. Thus he goes from facts to the laws by which they are governed; the sense perception comes between the two. The facts are the first, then the mental pictures are added, then the law discovered and so on.

In regard to the spiritual world itself the spiritual researcher sets about his investigation in a similar way; here the investigation is not really different. It is in regard to the physical aspect that differences arise. The spiritual facts are directly understood as one takes hold of them. If one wants to discover what significance they have for the physical world, then the corresponding physical facts must be sought out afterwards. The spiritual aspect is given first; afterwards one seeks out the physical facts or conditions which it explains. By means of the spirit one explains what in life must be spiritually explained. Many find it extremely difficult to understand that in spiritual research the law comes first, and the law; i.e., the spiritual aspect, then points to the physical phenomenon to which it applies. The physical phenomenon supplies confirmation, as it were, of the law. Spiritual investigators used to express this difference somewhat formally, saying that natural-scientific investigation has to proceed inductively — from fact to concept, whereas spiritual-scientific investigation must proceed deductively — from concept to fact. In this light, let us look at an example which is of significance today.

Spiritual research reveals that man in general develops in our time, through what nature and society provide, up to the age of 27. Therefore, the typical modern person who keeps aloof from spiritual knowledge will progress in his development up to his 27th year. If he is a person of significance, someone with many interests and is full of energy, then his faculties will be well developed by the time he reaches the age of 27. This means he will have brought to maturity everything one can develop simply through the fact of having physically become 27 years old. His powers of thinking will have developed and so too, the impulse to be active in one or another sphere. His will power will have grown in strength simply because his muscles have grown stronger, and similar things apply to the nervous system, and so on. If he is responsive to what he can absorb from the human environment, he will, by the time he is 27 years old, have developed a sum of ideas and ideals; he will be concerned about social reform and so on. All this will live and develop in him up to his 27th year, so that by that time he will, one might say, be crammed full. Then it stops; it ceases to develop further, and from then on what he brings to bear on life is the insight and outlook he has attained by the age of 27. He may live to be a hundred years old, and if he is a significant person he will bring about significant things, but whatever he does will be based on the ideas and impulses of a 27-year-old. Thus he is a true representative of the time in which we live; one could say he is a product of our time. But if he has no interest in the spiritual aspect of life, and does not develop impulses of the kind that enable, not only the body but the soul to mature beyond the 27th



year, then he refuses to participate in mankind's further evolution. As he does not kindle spiritual impulses in himself, he cannot bring them to bear on his environment. He is incapable of bringing into our time anything that contains seeds for mankind's further progress. All that he does bring is characteristic of the time. If he is a man of stature — and one can, of course, be such and still remain 27 years old — then he will provide our time with what is in complete agreement with a certain aspect of it, but it will provide no seed for the future.

How are we to picture to ourselves such a typical person of our time? What exactly would he be like? What we must now do is to bring our mental picture of such a person down into physical reality. We must look for a physical counterpart. We must, as it were, visualize where such a person could be encountered in social life. It would have to be in the midst of modern life. So in what circumstances would one find him? First of all, the 27th year of his life would be conspicuous, but conspicuous in the sense that from his 27th year onwards his position in society would enable him to carry out precisely the ideas and impulses of a 27-year-old. At the same time what he lacked, i.e., his inability to progress inwardly beyond that age would not be too noticeable. In other words, he must have the opportunity to remain the age of 27 in a fruitful manner. Had he reached the age of 27 and found no possibility to do anything significant with his impulses and ideas, then he would have grown older with something dead within him. If then at the age of say 31 he found himself in some public position, he would meanwhile have carried what had become lifeless and dissolute within him into that later age; he would be no true representative of our time. However, it is possible in present-day circumstances to visualize that in a democratic country, under so-called normal conditions, such a person would, at the age of 27 be voted into parliament. There he would have the perfect opportunity to influence social affairs; it would also be a certain peak in his career. For if someone of some significance enters parliament at the age of 27 that would mean an occupation for life. He is, as it were, stuck; he cannot change course. However, he is in a position to put into action, from his 27th year onwards, all he has developed within himself. Should he later be called from parliament to become a minister of state, then that would be a change of less significance than the one that brought him into parliament. As minister of state he can put into practice what, as a 27-year-old he brought into parliament. So we can say that a typical person of our age with political and social interests would be someone who at the age of 27 is voted into parliament, giving him the possibility to carry out in practice the ideas and impulses corresponding to his age.

Yet there are still other demands such a person must fulfill to be a true representative of our time. There are things in modern society that work against a human being's natural development. What develops naturally soon goes awry when the person is subjected to modern educational methods; the more so if he goes through some branch of university training that pushes him in a one-sided direction. What we are looking for is someone who represents the age, someone in whom what nature has bestowed develops as far as possible, up to the age of 27, unimpaired by modern training of the young. In other words, he must fulfill the requirement I laid down on the basis of spiritual science — you could say deduced from spiritual science — someone who at the age of 27 stands in the modern world with all that nature provides, fully developed, unimpaired by modern training, and who refuses to absorb any knowledge that provides seeds for the future. If such a person could be found in the modern world, his life would clarify many things. We would see in him demonstrated in practice what it means that mankind is in general 27 years old, that people anywhere who come to a standstill in their development at the age of 27, in a crude way weaken the seed of the future.

Does a human being exist somewhere who had all the required qualities at the right age to make him a typical representative of our age? He does indeed; all the qualifications I deduced from spiritual considerations fit Lloyd George completely. (David Lloyd George, 1863–1945, British statesman. Prime minister, 1916–1922.) Look at the life of Lloyd George, not just from the external aspect but, as it were, from above, from the spiritual aspect, and you will find that everything fits. He was born in 1863, was orphaned early in life — you will be acquainted with these details — he was brought up by his uncle who was a cobbler and also a preacher in Wales. He was of Celtic stock and, especially when young, of a lively and alert disposition. His uncle, the preacher, was always there as an example, and he aspired to become a preacher himself. That was not possible because the sect to which his uncle belonged was not permitted to have salaried priests; everyone had to pursue a trade and preach without remuneration. Therefore, not even these conventions had any inhibiting effect. Already in youth he was an ardent lover of independence. The poverty was such that often there was no money for shoes, so he ran about barefoot, in fact experienced all degrees of destitution. He grew up without attending school regularly, so received no proper education, but simply accepted what life brought him. In the same irregular fashion he embarked on a career as a lawyer, not through official training but by getting employment at sixteen in a lawyer's office, and through keen observation and sound judgment he became a solicitor at the age of 27.

Thus his attainments were achieved not through academic training but through what he could gain from life in the present. Life had also kindled in him a strong opposition to the many privileges birth and position bestow. It was with a certain fury that he had removed his cap in greeting to the local squire with whom he was obliged to meet several times a day.

Then what happens? In the year 1890 when Lloyd George, born 1863, is 27 years old, he becomes, through the death of a member of parliament, the candidate opposing the man to whom he hated raising his cap in daily greeting. He had been put forward as a candidate because of the attention caused by a series of urgent speeches he had made, inflaming the hearts and minds of his listeners, exhorting the liberation of Wales from English dominion. Celtic nationality, he said, was to be infused with new life, and in particular the Church should be freed of the organizing influence of the State. He drew so much attention that as a result he won a seat in parliament by a slight majority. This was in 1890. Lloyd George was just 27 years old and a member of parliament! Immediate life experiences had taught him what was needed in his time, and these experiences he brought with him into parliament. For two months this 27-year-old member carefully watched everything that was happening and said not a word. For two months, sitting with a hand behind his ear, with eyes that tended to converge but now and then could flash, he saw and heard everything that went on, whereupon he began the career of a much feared speaker in parliament. People like Churchill and Chamberlain who formerly had looked upon their opponent with a certain indifference, with a certain English impassiveness, became enraged when opposed by Lloyd George. (Sir Winston Churchill, 1874–1965, British statesman, prime minister 1940–1945, 1951–1955. Arthur Neville Chamberlain, 1869–1940, British statesman, prime minister 1937–1940.) After all, he was untutored, unacademic, but he also displayed penetrating logic and biting sarcasm when refuting an opponent, no matter how highly revered. He was close to Gladstone, but even he had to endure much from the sarcasm, the cutting remarks, and logical arguments Lloyd George was always ready to conduct. (William Ewart Gladstone, 1809–1898, British statesman, prime minister four times between 1868 and 1894.) Here we see the extraordinary versatility of someone taught by life itself. People not taught in this way tend to be one-sided, limited in things they can manage. Lloyd George was well informed about every subject and spoke in a way that enraged even the most distinguished members, rousing them from their habitual impassiveness.

It is indeed interesting to observe this great man as a representative of our time, to observe how he unites the characteristics of the 27-year-old with the strength of Celtic traits and makes the most of this combination. His caustic speeches against the Boer war, this wholly disgraceful affair, as he called it, are among his most outstanding. He constantly harangued parliament in even more vivid terms about what he called this vile, mean action of the war in South Africa. With Celtic fearlessness he continued to speak in public though he was once hit on the head with a cudgel so hard that he fell senseless to the ground. Another time he had to borrow a policeman's uniform and be smuggled through a side door because one dreaded the speech he was going to make. There had been no one like him in British political life, and he remained a severe critic well into the 20th century; naturally under a reactionary government a critic only. However, when the Campbell-Bannerman liberal government came to power early in the 20th century, everyone said how good it was to have a liberal government, but what was to be done about Lloyd George? (Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, 1836–1908, British statesman, prime minister, 1905–1908.) Well, in a democratic country what does one do in such a case? One hauls the person in question into the cabinet and gives him a portfolio he is sure to know nothing about. That was exactly what Campbell-Bannerman did with Lloyd George. He, who never had any opportunity to concern himself with trade, was given the Department of Trade, which he took over in 1905. He was a self-made man, molded by life, not by academic training. And what was the outcome? He became the most outstanding Minister of Trade Britain had ever had.

After a comparatively short time, spent studying his new task and which involved travels to Hamburg, Antwerp and Spain in order to study trade relations, he set about introducing a law concerning patents which was a blessing for the country. The bills he introduced and passed for reorganizing the Port of London were met with general approval, an issue over which many former Ministers of Trade had come to grief. The way he managed to settle a particularly critical railway dispute was universally applauded. In short, he proved to be a quite exceptionally efficient minister of trade. When the change of government came from Campbell-Bannerman to that of Asquith and Grey, Lloyd George naturally had to be kept in the cabinet. (Sir Edward Grey, 1862–1933, British statesman. British foreign Minister, 1905–1914. Herbert Henry Asquith, 1852–1928, British statesman.) By then it was the general opinion that Lloyd George could do anything. He was so truly a representative of his time that he was given the most important office, that of Chancellor of the Exchequer. With all his characteristics of a 27-year-old, with all his emotions stemming from his

Celtic origin, Lloyd George became Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had of course retained all the emotions that used to well up in him when as a barefoot boy he had to greet the local squire. He did, however, score over that same squire in his bid for a seat in parliament. He also retained his strong feelings against everything to do with special privileges and the like. He remained as he had been at the age of 27.

Before Lloyd George's time as Chancellor there had been in England a magic cure for financial problems; it was called tariffs. Inland revenue is really a form of tariff, worked out so that the privileged pay as little possible, ensuring that poverty is widespread. As Lloyd George presented his first budget, the abuse hurled at him and his impossible budget must have created a precedent. The British press was, in fact, hurling at him the kind of abuse they at present are reserving for the Germans. Everything in his budget to do with raising taxes in areas that affected the more privileged came in for heavy criticism.

In parliament he faced vehement opposition, but he sat, as always, completely calm and unperturbed, hand behind the ear, eyes that sparkled and lips ready to curl in sarcasm. This was a man in complete accord with the age. Chancellors before him had produced budgets which had been given this or that name, but the budget he presented was so unique to him that in Britain it was known simply as the Lloyd George budget. With no education other than that of life itself, he represented to perfection the time of which he was himself a product. Everything that could be learned about taxation and how it worked in America, France, and Germany he had investigated and endeavored to evaluate. Here again he did not gain his knowledge from books but from practical life, from the way the issue was dealt with at that particular time.

What he achieved is really most interesting and quite remarkable. His complete confidence is again demonstrated when one year, as he came to present his annual balance sheet, it was found that there was a deficit. Deficits had previously always been dealt with by simply absorbing them; i.e., making an entry for the amount. However, Lloyd George said: "Well, there is a deficit, but we shall leave it and not enter it because through the measures I have taken various branches of trade and industry will be so profitable that the extra revenue will cover the deficit in time" — which shows his confidence in life, a confidence that stemmed from his accord with life. Most importantly, unlike others he did not lose that confidence when things went wrong. And in regard to this matter things did go very wrong. The deficit remained, but the prosperity he had so confidently

promised did not materialize. Yet he remained calm, being so completely adjusted to life. And what happened? Three of his greatest adversaries died, all exceedingly wealthy men. They had strongly opposed him because of his tax laws which had earned him the title "robber of the upper classes," one of the many insults hurled at him. Well, three of his most powerful enemies died — and you may call it a coincidence, but the death duty he had already introduced was so high that the revenue from their estates made up the deficit.

In a remarkable way the tide gradually turned, and Lloyd George began to be praised. He lived according to his inner conscience and the way he was prompted by the environment, and nothing could be in more complete accord than the man who had remained aged 27 and mankind aged 27. However, the time came for his 1909 budget. By then he was of course considerably older, yet had remained aged 27 in the real sense. As he introduced new measures in every sphere in which he had influence, all aiming at fighting poverty and other social ills of the worst kind existing in Britain, it was not surprising that he met with much enmity. But, if one is in such accord with what lives in mankind and has the strength to experience it, the strength will also be found to cope. He sometimes had to listen for ten hours or more to speeches and continually had to intervene and often was opposed by the strongest members of parliament, some glaring at him through monocles while reviling him. Lloyd George remained calm, answering objections for ten hours if he had to, always with wit and ironic remarks that found their target. Thus he managed to introduce laws of immense benefit, such as care of the elderly, laws aiming at improving the population's health, such as effectively combatting drunkenness and the like. One could say that as representative of the time he fought everyone who did not represent his time.

In order to understand fully this whole issue, we must add to it another basic aspect of mankind's evolution. We must bear in mind that in the first, the ancient Indian epoch, man developed the ether body, in the ancient Persian epoch the sentient body. Then in the Egyptian-Chaldean epoch he developed the sentient soul, in the Graeco-Latin epoch the intellectual soul, and in our epoch the consciousness soul. However, in the present epoch no other people anywhere are in the position of the British, for they are especially constituted for the consciousness soul. We know that the Italian and Spanish peoples develop the sentient soul, the French the intellectual soul, the English people the consciousness soul, the Central Europeans the I, while the Russian people are preparing for the Spirit Self. The English people are therefore representative of the materialism of the epoch,

because materialism is bound up with the development of the consciousness soul. Thus Lloyd George is also intimately connected with the consciousness soul; he is, as it were, predestined to be in every way the representative of our time. It is of immense significance that he, the typical 27-year-old, should emerge with the 27-year-old English people. That is why in everything he said he represented the English folk. But he also spoke as a representative of man-kind's present evolutionary stage, as one who has no inclination to further that evolution, but rather with bull-like tenacity wants to press on with what this evolution presently has to offer. Thus the English folk soul is coming to expression in a human being representing the age.

Lloyd George has been active in the British social system ever since 1890, when he was 27 years old, and has left his mark on every aspect of it. And it comes as no surprise that in the years leading up to the war he was heard saying that the British people were not to let themselves be confused by warmongers who continually tried to convince them that the Germans meant to invade England. There was to be no war and not a penny would be spent on arms. So again, this eminent representative of the British people expressed exactly what the British people felt. It also expresses the idealism of a 27-year-old. Whatever else was taking place at the time was more reminiscent of the other ideas as they had been in different ages. But Lloyd George expressed the un-warlike sentiment of the present age, particularly characteristic of the British people. He said there were three stages — which must be avoided at all cost—to sure ruin: to budget for war, to arm for war, and the war itself. This man, the eminent representative of our time, during the period of liberalism in Britain had imprinted it on all spheres of life. All that could be done in Britain in this respect he had done. He also dreamed of a world court of arbitration, which is a typical abstract ideal of a 27-year-old.

Everything I have explained so far about Lloyd George is connected with the fact that he possesses in an unspoiled way the qualities of the 27-year-old. This makes him the ideal representative of the English folk, and in fact, of everything from which the British people benefit and through which they in turn can benefit the world. But what Lloyd George cannot do is progress beyond the age of 27; he remains that age throughout his life in the sense I have explained. Consequently when something occurs under the influence of a different human age group with which he has no affinity, he is immediately thrown off balance. Someone who accepts only what nature and life of itself provide can have no understanding of something which issues from quite a different aspect of mankind's evolution. When one is

able to look behind the scenes of world history it is an indisputable fact, though one that is little recognized, that what is represented by Lloyd George is what on the surface the British people want. And what they want is no war. This comes to expression perfectly in the sentiment which says that the three stages to certain ruin are to budget for war, arm for war and war itself. Though the war was not prevented, and thus permitted to occur by Britain, the real truth is that it was brought about by occult powers who manipulate those who govern as if they were marionettes.

One could point to the exact moment when these occult powers intervened, the moment they caught in their net those who were rulers or rather appeared to be. The occult powers who caused the war from Britain were behind well-known statesmen, and their impulses are most certainly not those of 27-year-olds. Rather they stem from ancient traditions and from a thorough knowledge of the forces inherent in the peoples of Europe. They have knowledge of where and when various peoples, or individuals, various leaders may be weak or strong. Their knowledge is exact and far-reaching, and has for centuries not only flowed through hidden channels but has been kept so secret that those in possession of it could drag others unawares into their net. Individuals like Asquith and also Grey were in reality mere puppets who themselves believed, right up to early August 1914, that at least for Britain there would be no war. They were sure they would do everything to prevent war, when suddenly they found themselves manipulated by occult powers, powers which originated from personalities quite other than those named. Over against these powers Lloyd George, having remained 27 years old, also became a mere puppet. This was because their influence originated from quite a different human life period than his; they could be so effective because of their ability to place ancient traditions in the service of British egoism. The influence of these powers swept like a wave over Britain engulfing also Lloyd George who, though a great man, is through and through a product of our time. Behind the impulses which from Britain laid the foundations for war existed an exact knowledge of the peoples of Europe and their political intentions. Those who know what took place in Britain also know that the content of what today is expressed in war slogans existed as an idea, as a plan, already in the 1880s and 90s, a plan that had to become reality.

Those with occult insight into Britain's political future and the future of the peoples of Europe were saying that the dominance of the Russian empire will be destroyed to enable the Russian people to exist. The Russian revolution in March 1917 was planned already at the end of the 1880s, and so were the channels through which events were guided and manipulated.



This was something known only to that small circle whose secret activities sprang from impulses that were of considerably older origin than those of Lloyd George. The events that took place on the Balkans were all planned by human beings of whom it could be said that they were the "dark figures behind the scenes." That these things happen, is destiny. When from Britain something intervened in the world situation which could not have arisen from the essentially British character represented by Lloyd George, the powers behind the scenes saw to it that he became Minister of Munitions! As long as he had been himself, Lloyd George's deepest convictions had been that the way to certain ruin was to budget for war, arm for war and war itself. Now that he is a puppet he becomes Minister of Munitions! All he retained of his own was his efficiency. He became a very able Minister of Munitions. The man who from deepest inner conviction had spoken against arms brought about that Britain became as well armed as all the other nations.

Here we see coming together the one who, having remained at age 27, so eminently represents mankind, and the dark powers behind the scenes, powers capable of overturning even the deepest convictions because all that lives in the physical world is governed by the spiritual realm; therefore it can be guided by a spirit which acts in accordance with the egoism of a certain group of people. Seldom perhaps have convictions been so completely reversed by the powers behind the scenes as those of Lloyd George have been. The reason lies in the fact that his convictions were so completely rooted in what had been prepared for this particular time as the essential "age 27 quality." As long as the "age 27 quality" of this single human individuality was effective within mankind also aged 27, there was complete accord. However, just because that harmony was rooted solely in the present, the discord became all the greater when that other influence, based on ancient knowledge, asserted itself.

This extremely interesting interaction does certainly explain a great deal about present-day events; it can also help us to base our judgments on the facts of human evolution, rather than on sympathy or antipathy. The seriousness of certain things can be understood only when they are seen against the background of mankind's evolution as a whole. This also leads to a recognition of how essential it is to be aware of what goes on behind the surface of world history. As long as mankind's age had not receded below that of 28, up to the fifteenth century, evolution could go on without the individual acquainting himself with the guiding spiritual impulses behind historical events. Today it is necessary that we learn to know the influences at work beneath the surface. Such insight is essential especially in Central

Europe. If one is to guard against the adversary, one must know the full extent of his might. The only way we can attain insight into mankind's evolution today is to acquaint ourselves, through spiritual knowledge, with the laws that govern that evolution. We understand our time even in regard to the individual human being only when we do so out of the spirit.

How does such an enigmatic figure as Lloyd George come to be just in the key position at this time? The answer to this question is important if one is to understand what is taking place. However, even when the individual is a representative of mankind, he can only be understood through the science of the spirit. Everything concerning Lloyd George's future will be of interest, just as everything concerning his past is of interest. Every step taken by him since 1890 has been significant. So, too, is the way he was there in the background at the outbreak of war, reflected, as it were, in the surface of events. Interesting is also the way he has become the pivot around which so many things in the world revolve, including what emerges from Woodrow Wilson, another one aged 27. (Woodrow Wilson, 1856–1924, note 3 to Lecture I.) Not least of interest is the fact that Lloyd George's inner convictions, despite their strength, were obliterated in the face of spiritual influences and powers of a dubious nature. How will Lloyd George be superseded? What is his future? (David Lloyd George, see note 3, fell from power as Prime Minister in 1922 in connection with the Irish Question. He was a minister in various cabinets from 1909–1916, and Prime Minister from December 1916–1922. The liberal party which he led lost its influence thereafter. Lloyd George's role as a prominent politician was also at an end.) These questions are also of interest. We must wait and see.



## Lecture 8

*24 July 1917, Berlin*

Alongside the content of these lectures I am concerned to show that truth, in the spiritual sense, is a living reality. It is especially essential in our time that a feeling should develop for the fact that truth is something living. What has life is different from one time to another; at one stage it may be formless, at another it may have a definite structure. A young child is very different from an old person. What is alive is continually changing. The human being who is perhaps to unfold his activity sometime in the future cannot be spoken of *now* as someone existing, as far as the physical plane is concerned. These things are so obvious as to be trivial. However, they cease to be trivial when one has learned to cherish the feeling that truth is a living entity.

I spoke to you last time about a contemporary statesman, Lloyd George. (David Lloyd George, see note 3 and note 9 to Lecture VII.) If someone in England in 1890, when Lloyd George was 27 years old, would have spoken about the whole significance of that age in our epoch, as we did last time, it would, in the spiritual-scientific sense, have been wrong. He could have spoken about it in relation to Lloyd George, though of course without the biographical details which had hardly begun to happen. But to do so would have been wrong.

People have the notion that truth can always be expressed at any time in the same way, but that is not the case, especially when one is dealing with certain higher truths. It is only now that the time is right for speaking about the relation that exists between the individual human being's age and the age of mankind as a whole. This kind of truth is also an active force. To speak about Lloyd George in 1890 when he was aged 27, giving an outline of his life—which could have been done within certain limits — would have been irresponsible. It could be compared with planting something in the wrong season. It is important not only that such truths do not reach the human soul as abstractions, but even more that they come at a time when they can be effective. This holds good not only in regard to historical facts, facts related to world evolution in the widest sense, but to truth in general in its effect upon the human soul. I gave some indication of this last time, but attention must continually be drawn to it because we

are at present at a stage of transition in the conception of truth. Science of the spirit should create a certain condition of the comprehension of truth. The relationship which man has to truth must alter, must go through a certain development.

In the last lecture I drew attention to the fact that nowadays the human soul easily feels dissatisfied. Let us look at some of the reasons for this dissatisfaction of modern man. We know that the human soul needs concepts and ideas in life which can throw light on certain basic questions, such as the immortality of the soul, the meaning of world evolution, and so on. The human soul needs ideas with which it can live. If it cannot develop such ideas, or only unsatisfactory ones, then it remains dissatisfied and becomes ill in a certain sense. Many human souls today are in fact in a condition of sickness to a far greater extent than is admitted. The near future will see many more such souls than it is at present possible to imagine, unless people turn to the kind of knowledge that can fill the soul with spiritual content.

Nature itself does in many ways present an image of the loftiest and most secret spiritual reality; it is a question of understanding the image rightly and not interpreting it materialistically. The difficulty arises because people want ready-made formulas, sets of concepts with which they can live and be satisfied once and for all. When such are not discovered they may seek advice. However, it is clear that what is expected is a short description of some kind, a book perhaps, that in a short time can be assimilated and that gives the person something that satisfies him for the rest of his life. If one is able to experience even to some degree truth as a living reality, then such a demand is felt to be the equivalent of demanding a food that will sustain the bodily organism for the rest of life. He wants an advice that he can "eat" so that spiritually he never needs to eat again. That is an impossibility in either realm.

Spiritual science cannot hand people something which, once assimilated, is enough for the rest of life. I have often pointed out that there exists no short summary of a world view which can be kept at hand in one's pocket. In place of ready formulas, science of the spirit provides something with which the human soul must repeatedly unite itself, which must be repeatedly inwardly assimilated and digested. External truths such as those provided by natural science we can, if we have a good memory, take in and then possess them once and for all. That is not possible with spiritual-scientific truths, the reason being that the truths of natural science are lifeless concepts. The laws of nature are dead once they have been

formulated into concepts, whereas spiritual-scientific truths are living concepts; if we condemn them to lifelessness because we accept them as if they were external truths, then they provide no nourishment; then they are stones the soul cannot digest.

In view of what the science of the spirit is today and what it really ought to be, it is worth remarking that in the cultural life of the 19th century there were trends struggling towards it. But much has happened in the last decade to cause what was then achieved to be swept away and forgotten. Today I would like, by way of introduction, to point to something that was much misunderstood in the second half of the 19th century. It was usually referred to as "Eduard von Hartmann's kind of pessimism." (Eduard von Hartmann, 1842–1906, German philosopher. *Philosophie des Unbewußten*, 12th edition, Leipzig, 1923.) However, the fact is that his pessimism is not meant the way it was usually interpreted. People set out from the fixed notion that pessimism means a view that considers the world to be less than perfect, having many unsatisfactory aspects, being in fact quite bad. That view can never do justice to Hartmann's pessimism, but it was usually assessed in the light of this general view. Today it is still difficult to clarify this issue which deals with something basic and deeply rooted in the human soul.

Today every child is taught at school about the impenetrability of bodies. When the teacher asks, "What is impenetrability?" the children have learned to answer, "Impenetrability is the property by virtue of which two bodies cannot occupy a place at the same time," which is true of physical bodies, but today no one imagines that it is a sentence which one day will have to be unlearned or rather be interpreted differently. Here I shall only indicate what the issue is about. The day will come when the sentence will no longer run, Impenetrability is the property by virtue of which two bodies cannot occupy the same place at the same time; rather, it will be said, Entities whose property is such that when they occupy a space from which other entities of the same kind are excluded are physical bodies. Thus the basic definition will be different. The day will come when the approach will no longer be dogmatic, but based on reality. Much is said nowadays about old dogmas being superseded. The future will prove that there never was an age more steeped in dogmas than our own. Our sciences are stuffed with dogmatism, even more so are public opinions, not to mention political views.

If we take a positive view of pessimism — for the moment that of Eduard von Hartmann — we shall discover what follows. He says, Many people strive for happiness; they want instant inner contentment which they call happiness. But that can never be the foundation, in a higher sense, for an existence worthy of man. Striving merely for one's personal satisfaction can only lead to isolation; it is bound to lead to a greater or lesser degree of egoism. Man's task cannot consist in striving merely for his own satisfaction; rather, must it be to place his living being into one process of the world, to work with and for the development of the world. However, complete satisfaction with external life or harmony within himself would prevent him from fulfilling that task. Only when we are not satisfied with conditions do we strive to further the upbuilding processes in the world. Thus Eduard von Hartmann's pessimism is in the realm of feeling. It is his view that without this pessimism which makes us dissatisfied, we would lack the incentive to cooperate in the work of furthering evolution. Thus Eduard von Hartmann, expressing himself philosophically, states that he stands for both empirical and teleological evolutionism. It is clear that we are here dealing with a pessimism that is very different from the usual dogmatic view of pessimism. With his concept of pessimism, which I won't pursue further at this time, Eduard von Hartmann is in a certain sense on the path that spiritual science must follow.

This spiritual science, however, shows us much more; it shows us what a fully satisfying mental image would really be for our soul life. It would be for our soul life exactly what external food would be for us if we ate it but then had no way to digest it, and instead carried it around with us undigested. It could not really be called nourishment. It is actually so that someone who takes a book of Trine or Johannes Muller and wanted to be satisfied with it, would be attempting the same as someone who wanted to eat food which could then only be carried around undigested in the body. (Ralph Waldo Trine, see note 1 to Lecture VI. Johannes Muller, 1864–1919, Protestant theologian.)

If it were not simply carried, it would be digested, but then it disappears; it loses its essential identity. This never happens with a fully satisfying mental image. A fully satisfying mental image remains with us forever, if I may express it so, lying in the stomach of our soul. And the more we believe we receive at a given moment from such a mental image, the more we hope to voluptuously satisfy our soul with it, the more we will see that once we have lived with it awhile it cannot satisfy us anymore. Instead it develops in us so that it bores us, becomes annoying to us, and the like.

These things have another side which is connected with what some people regard as contradictions in spiritual science; namely, the fact that new viewpoints are continually sought from which to develop our concepts. We could, as it were, speak forever from different points of view. These do not contradict one another; rather, they prove that spiritual truths have a capacity for continuous transformation, which is an indication of their living quality. Science of the spirit cannot be molded in rigid concepts. Single facts can certainly be presented in a straightforward manner, but the content of what is to satisfy us as a world view must be presented in thoughts that are full of life and can be understood from ever new aspects. Whoever takes in the thoughts of some aspect of spiritual science and lets them dwell in his soul will find that they speak to him. If at another time the same thoughts pass through his soul, they will speak to him again but quite differently. When he is happy, they will speak differently from when he is sad and troubled, but insofar as he receives them in their living quality they will always speak to him.

Spiritual-scientific concepts do not just provide an image of something; they establish a living connection between the human soul and the whole endless spiritual aspect of the world. Because the spiritual aspect is endless it can never be exhausted. Science for spirit will in every single case bring about a connection between the soul and the spiritual world, provided we retain an open receptivity for what comes to meet us from the world. We must above all become accustomed to the fact that certain concepts which today seem basic and beyond dispute may in the future have no relevance at all. Take the example of the countless philosophies; a problem that emerges in them all concerns "being" or "existence." Existence as such is always debated and already the form in which the problem is presented creates great difficulty for the mobile human soul to deal with. Especially through these lectures it is my hope to kindle in you a feeling for the fact that whatever we look upon as "existing," whatever entity we ascribe the state of "being" to, is directly related to the process of coming into being. The truth is that neither what Parmenides said about immutable existence nor what Heraclitus said about the coming into being is correct. (Parmenides, approx. 450 B.C., Greek philosopher. Heraclitus, 540–470 B.C., Greek philosopher.) In the world things *exist* and things *become*, but only what is in the process of becoming is alive; what is already in existence is always dead. What is in existence is the corpse of what was becoming. You will find more about this in my *Occult Science*. (*Occult Science*, see note 7 to Lecture IV.) In nature all around us we find "existence," and spiritual

science confirms that this existence has arisen because once it was in a process of becoming. The "becoming" left behind its corpse. What is in the state of existence is dead; what is becoming is alive.

This has special significance for man's inner life. We do not attain a satisfying view of things through concepts that are finished and complete, because they belong to what exists, not to what is becoming. A satisfying view can only be derived from what is in the process of becoming; it must act on the soul so that as we absorb it, it becomes unconscious, but in uniting with the soul stirs in us again questions concerning the becoming. This is also an aspect of the science of the spirit which causes difficulty for many because they prefer what is finished and complete. While the science of the spirit points to what will truly nourish the human soul, the inclination is towards the very opposite.

What people want today is to attain as quickly as possible a complete and finished view of the world. Much of what comes to expression as inner disturbances and dissatisfaction will be alleviated only when, instead of demanding finished truths, our interest awakens for participation in the coming-into-being of truth. Certainly truths must be clearly defined, but what is expressed in finished concepts always refers to something that belongs to the past. However, the truths deposited, as it were, by the past we can absorb; by so doing they live in us, and we can in this way participate in truth.

All this is going through a process of transformation in our time, which shows itself in the extreme polarity between Western and Eastern Europe. We in Central Europe are placed in the middle of this polarity. The Western pole has already reached hypertrophy, over-ripeness. The Eastern pole is only just coming into being; it has hardly reached the embryonic stage. It is very important that we be clear about the fact that what shows itself as strange and chaotic conditions in Eastern Europe is very little understood in Central Europe and not at all in Western Europe. How many discussions are not going on about the nature of the Russian people, about what is happening in Eastern Europe! Recently I read about an opinion, put forward by a gentleman who no doubt thinks himself very clever, that the Russian people are going through a stage resembling the one Central and Western Europe went through in the Middle Ages. At that time there was, he said, in Central and Western Europe more faith, more of a kind of dreamy, mystical attitude, just as there is now in Eastern Europe. Thus Eastern Europe must be passing through its Middle Ages whereas in the



rest of Europe reason and intellect, and with it the natural sciences have meanwhile progressed. The Eastern Europeans will have to catch up with all of this development.

None of this has any bearing on reality. The truth is rather that the Russian is by nature mystically inclined, but this mystical inclination is at the same time intellectual. What meets us here is intellectual mysticism, or mystical intellectualism; that is, an intellect that expresses itself mystically. And that is something which never existed in the rest of Europe. It is something quite new, new in the same sense as a child is new when compared to an old man, perhaps his grandfather, whom he will come to resemble. It is so important that modern man wakes up and recognizes these things instead of passing them by in a state of sleep. To understand the polarity of Western and Eastern Europe is in particular for Central Europe a pressing necessity. Unless attempts are made to understand it, the chaos that exists at present will not be overcome.

It is rather difficult to become altogether clear about the contrast between Eastern and Western Europe, basically because what comes to the fore in the West is in a sense too mature, whereas what appears in the East has, as I said, hardly reached the embryonic stage. Yet we must try to understand. We have in Western and also in Central Europe what might be called a specific kind of superstition which does not exist in Eastern Europe, or when it appears there, it is an adoption from the West. This superstition, so prevalent in Western and Central Europe is, to put it bluntly, concerned with the printed word, with everything to be found in books. This may sound somewhat grotesque but it does illustrate what encompasses a whole complex of cultural attitudes. In the West we cling to what can be pinned down and put into print. We place the greatest store on what we can objectify by detaching it from the human being. To do so is regarded so highly that our libraries grow into gigantic monstrosities, immensely appreciated more particularly by those working on some branch of science. However, there is another reason why libraries are so appreciated: they keep in storage thoughts which have become divorced from their human source. A sum of such thoughts we call liberalism; when a group of people profess them it is called a liberal party. A liberal party is what results when, over a number of human beings a liberal theory is spread, like a spider's web, i.e., what can be preserved in books. The same applies to many other things. The superstitious belief in theories leads to the attitude that, for things to be dealt with efficiently they must first be pinned down in this way.

In the West there has emerged in quick succession a whole number of theories such as liberalism, conservatism and others, and also wider, more universal theories, preserved in books, such as Proudhon's and Bellamy's utopias. (Pierre Joseph Proudhon, 1809–1865, French socialist and anarchist. Edward Bellamy, 1850–1898, U.S. author.) These things become more numerous the further West we go. Central Europe has produced comparatively few such utopias, strictly speaking, none. Some may have appeared in Central Europe because these things get transferred, but they are all products of the Anglo-Saxon and Latin races. A feature of Western superstition — adopted to some extent in Central Europe — is that what originates in man, i.e., his thoughts, must first be externalized, must be detached from him, before being of use. This procedure has led to evil practices in certain movements usually of a mystical nature. Such practices are facilitated by the fact that great value is placed on producing something, not directly from contemporary life, but from what can be derived from ancient writings and old traditions, in short, from what has become divorced from man. Many people are not interested when told about the spiritual worlds related to today. But if told that what they are hearing stems from ancient Rosicrucian wisdom they are pleased, and even more pleased if told about ancient temples, or better Oriental mystic temples, and it is emphasized how old everything is, how long it has all been deposited, how truly fixed it has become.

This tendency continues to develop to extremes in the Western world. It is a tendency that is intimately connected with a certain despotic power that is being wielded over human beings by the spirituality that has become detached from them. The spiritual element that has become independent exerts its power, in the last resort, over man's elemental forces. The human being himself is then excluded; in one way or another, what he has separated off takes control. Furthermore what has in this way been thrust into the world seeks materialization; it does not just seek to be understood in a materialistic sense, but actually to materialize. The Western world has already gone a long way in this respect. The phenomena are there, but no attempts are made to understand the inner laws that govern them; however, they exist and the day is not far off when man will regret that he did not seek knowledge of them.

A former commoner known today as Lord Northcliffe is a British newspaper magnate, and he is on his way to becoming one in America. (Viscount Alfred Charles William Northcliffe (actually Harmsworth), 1865–1922, English newspaper publisher.) He started by pondering the question of whether it would be possible to make society — that is, the ideas and

views people generally share — independent of human beings as such. In other words, he wondered how one could get what has detached itself from man to gain dominance over him. He began by formulating a theory saying: Every province has its own newspaper; it carries articles written by local individuals; consequently the papers differ from one province to another. How splendid if one could gradually pour into all the provincial presses a uniform model newspaper. One could establish a central office which collected all the best articles on chemistry, written by famous chemists, all the best written on physics by eminent physicists, all the best on biology by famous biologists, and so on. This material could be distributed to the various local papers which would then all carry the same articles. Even where of necessity something had to be different, it could be arranged from the central office. Of course, due to different languages, absolutely everything could not be the same, but everything could be centralized.

You will find that this man has come a long way towards his aim. He is today the unseen power over a great part of the British, French and American press. Certain newspapers in Britain, France and America carry nothing that has not been issued from the same central office. Those newspapers which are still independent have to fight for survival, faced with competition from all that flows through his channels. His real aim is to get rid of everything that is not issued from one and the same source. In view of Western man's blind belief in what has become detached from him and which now comes to meet him in this way, you will realize what possibilities this opens up for exerting tyrannical power over individual human beings.

People in Eastern Europe have a natural inclination to restore to the individual his full human dignity and independence. Their inclination is towards overcoming what has become entombed in the printed word and replacing it by man himself. What is striven for in the East as an ideal is to read less, to be less influenced by what has become inert and fixed and rather to let influence come from what is directly connected with individual human beings. Man is once more to listen to his fellow man and to know that it makes a difference whether speech comes directly from the human being or whether it has become detached from him and made a detour via printers' ink or the like.

Meanwhile in the West a dreadful use is made in many spheres of what has become detached from man, especially in the realm of art where it has led to methods of reproduction that are most efficient in extinguishing the

sense for the artistic. The ability to recognize the unique aspect in a work of art has to a great extent been lost. This applies especially to objects in everyday use. When objections are made to this modern malady, they are not met with much understanding. You may have noticed that some of the ladies present are wearing rings or other ornaments, every item different, because value is placed on individual design, and on the fact that a connection exists in the ideal sphere between the object and the person who made it. At a time when everything is mass produced, that is, has become detached from man, has been objectified, there is not much understanding for such things. The intention behind much that is developed in our time really springs from this tendency, although it may be thought that things are done from preference. On the other hand, what is preparing in the East is based on what is individual, on enhancing man's intrinsic value, though as yet this tendency is only in the earliest embryonic beginnings.

Marxism (I could just as well choose a number of other examples) originated in the West. But what is Marxism? It is a theory which presents in conceptual form a social structure within which all human beings are supposed to live together in harmony. To the spiritual outlook gradually preparing in the East it will seem an absurdity that a theory of this kind, supposed to have universal validity, could ever have been spun out. It will be recognized that it is impossible to decide in an arbitrary manner how people are to live. That is something which each individual must determine for himself, just as people's lives within a community must be worked out between the people themselves. What is preparing in the East is creative individualism — I hesitate to use yet another stereotyped phrase, but no other possibility exists than to make use of certain concepts.

It is so very important that these things are understood. They indicate the forces which at present are shaping the world, and we are placed in their midst. Unless these things are taken into account sufficiently, it is not possible to arrive at an adequate view of world events. For example, without such insight it is not possible to recognize what is behind the fact that Lord Northcliffe bought up not only British, American and French newspapers, but a Russian one as well. A newspaper called *Nowoje Wremja* is completely under his control. This enables him to throw a net across to the East, instigated no doubt by human beings who have a certain insight into what will result from gathering into the same net what constitutes the past and what constitutes the future. Something of far deeper significance than is imagined lies behind this East-West union into which we in Central Europe are wedged. These things are worked at far

more thoroughly and systematically than people are aware of. Similar things are taking place in other spheres. The idea of implanting the dying forces of the West into the germinating forces of the East is dreadful. Some are aware of what is taking place, but who today can rightly judge the meaning of the fact that at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries there suddenly appeared in the British press a whole series of fictitious names, names such as Ignotus, Argus, Spectator and so on? Who recognizes from a comprehensive viewpoint that an issue of *Nowoje Wremja* purchased in Russia is written in London by representatives under various pseudonyms, thus ensuring a complete interchange between what is overripe in the West and what is still embryonic and germinating in the East? These are things that go on behind the scenes of our everyday lives, things that have a direct connection with laws governing the evolution of mankind and the earth.

At the beginning of the 20th century the spirit of Eastern Europe was joined to the spirit of Western Europe. Systematic work was done to create a general public opinion. Work on this started in the editor's office and spread to parliament before entering more subterranean channels. Anyone who believes I am imagining things in maintaining this should read and really take in the content of letters published at the beginning of the 20th century by Mrs. Novikoff, the wife of the Russian envoy in Vienna. (Olga Novikoff: *The M.P. for Russia, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Mme. Olga Novikoff*, edited by W.T. Stead, Vol. I 1841–78, Vol. II 1878–1908, London, 1909, Andrew Melrose.) These letters were written by Mrs. Novikoff to Mrs. Campbell-Bannerman, with whom she became acquainted in England. In reading these letters you will find that I am not imagining things and you will find much that explains what seems inexplicable, especially to people in Central Europe.

If we are really to understand the significance of the deep changes occurring in our time, we need concepts that are different from those carried over from the past. We must recognize that we have an inherent inclination and ability to formulate such concepts. We must not sleep through the significant events that are taking place. We could cite hundreds upon hundreds of such events. Take for example what took place at Oxford in the summer of 1911. There was a large gathering at which were present, in their official attire, a splendid procession of all the dignitaries and professors of the University of Oxford. They had gathered because Lord Haldane was to deliver a speech. (Viscount Richard Burdon Haldane, 1856–1928, English statesman, *Education and Empire*, 1902; *The Pathway to Reality*, 1903–04.) You must bear in mind that this is the

Secretary of State for War giving a speech. And his subject? He discussed in strictly scientific terms how greatly the German spirit had contributed to the furtherance of mankind's evolution. He stressed that it had demonstrated that civilization is furthered not through brute force but rather through moral and ethical influences. The whole speech was a eulogy in praise of the intrinsic value of German culture.

Once war had broken out, Lord Haldane fully agreed with and even emphasized the view that the German spirit came to expression mainly in militarism that created hell for the rest of the world. Yet that same Lord Haldane had in his youth, while in Göttingen, sat in reverence at the feet of the philosopher Lotze who had written some fine books on *Education and the State* and one entitled *A Path to Truth*. (Rudolf Hermann Lotze, 1817–1881, physician and philosopher. *Metaphysics*, Vol. 1, 1841–79, Vol. 2, Leipzig, 1879.) That same Lord Haldane had in beautiful words spoken about the difference between Hegel and Goethe. He pointed out that while Hegel said that we would be able to hear nature express the highest secrets if we only had the sense, Goethe made a still loftier saying the foundation for his whole world view, namely, that if nature could actually express everything man needs to hear, then she would have had the ability to speak. A deep meaning is contained in these words. They imply nothing less than that Goethe professed true spiritualism, for if nature contained all there is in the world, then she would reveal it to us; the fact that she does not prove that there is more; there is something beyond nature, namely the spirit. All this Haldane had been able to express because of his experience of German cultural life. Yet like hundreds of other instances, we see him suddenly change.

These phenomena are not of a kind that can be brushed aside with trivial remarks like: Once peace has been signed all these things will even out. — Many people do believe that, but what is needed is a fundamentally different approach. The basis for this approach we do not even have to acquire; in a sense, we possess it already, and if we have the will, we can act accordingly. We in Central Europe have by nature the ability, if we would only exert it, to look with understanding towards both the East and the West. What we must do is overcome the habit of approaching things especially spiritual science theoretically. We must enter into it with all our heart, with all the inner forces at our disposal.

Allow me for a moment to turn to something of a personal nature; after all, we know one another and these things concern us all. As you know, I have written about Nietzsche, and from my book you will have seen that I value

and admire him greatly. (Rudolf Steiner, *Friedrich Nietzsche, Fighter for Freedom* (Rudolf Steiner Publications, Blauvelt, NY, 1985).) Lately, when lecturing in various places, I have expressed my respect and admiration for the Swabian aesthetician Friedrich Theodor Vischer. (Friedrich Theodor Vischer, 1807–1887, German poet and philosopher.) I also mentioned the fact that he was among the; first to whom I turned after I had for thirty years been concerned with laying the foundation for what I now call the science of the spirit. He was the first to approach me in saying: Your conception of time is a most fruitful foundation on which to build up a science of the spirit." As I said, I respect Nietzsche, and I tried to do him justice in my book, *Friedrich Nietzsche, Fighter for Freedom*. I also respect Vischer. But how do the two regard each other? You will find that Nietzsche wrote an interesting passage on Vischer. He also coined the much used expression "bourgeois philistine" which is what he called David Friedrich Strauss, the author of *Life of Jesus* and *The Old and the New Faith*. (David Friedrich Straul3, 1808–1874, German theologian.) Vischer was a great admirer of David Friedrich Strauss, a remark I add merely by way of explanation. Concerning Vischer, Nietzsche had the following to say:

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*... Lately the assessment of an idiot concerning historical facts has been circulating in German newspapers to the joy of the pale aesthetic Swabian Vischer. This assessment, to which every German will agree, is the so-called "truth," that "Renaissance and Reformation — aesthetic rebirth and moral rebirth — must be taken together to form a whole." Such a sentence tests my patience too far. I feel it to be my personal duty, once and for all, to tell the Germans what they all have on their conscience: four centuries of crimes against culture; that is what they have on their conscience. (Friedrich Nietzsche, 1844–1900, *Ecce Homo*, "The Case of Wagner: A Musician Problem," in several editions in English.)*

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Thus it is possible to have respect for both personalities and their philosophical approaches; but one calls the other an idiot. That does not in the least alter my regard and respect for them both. I do not feel obliged to swear by the one or the other when I acknowledge what they have to say. Nor do I feel obliged to make whatever view each has of the other my own. I accept that that is his view, just as I accept that the gentleman sitting across the room will have a different view of the pile of books in

front of me than I have. Judging things from one aspect only is a common tendency, which some develop to a remarkable degree. That is something that has to be reckoned with. There is the example of what Hölderlin puts into the mouth of Hyperion in his "Hyperion in Greece"; it is so interesting because, as those will be aware of who know Hölderlin, he identifies with Hyperion. The views expressed by Hyperion are his own. The Germans he describes as follows:

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*They always were barbarians right from ancient times, and became more so through diligence, learning, and even religion. Completely devoid of pious feelings, lacking every grace, subject to every excess and shabbiness insulting to a fine soul, dull and without harmony like the fragments of a discarded vase — these, my Bellarmin, were my comforters. — These are hard words and yet I say them because they are true: I cannot think of any people more torn apart than the Germans. You will find artisans, thinkers, priests, masters and servants, young folk and mature ones; all these you will find, but no human beings ... (Johann Christian Friedrich Hölderlin, 1770–1843, Hyperion, oder der Eremit in Griechenland, 2 parts, Stuttgart, 1797–99, in Sämtliche Werke, Insel Verlag, Leipzig o.J., p. 580.)*

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One can imagine authors of the entente wanting to copy such a passage. But there is another important aspect: the same Hölderlin who had these convictions also called Germany "the heart of Europe." In other words, he was capable of having both views. We must be able ever more to recognize that not only is it possible, but it is also a deeply rooted disposition in man. If one clings to the abstract opinion that it is contradictory to hold different views about the same thing, one is clinging to one-sidedness. The views and outlooks that led to the greatness of Western Europe are no longer capable of understanding what is beginning to evolve in Eastern Europe. The day will come when to the people of Eastern Europe it will seem incomprehensible that one should not be able to have two completely opposite views of something. Many-sidedness is what is developing in the East, and it will seem obvious that to understand things one must view and describe them from all sides.



All this is connected with what I began with today, the necessity to attain a new relationship to truth. An essential aspect of this is the recognition that our life of thinking, that is, our life in mental pictures and concepts, is already a life in the spirit. In order to recognize that thinking is a spiritual activity it is necessary to overcome the materialistic and quite unscientific attitude which says, When I think, I use my brain, so thinking must issue from the brain. — That is just about as clever as someone saying, Along this road there are footprints; where can they have come from? There must be forces beneath the ground that have caused them. I must study these footprints so that I can build up a theory as to the nature of the forces that push and pull from beneath the ground and form the footprints in the soft soil. That is comparable to seeking in the formations and processes of the brain the forces that create thinking. Just as the footprints, though found in the soil, originated from people walking over it, so are the formations of the brain — just as biology and physiology describe them — the imprint of thinking which is spiritual.

Naturally the brain must be there, just as the ground must be there if people are to walk over it. Like the ground, the brain offers resistance as long as we live between birth and death. What lives in us as spirit must be reflected from something during our existence between birth and death. The reflecting apparatus is the brain. But this reflecting is an active process, as if in a mirror in which light was not thrown back from a smooth surface, but one which contoured itself so that one could recognize from the resulting shape what had been reflected. One must understand that thinking as such is spiritual, that we already stand within the spiritual world when we think. We become fully conscious of this only when thinking frees itself, when thinking, as it were, is able to catch hold of itself. Such a refined thinking can follow a course that enables it to take hold of the more hidden connections between events in life. It is able to seek out the more delicate links beneath the surface. I spoke of these things in the two previous lectures.

What thinking is in its spiritual nature one becomes aware of only when it has freed itself from matter. Only then does one attain to a thinking that is truly creative. The natural world can be grasped by a thinking that passively assimilates what the natural phenomena of themselves reveal. If one is to find ideas that can be effective in society, ideas that are, so to speak, to govern people's affairs, they must arise out of a thinking that has become independent. We lack to a high degree the ability to rise above dependence on external phenomena, to rise to a thinking that formulates thoughts independently, within its own essence. That is why our political

life is so sterile, so unfruitful; only thinking that has freed itself from matter can deal effectively with social problems. If one wishes, it could be called the next necessary step to be taken in mysticism. But what is meant is not a vague mystical something so often pursued nowadays. What matters is not the awareness of oneself within a divine essence or some such lovely phrase. The God within is an experience common to all creatures. To be in connection with the unity of the world, with the divine element within, one need only to utter words like mysticism or theosophy. A June bug has that kind of connection too, though in its own special way. What matters is that we begin to experience thinking as something active and alive, expressing itself in concrete concepts. Such concepts are able to take hold of and deal effectively with social problems.

At the beginning of today's considerations I spoke about the importance for man not only to regard his relation to truth in the light of the science of the spirit, but also to recognize that the relation itself must become different. It must become an active union with reality; this will have immense significance, not only for the understanding of world events, of history and social problems now and in the future, but also for the individual. What needs to be done now, is to continue certain important spiritual streams and endeavors which have been forgotten. There were good reasons — we still have to speak of them — that in the second half of the 19th century much was forgotten or abandoned. When a new edition of my book *The Riddles of Man* is published, I shall indicate many phenomena which belong to these forgotten aspects of spiritual life. (Rudolf Steiner, *Vom Menschenrätsel*, see note 4 to Lecture VI.) Many endeavors, now forgotten, existed in the first half of the 19th century to which spiritual science has a direct link. Had they endured — which is of course purely hypothetical, for things could only develop the way they did — but if they had, man would not have been so helpless in face of the present tragic events.

I have mentioned before the remarkable fact that, for egoistical purposes, the strength of the various nations in Europe was carefully monitored in the West, especially in Britain. It was through this that the storm clouds gathered from whose effects we are still suffering. In past lectures I have explained many things which brought about the present catastrophe. You will realize from much of what I have said lately that it is by no means enough to reckon only with the events usually talked about. It is necessary to dig much deeper and to take account of the much greater significance of what happens beneath the surface of external events. It is this which pours over mankind like some dreadful deluge. Many of these things can as yet not be called by their true name, because human beings are not ready to

accept them. But if evolution is to be understood, if light is to be thrown on the hidden secrets directly connected with present events, then they must be touched upon. Understanding of these things is possible only if the science of the spirit is taken ever more seriously.

The aim of the science of the spirit is to unite with all that is best in the forces and impulses of the Occident; above all it wants to further evolution. It can achieve its aims only if it ceases to be confused with all the foolish nonsense that appears nowadays in the guise of some spiritual or mystic impulse. Things have come to such straits that in future the difference must be made abundantly clear between everything spiritual science stands for, everything our anthroposophically-orientated spiritual science aims to be, and all the many movements that wish to identify with it.

In conclusion I ask you to look for a moment at the Orient; certainly it did have in the past a high degree of insight into repeated earth lives. This insight was attained through a special training of man's own being. From a certain point of view it must be said that no description of the individual soul's connection with the cosmos surpasses that of the Bhagavad Gita. But we, in our time have different tasks. In his *Education of Mankind*, Lessing inaugurated one of these tasks. There the concept of repeated earth lives reappears in the Occident. But how did the idea come to Lessing? He knew of course that it had been a teaching among primitive peoples. But the idea came to him while contemplating the consecutive epochs in mankind's evolution, and noticing how one epoch develops out of the preceding one. He considered that the reason no break in evolution occurred between the epochs could only be because human souls themselves carried the forces and capabilities they had attained over from epoch A to epoch B, to epoch C, etc. Just think, if our souls were present back in darkest antiquity and continued to incarnate again and again, that would mean that we ourselves have carried over from antiquity right up into our time what runs like a thread through the whole of history and evolution. Then human beings themselves would have created the various epochs. History gains sense and meaning when it is recognized that the human souls themselves carry over impulses from one epoch to the next. Through such a comprehensive historical survey the idea of repeated earth lives came to Lessing, not as in the Orient from the individual human soul.

Historical thinking and history, history in its highest sense, that is the task of the Occident. However, this requires that we recognize it in every moment. History confronts us when individual facts unite in the understanding of the different ages of man. We have history when a child

stands before an aged person. Here we grasp the historical sense by recognizing that the old person was once a young adult and before that a child. What is consecutive in history can also appear side by side in space. Eastern, Western and Central Europe, though next to one another in space, can be understood only when also seen in a historical sense as following one another. This, of course, must be done in the right way.

These tasks stand before each one of us. When we widen our horizon to encompass such matters we shall in our living relationship with what is around us attain that gratification for which our soul longs.



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