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by

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The Need for Christ

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In the lectures given here just before the burning of the Goetheanum I spoke to you of man's connection with the course of the year and of other related subjects. ^[1] As a continuation of those lectures I want to take your minds back again today to an epoch of history which we have often studied and which must be thoroughly understood if genuine insight into the present phase of the evolution of humanity is to be acquired.

We have heard that certain processes taking place in the human being can be recognised in the ever-repeated happenings of the course of the year. I also said that it was the aim of earlier Mystery-science, Initiation-science, to spread such knowledge among persons able to accept it. By spreading this knowledge the aim was to strengthen man's thinking, feeling and willing, to strengthen his foothold and position in the world.

We may ask: Why was it that in earlier times human beings were able by their very nature to understand the relation of man the microcosm, to the great world, the macrocosm, as this relation is expressed in the seasonal course of the year? For there was indeed such understanding. This was because in those ancient times man's inner life, his life of soul, was more closely linked with the etheric or formative forces body than is the case today.

You will remember from the outline which I was able to give in the lectures of the so-called French Course, ^[2] that when man has passed through the supersensible life between death and a new birth, when he has sent down to Earth the spirit-seed of his physical body, while he himself, as a being of soul-and-spirit before conception, has not yet descended, he gathers together from the Cosmos the forces of the cosmic ether and with them builds his etheric body which he thus possesses before he unites with his physical body. Thus as man descends from the

supersensible worlds as a being of soul-and-spirit, he first envelops himself with an etheric body. Then he unites the physical body given him through the physical stream of inheritance by the father and mother.

In earlier ages of evolution the union into which man could enter with the etheric body before his actual earthly life was far more intimate than it was in later times and is today. And it was because of this more intimate union with the etheric body that it was possible for an earlier humanity to understand what was meant when from the Mysteries it was proclaimed: the physical Sun seen by the bodily eyes is the physical expression of a spiritual reality. Men understood what was meant by the 'Sun Spirit'. They understood it because when that intimate union between the human soul-and-spirit and the etheric body was still present it would have seemed absurd to expect man to believe that somewhere up in universal space there hovered that physical globe of gas of which modern astrophysics speaks today. To those human beings of an earlier epoch it would have seemed a matter of course that to this physical phenomenon there belongs a spiritual reality and it was this spiritual reality which in all the ancient Mysteries was recognised and revered as the Sun Spirit.

We can point to the fourth century after Christ as the epoch when human beings descending from the supersensible world were no longer united in this intimate way with the etheric body. (These details are only approximately accurate, although in essentials they are correct). There was now a looser union and for this reason the time drew nearer and nearer when in their earthly life too men could use only the physical body when gazing at the Heavens. In earlier times when they looked up to the Heavens they too beheld the Sun but an impulse arose from within them not to see this Sun as a merely physical phenomenon but to recognise soul-and-spirit in the Sun. After the fourth century A.D., however, men could use only the physical body, the physical eyes, when they gazed at the Sun, for their sight was no longer borne and sustained by the power of the etheric body. Hence as time went on they saw merely the physical Sun and to teach of a Sun Spirit was possible only because this had been known by men in earlier epochs and the tradition still survived.

Julian the Apostate was one who learnt from his teachers of the Sun Spirit. But we know that in the Mystery of Golgotha this Sun Spirit came down to the Earth. He transferred the course of His heavenly life to the Earth, changed it into a course of earthly life. For since the Mystery of Golgotha His activity has been concerned with guiding the evolution of mankind in the sphere of the Earth.

You will notice that the two points of time do not coincide. The Mystery of Golgotha tells us, when we look back at it today, that it was then that Christ, the sublime Sun Being, united Himself with Earth-existence. Popularly expressed: since that point of time, Christ has been on the Earth.

Vision of the Sun Spirit was possible to men until the fourth century A.D., because up to then they were still intimately united with the etheric body, as I have already said. And although Christ Himself was already on the Earth, until well into the fourth century the etheric body still enabled men to behold His after-image in the Sun. Just as in the physical world when we gaze at some object and then shut our eyes, the eyes retain an after-image, so in personalities in whom this faculty had remained, the etheric body retained an after-image of the great Sun Spirit when such men looked up into the Heavens. Hence those human beings who were still closely united with their etheric body – and there were many, especially in the regions of Southern Europe, Northern Africa and Asia Minor – realised from actual experience: The Sun Spirit is to be seen when our eyes gaze into the heavenly expanse. And they could not understand what it meant when the teachers and leaders of those other Mysteries of which I spoke during the French Course declared that Christ was on the Earth.

You must remember that nearly four centuries had elapsed since the Mystery of Golgotha, during which time, for the reason I have just given, a large number of sound human beings were unable to make anything of the declaration that Christ had appeared on Earth. What had taken place in Palestine was for them an insignificant event, just as insignificant as it was for the Roman writers who merely mentioned it as an aside. The death of an individual of no importance had taken place under unusual circumstances. The men of whom

I am speaking simply did not understand the depths of the Mystery. It can be said that these men did not need the Christ on Earth for in the old sense He was still there for them in the Heavens. For them He was still the Cosmic Spirit, the Spirit working in the light. For them He was the all-embracing illuminator of mankind. There was still no need for them to look into the human being and seek Him in the ego.

A man who could not grasp why Christ should be sought in a human being on the Earth since He was obviously to be sought in the Heavens, living in the light which from sunrise shines daily upon the Earth and ceases to shine at sunset – such a man was Julian the Apostate. For him, and others of his kind, what had taken place in Palestine was an event on a

par with any other historical event, but altogether insignificant. For such men it was an ordinary, actually unimportant event, for the need for Christ was not yet alive in them.

When was it that the need for Christ began to live in men? This is what we shall be thinking about today. When could the need for Christ arise in mankind at all?

Let us now think of the successive epochs of earthly evolution after the great Atlantean catastrophe. The catastrophe took place in the eighth/ninth millennium before Christ and after it we come to the first post-Atlantean civilisation-epoch which in the book Occult Science I called the ancient Indian epoch. In that ancient time man lived paramountly in his etheric body. His union with the etheric body was so close that we can say quite simply: man lived in the etheric body. His life was such that the physical body was really more like a garment for him, something quite external. He looked out into the world far more with his etheric eyes than with his physical eyes.

The second period was the ancient Persian epoch. Man now looked into his environment mainly through the sentient body. In the third, the Egypto-Chaldean epoch, he looked into the world with the help of the Sentient Soul, and at length, in the fourth, the Graeco-Latin epoch, he looked into the world with the powers of the Intellectual or Mind-Soul.

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| | Atlantean catastrophe | |
| I. | Ancient Indian epoch | Etheric Body |
| II. | Ancient Persian epoch | Sentient Body |
| III. | Egypto-Chaldean epoch | Sentient Soul |
| IV. | Graeco-Latin epoch | Intellectual or Mind-Soul |
| V. | Present epoch | Spiritual or Consciousness Soul |

In our own fifth civilisation-epoch since the fifteenth century, which we may call the historic present, man looks into the world with the Spiritual or Consciousness Soul. This brings about the results I have described in their

historic sequence in the Natural Science Course. [3]

But we must now be clear about what this really signifies. The soul makes itself felt to begin with in the etheric body. In the first epoch man is still living altogether in the etheric body. Then he lives in the sentient body. But this, in reality, is still immersed in the etheric body. Only in the Egypto-Chaldean epoch does he begin to live in the soul itself, but even now the soul is still living in the etheric body. In this epoch, when man experiences himself inwardly as a being of soul, he still feels half immersed in the etheric body.

It is in the Graeco-Latin epoch that in his life of soul man grows out of and beyond the etheric body. The etheric body is still within him, of course, until about the year A.D. 333. Then he begins to grow beyond the etheric body in such a way and to such an extent that his soul is only loosely united with it; there is no longer a strong, inner union. In the outer world the soul feels deserted, being obliged to go out into the world without the support of the etheric body. And it is now that the need for Christ arises. Man's soul is no longer united with the etheric body so he no longer sees the great Sun Spirit, does not even see His afterimage when he looks out into the Heavens.

But world-evolution is a very gradual process, lasting for long, long periods of time. From the fourth century onwards the soul was as it were inwardly emancipated from the etheric body but not yet strengthened in itself; it was still inwardly weak. And if we survey the centuries, the fifth, sixth and seventh, right on into the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, even on into our own time (but we will consider primarily the period until the fifteenth century) we find the human soul inwardly emancipated, it is true, but weak and ineffectual. It feels the need for something but is not strong enough yet to meet this need from its own inner forces, not strong enough yet to seek the Christ, not, as formerly, in the Sun, but now in the Mystery of Golgotha; to seek Him, not in cosmic space but in the course of Time. The soul of man had to grow inwardly strong enough to develop forces within itself. Through all the centuries until the fifteenth, man was not strong enough to develop inner forces whereby he could have acquired understanding of the world through his own soul. Hence he was content to gather knowledge from the writings left by the ancients, from surviving traditions.

This is something we must bear in mind. The soul of man had to grow strong. In the fifteenth century it had reached the point of being able to experience as its own what it was no longer able to experience through the etheric body or through the etheric body out of the physical body, namely, the mathematical domain which it could now experience as abstraction. With this experience mankind has not yet achieved a great deal. But as you will be aware, it is now a totally different kind of experience. It is the impulse, out of the innermost soul itself, to arrive at something which mankind had not been able to reach in ancient times by using the etheric body with which the soul had been so intimately united.

Men had to grow inwardly strong enough to reach the Christ, whereas in earlier times the etheric body had enabled them to behold Him s He appeared in the Sun. We may therefore say that up to the fourth century A.D. it was precisely the most highly cultured men who were unable to make anything of the tidings about the Christ and the Mystery of Golgotha.

It is interesting to be able to say that neither the Emperor Constantine's adoption of Christ nor the Emperor Julian's rejection of Him was based on any firm ground. The historian Zozimus even goes so far as to declare that Constantine himself went over to Christianity because he had committed so many crimes against his family that the priests of the old religion refused to pardon him. He therefore broke away from the old Paganism and its priests, the Christian priests having promised him that they would be able to forgive his iniquities. This was hardly a very valid foundation for the adoption of Christianity. Indeed one can truly say that it was by no means out of a deep or intense need for Christ that Constantine turned his allegiance to Him.

In Julian's case it only required initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries – an initiation which by that time was a very external matter – to fill him with enthusiasm for the Sun Spirit in the form in which that Spirit had been known. In his case too, therefore, the foundation of it was not really profound, although Julian did indeed acquire remarkable insight through his initiation into the Mysteries of Eleusis. But in regard to the Christ question, neither the pros nor the cons were at that time really powerful or profound, for men simply did not know the meaning of the statement that Christ must now be sought for in history, in the body of a man.

And again, from the fourth century onwards, when their souls were inwardly emancipated but not strong enough as yet, men could find no other way to the Christ or indeed to any explanation of the world – for this

had to be entirely recast – than through historical tradition, written and oral tradition, largely oral tradition, since few were cognisant of the written traditions and interpreted them to others by word of mouth.

This state of things remained for many centuries, indeed so far as perceptive understanding of Christ is concerned it remains so to this day. But it is of great significance that the soul had become free. Although in history it is true that every change has its preliminaries and its after-effects, nevertheless the year A.D. 333 can be cited as the point of time when the emancipation of the soul became a reality in the more advanced men. But the soul was still too lacking in strength to acquire any inner knowledge by its own efforts. In those times, when a man pondered earnestly and deeply about the surviving traditions and teachings, he could say: 'Quite a short time ago there were people who still beheld divine-spiritual reality in the Sun. But I see nothing. Those to whom this divine-spiritual reality was revealed drew from it a wealth of other knowledge – mathematical knowledge, for example. My soul does indeed feel itself independent but it cannot yet muster its own forces to acquire such knowledge.'

In the fifteenth/sixteenth century the important symptom was that people began at least to formulate mathematical-mechanistic knowledge by using the forces of the soul itself. And Copernicus was the first to apply to the structure of the Heavens what he experienced through an emancipated soul. All earlier cosmologies had been evolved by souls not yet emancipated from the etheric body, who were still using the faculties of the Intellectual or Mind-Soul and who were thus able to apply the powers of the etheric body to look out into the Universe. The Intellectual or Mind-Soul was still active until well into the fifteenth century, but men could make use only of the physical body, the physical eyes, when they gazed upwards to the Heavens. These are the reasons why through all the centuries to this very day, knowledge of Christ and the Mystery of Golgotha could be transmitted only by scripture or oral tradition.

And now – what have we gained as yet through the soul which has become gradually stronger since the fourth/fifth century? External mechanistic knowledge, physical knowledge, of which I spoke in the Course on Natural Science. But now the time has come when the soul must become even stronger; for whereas in earlier days, when gazing up into the Heavens with the help of the etheric body the soul beheld in the physical Sun the Spirit Sun, so now, gazing inwardly into the ego it must

feel, behind the ego, the Christ. By physical eyes the physical Sun is seen and by the eyes belonging to the etheric body, the Sun Spirit, the Christ, is seen.

When man looks into himself today he finds the ego. He is aware of the ego, has a feeling of the ego, but it is very shadowy. This feeling of the ego was an experience which first arose in the emancipated soul. Formerly man had looked out into the world; now he must look into his own inner being. Gazing out into the world brought him into touch with the Sun and with the Christ, the Sun Spirit; gazing inward has brought him, so far, into touch only with the ego. He must now reach the stage of finding behind the ego the reality of being which in ancient times the Sun revealed to him. The Christ he once experienced in the light from sunrise to sunset, the illuminator of his life, he must now feel radiating as a light from within himself, from his own ego. In Christ he must find the strong support of his ego.

And so we may say: Formerly man gazed outwards to the Sun and found the Christ-filled light. Now he feels his way into his own being and must learn to recognise and experience the Christ-filled ego. True, we are at the very beginning of this development and we must remember what Anthroposophy tells mankind, namely that the centuries since the fourth century A.D. have been an intermediate period. In the previous centuries men were able to look out into the Heavens and find the Christ as the Sun Spirit in outer space. Now that these intermediate centuries are past a new humanity must arise. Men must find the way into their own inmost being and along this path find the inner Sun, the Christ; for He now appears when the ego is experienced as in former ages He was revealed in the Sun. He who was once the Sun Spirit is now the pillar and support of the ego.

With the fourth century, in that humanity which was gradually evolving out of the Graeco-Latin races, there began the need for Christ which at first could find satisfaction only through written or oral tradition. But today, especially for the more advanced members of humanity, this written and oral tradition has lost its power of conviction. Today, therefore, men must learn to find the Christ inwardly, even as a humanity of olden times found Him outwardly through the Sun and its light. It is important to understand the intermediate centuries during which the soul of man was independent but in a certain sense empty of content. When the soul looked out into the Universe while endowed with the power of the etheric body, it could not possibly perceive in the phenomena of the Heavens that mechanistic-mathematical system which subsequently became the Copernican system.

Everything was perceived in far closer union with the human being. And the result was not some arbitrary cosmic system abstracted entirely from the human being, but the system which then, already decadent, became known as the Ptolemaic.

But when the soul began no longer to be rooted in the cosmic ether with its own etheric body, a new mental attitude in man was gradually being prepared. And this mentality subsequently produced a science of the stars in which it was a matter of indifference whether man is related or is not related to the Heavens. The one and only tribute paid by this transformed mentality to ancient times was that men placed the starting-point of the new system in the Sun. Through Copernicus, the Sun was made the centre of the Universe – not of the spiritual but of the physical Universe. This indicates the existence of a dim feeling that once upon a time the Sun, with the Christ, was felt to be the centre of the Universe. We must not, as has gradually become the custom nowadays, study the external aspect of history only; we must also pay attention to the development of inner feelings, inner perceptiveness, in human beings.

If we really understand how to read Copernicus, in whom this element of feeling was obviously present, we realise that he did not merely calculate. He was aware of an urge to restore to the Sun something of the old glory. This inner impulse led him to the discovery of three laws, the third of which actually makes everything that is said in the first and second, questionable and uncertain. For Copernicus had formulated a third law, which subsequent astronomy, reducing everything to a mechanistic system, simply omitted. This was a law according to which the movement of the Earth around the Sun was by no means described in such absolute terms as it is today. For today, as I have often said, the whole matter is regarded as a simple fact of observation, as if one were to place a gigantic chair far out in cosmic space, view the Sun from there with the Earth circling around it. But the chair would have to be far out in cosmic space and sitting on it the pedant, observing the system from outside. This could not, of course, be regarded as a result of observation at all. Copernicus himself, if I may put it so, had a conscience in these matters not quite as stubborn or hardened as those who later on mechanised the whole structure of the Universe. Moreover he cited phenomena which indicate that this movement of the Earth around the Sun is not, after all, absolute and unconditional. But as I said, this third law was simply ignored and suppressed by later science. The scientists confined themselves to the first two laws – the rotation of the Earth on its own axis and around the Sun – thus obtaining a very simple system which in this form was gradually introduced into the

schools. Needless to say, there is no question here of raising opposition to the Copernician system. Its advent was a necessity in the course of evolution. But today the time has come when we must speak of these matters as I tried to do in the Course of lectures on Natural Science and Astronomy, given in Stuttgart. [4] I showed that we must think about these things quite differently from what is possible in the field of materialistic science today.

In Copernicus himself, in the whole conception of his system, there is still an element of feeling. After all, he did not wish to apply a purely mathematical system of co-ordinates to our solar system with the Sun at the centre. He wanted to give back to the Sun what had been taken away from it because men were no longer able to behold the Christ in the Sun.

Such things as these should show you how necessary it is to observe not only the external facts and the change in men's thinking in the course of history, but also the change in their feelings. This was especially striking when the mechanistic principle came decisively to the fore. In Copernicus, and notably in Kepler, these elements of feeling are still perceptible and in Newton very emphatically so. A few days ago in the lectures on science I explained how Newton subsequently became rather ill at ease with his mathematical natural philosophy. To begin with he had conceived of space as being permeated with purely mathematical-mechanistic forces, but later on, after reading through what he had written he became uneasy about such an abstract conception, and he thereupon declared that what he had thus posited as abstract space with the three abstract dimensions, was in reality the Sensorium Dei – the Sensorium of God. Newton had grown a little older. These ultra-mathematical ideas pricked his conscience and he now declared space to be the most important realm in the brain of God: the Sensorium.

It was not until later that men of knowledge were judged entirely as thinkers, the element of feeling being ignored altogether. But this ought not to have happened in the case of Newton, above all not in that of Leibnitz and the natural scientists of that time. And anyone who reads a life of Galileo will find on every page how human nature in its fullness was at all times active. Man as a thinking apparatus, feeding himself as such with the results of experiment and observation as any steam-engine is fed with coal, man as a thinking apparatus does not appear on the scene until a later time, and only then becomes the authoritative leader in science which is said to be free of a priori premises. And it is indeed free of a priori premises of true knowledge.

The soul is no longer the empty soul which it became in the fourth century of the Christian era. It is no longer empty for it has filled itself with a multitude of mathematical-mechanistic ideas. But to all this, something must be added: the inner light must be found within the ego, which in order to avoid speaking merely in a figurative or symbolic sense, we should call the Being who is the pillar and support of the soul.

And here we come to something that became more and more apparent in the course of the centuries and is strong today but is cast by men who have dulled their senses to sleep into the sub-conscious foundations of their souls. It is: the need for Christ. Only a spiritual knowledge, a knowledge of the spiritual Universe, can satisfy this need for Christ. A characteristic of our own age, the twentieth century, is the need for Christ and with it the inner effort of the soul to muster the power to find the Christ in the ego, or behind the ego, even as in past times He was found in the Sun.

The relation of men to the Sun Spirit in the Graeco-Latin epoch was in the state of evening twilight. For it was in the ancient Indian epoch that men beheld the Sun Spirit with full clarity of vision. We ourselves are living in an age when we should be aware of a dawn – the dawn of the true knowledge of Christ won by man's own forces. The ancient knowledge of the Sun Spirit which Julian the Apostate still wished to galvanise into new life, can no longer afford any satisfaction to mankind. Even the endeavours of Julian were in vain because of the march of evolution. But the epoch of the first four centuries of our era, when men did not know what to make of Christ and the following epoch when they already felt the need for Him but could satisfy this need only through written or oral tradition – these epochs must be followed by the new age in which there is understanding for words in the Gospel such as these: 'I have yet many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now.'

An age must come which understands what Christ meant when He said: 'I am with you always, even unto the end of earthly time.' For verily Christ is not dead; He is alive and He speaks not through the Gospels only. He speaks for the eye of Spirit, when the eye of Spirit opens again to the mysteries of man's existence. Then He is present at all times, speaks and reveals Himself. Truly it is a feeble humanity that will not strive for the time when men can be told what they could not be told two thousand years ago because they were not then able to bear it. As souls they were still in a condition which made it impossible for them to understand what Christ was

offering to humanity. Certainly, those immediately around Him could understand something of it. But the Gospel was given for all beings and the saying just quoted resounds through the whole world.

We must strive to promote a humanity which puts the living Christ in the place of mere tradition. But even without discrediting tradition, nothing could be more unchristian than repeatedly to declare that only what has actually been written down has validity, thus ignoring the revelation of Christ that comes from the spiritual world today, speaking to our thinking as it strives for illumination, to our feeling heart, and to the fullness of manhood in our will.



2 Living Knowledge of Nature

Source: <https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA220/English/Singles/19230120p02.html>

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In recent lectures we have been comparing man's relationship towards Nature, towards the whole world, in olden times with that existing in our time. I pointed out, for example, how very much more concrete and actual was man's experience of Nature in more ancient times, because his inner life was much more vivid. I showed how man used to perceive his thinking process as a kind of deposition of salt in his own organism — if I may express it somewhat crudely. When man thought, he had the feeling that something hardened in his own organism. He seemed to feel the thoughts shining through his being and was aware too of a kind of etheric-astral skeleton. The sight of a cubic crystal aroused in him feelings different from those evoked by a sharply pointed one. He experienced thoughts as a hardening process within himself. Willing was to him a fiery process, a process of warmth radiating inwards.

Because man possessed such definite and vivid feelings within his own being, he could also feel outer Nature more vividly and thereby also live more concretely within it. We might say that to-day man knows little more of his inner being than the reflections cast into it by the outer world. He knows these reflections as memories and he knows the feelings, the very abstract feelings, he experiences or has experienced in connection with them; but he has lost that vivid experience of his organism being irradiated, illumined and warmed through and through. At the present time man knows of his own inner being only as much as the doctor or the scientist can tell him. Actual inner experience of his own being has ceased. Since man's external knowledge corresponds exactly to his knowledge of his own inner world, and since of this latter he knows no more than the scientist or the doctor can tell him, then also his knowledge of the outer world remains equally abstract. He informs himself about the laws of Nature but these are abstract thoughts. A really sympathetic experience of Nature is only possible in an instinctive way, though it is one which cannot

be denied. Man has gradually lost knowledge of the elementary forces really working in Nature and therefore he is shut out from the rich life of Nature.

What has been preserved from former times concerning the life of Nature is now called myths and fairy tales. Certainly these myths and fairy tales express themselves in pictures, but the pictures point to something spiritual ruling in Nature. This is first of all an "elementary" spirituality expressed in indefinite outlines, but it is nevertheless spiritual, and when we penetrate through it we see a higher spirituality.

We might say that in former times man dealt not only with plants, stones, animals, but with the elementary spirits living in earth, water, air, fire, etc. When man lost himself, he also lost this experience of the Nature spirits.

A kind of dreamy resuscitation of these Nature spirits in human consciousness would not do, for it would lead to superstition. A new attitude towards Nature must lay hold of human consciousness. Man must be able to say to himself something like this: "Once upon a time men looked into themselves. They then had a lively experience of what went on within their own being. They thereby became acquainted with certain elementary spirits. When man turned his gaze inwards, those spirits began to speak to his heart and to give him that older, inner knowledge in the form of pictures which even to-day work upon us with elemental poetic force."

Those beings who were thus able to speak to man had their homes in the several human organs; for one lived as it were in the human brain, another in the human lungs, another in the human heart, etc. For man did not perceive his inner being in the way described by the anatomist to-day, he perceived it as living, active, elementary being. And when to-day with the science of initiation the path is sought to these beings, man experiences a very definite feeling about them. It seems to him that in olden times they used to speak to man through his own inner being, through each single part of this inner being. They were as if enclosed within the human skin. They inhabited the earth but they dwelt in man. They were within man, spoke to him, and gave him their knowledge. All man's knowledge of earthly existence came to him from within his own human skin.

With the development of humanity to freedom and independence these beings have lost their dwelling-place in man on the earth. They do not embody themselves in human flesh and human blood and therefore they

cannot inhabit the earth in the human way; but they are still within the domain of the earth, and together with man they must reach a certain earthly goal. This is only possible if man, as it were, pays back to them what he once received from them. Then with initiation science the path to vision of these beings is trodden, it is realised that these beings once cultivated and fostered human knowledge. Much of what man is, he owes to them, for they permeated his being in his former incarnations and through them man has become what he is to-day. But they do not possess physical eyes nor physical ears. Once they lived with man. Now having left him they remain in the domain of the earth. We should recognise that once upon a time they were our teachers. Now when they have grown old we must restore to them again what they once gave to us. But that is only possible in the present phase of evolution when we approach Nature in the spirit, when we seek in the beings in Nature not only that which the abstract intellectuality of the present day seeks, but that pictorial element which is not accessible to the dead judgment of the reason but only to the developed life of feeling.

When in spirituality, that is to say, from the spiritual world-conception of Anthroposophy, we seek this pictorial element, we meet with these beings again. They may be said to observe and listen to us immersing ourselves anthroposophically in Nature; in this way they receive something from us, whereas from the ordinary knowledge of physiology and anatomy they get nothing and even have to suffer frightful deprivation. They get nothing from the lectures on anatomy nor from the operating theatres, nothing from the chemical laboratories nor the experiments in physics. They seem to ask: "Has the earth become utterly empty? Has it become a desert waste? Have they left the earth, those men to whom we once gave all we possessed? Will they not now lead us again to the things of Nature, as they alone can do?"

The fact to be realised is that there are beings who are now waiting for us to unite with them — just as we unite with other human beings on a common ground of knowledge—so that they may share in our knowledge and our actions. When a man studies physics or chemistry in the ordinary way, he is ungrateful to the fostering beings who once made him what he is. For by the side of all that man now unfolds in his consciousness these beings must starve in the domain of the earth. And man will only develop gratitude for their kindly care when again he seeks the spirit in that which he can see with his eyes, hear with his ears, and grasp with his hands. For these beings are able to share with man the spirituality permeating the perceptions of the senses. But in what is grasped in a purely material way,

these beings are quite unable to participate. We human beings are only able to pay our debt of gratitude to these other beings when we really enter deeply into the content of Anthroposophy.

For instance, let us suppose that a man of the present day lays a fish on the table, or places a bird in a cage, and perceives it externally through his sense of sight. He is so egoistic in his knowledge that he stops at what he already perceives. Nor is it enough to picture the fish in the water or the bird in the air — this egoism only gives way when we see from the very form of the fish or of the bird, that the former is a creature of the water and by means of the water, and the latter a creature of the air and by means of the air. Let us imagine that we are observing flowing water not merely as a chemist to whom it is a chemical combination of hydrogen and oxygen, H₂O, but that we look at the water in its reality. Then perhaps we find fish in it; we find that these fish consist of a soft substance developed in remarkable way into breathing organs in front; and we find that they are surrounded by a bony structure which, on account of the water, remains soft, with a delicate jaw over which the flesh, the substance of the body is laid. This bodily substance may appear to us as if proceeding out of the water, from water into which fall the rays of the sun. If we are able to perceive the sun's rays falling into this water, shining through it and warming it, and the fish swimming towards the warm illumined water, then we begin to perceive how this sun-warmth tempered by the water, and this sunlight shining in the water come towards us. This warm illumined water, together with the rhythm of the breathing, lays the soft substance of the fish's body over the jaw, and when the fish faces me with his teeth, when he comes towards me with his covered jaws and his peculiarly formed head, I feel that with this fish the shining warm water also comes towards me. And then I feel how, on the other hand, some other formative force is active in the fins. I learn gradually to perceive in the fins of the tail (I will only briefly indicate this now) and in the other fins, a tempered light, a light so tempered as to produce a substance harder than the rest of the body. Thus I learn of gradually to recognise the reflection of the sun-element in all that the fish brings towards me in its head, and the reflection of the moon-element in its hardened fins; in short, I am able to place the fish in the whole water element.

Then I look at the bird. It is impossible for the bird to develop its head in water, by swimming towards or with the sun-warmed, sun-illumined water, for the bird is adapted to the air. I learn that there is effort in its breathing. Where the breathing is not supported by water working on the gills, it becomes an effort. I perceive how the sun shines through and warms the

air differently, and I become aware of the way in which the substance of the bird is pressed back from the bird's beak; I recognise that in the bird it is somewhat as if a man were to force back all the flesh that lies over his teeth thus making his jaw project. I recognise why the bird thrusts its beak towards me, whereas in the fish the jaw is held out more modestly clothed in bodily substance. I learn how the bird's head is a creation of the air, air which is everywhere filled with the warmth and light of the sun. I learn to perceive a big difference between the warm gleaming water which produces fish, and the warm illumined air which produces birds. I learn gradually to understand how, through this difference, the whole life of the bird becomes different. While the fins of the fish obtain their simple rays from the water, the bird's feathers obtain their barbs and barbules through the particular activity of the air, air that is filled with the light and warmth of the sun.

In this way I outgrow the ordinary crude view, and when the fish comes on to the table I am not too lazy to see the water as well, and when the bird is in the cage, to see the air with it. When I go further and do not limit myself to seeing the air round the bird only when it is flying in the air, but in its form I see and feel the formative element in the air, then that which lives in the forms and is filled with spirit awakens for me. In this way I learn to distinguish how differently the different animals live together with outer Nature, what a difference there is between a pachyderm, a thick-skinned animal such as a hippopotamus, and a soft-skinned animal such as a pig. I perceive that the hippopotamus has the tendency to expose his skin to the direct rays of the sun, while the pig continually withdraws his skin from the direct sunlight, preferring to withdraw into the shade. In short, I learn to recognise the particular action of Nature in each single being. My method is to pass from the several animals to the elements. I leave the path of the chemist who says that water consists of two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen! I leave the path of the physicist who tells us that air consists of oxygen and nitrogen. I pass over to concrete vision. I see the water filled with fish; I see the relationship between water and fish. To speak of water in its abstract character as hydrogen and oxygen is to be quite inadequate. In reality water, together with sun and moon, produces fish, and through the fish the elementary nature of the water speaks to my soul. To speak of the air as being a mixture of oxygen and nitrogen is too abstract — the air that is filled with light and permeated with warmth, that pushes back the flesh from the bird's beak, and that shapes the organs of breathing in fish and bird each in its own peculiar

way. Through fish and bird these elements express to me their own character. What riches are brought to the inner life by this approach to Nature, what poverty by the other!

Anthroposophical spiritual science gives us opportunities everywhere to speak of things in the way just described. For Anthroposophy has no wish to be received like the products of contemporary civilization; it desires to stimulate us to a new and special perception of the world.

If what has just been characterised were to be really felt, than a gathering of people into such a society as the Anthroposophical would make this society a reality. For then every member of this Anthroposophical Society would have a certain right to say: "I return thanks to the elementary beings who were once active in my human nature and really made me what I am. Once they dwelt within my skin and spoke to me through my organs; now they have lost that possibility. But when I gaze upon the single objects in the world in this way and see how each is fashioned out of the whole of Nature, when I take seriously the descriptions in Anthroposophy, then I speak in my soul a language which these beings can understand once more. I am able to be grateful to these spiritual beings."

This is what is meant when it is said that members of the Anthroposophical Society should not merely speak of spirit in general, — the pantheist also does that, — but should be conscious of being able to live again with the spirit. Then quite of itself there would enter into the Anthroposophical Society this "living in the spirit" with other men. And it would be realised that the Anthroposophical Society is in existence for the purpose of repaying the debt we owe to those beings who nurtured us and cherished us in ancient times; then would members become aware of the reality of the spirit ruling in the Anthroposophical Society. Many of the old feelings that still live on in tradition would disappear, and be replaced by the recognition that the Anthroposophical Society has a very definite task. Then would everything else develop and be understood in its relation to life. We may indeed point with a certain inner satisfaction to the fact that during the war, when the peoples of Europe were engaged in fighting against one another, seventeen nations were working together on this Building, which has now come to such a sad end. But the reality behind the Anthroposophical Society only emerges when the various nationalities are able to burst through the narrow limitations of nationality to real unity in

Anthroposophy; when behind the abstract form of the Anthroposophical Society we experience the true reality. But to this end very definite preparations are necessary.

There is a certain justification in the reproach made by the outside world against the Anthroposophists, that whereas much is said about spiritual progress there is little of it to be seen among individual Anthroposophists.

It is quite possible to make this spiritual progress; for the right reading of any one book gives this possibility. But to this end it is necessary that the content of our last lecture (Truth Beauty and Goodness, Dornach, 19.01.1923) should be taken seriously: — that the physical body is built up rightly through truthfulness, the etheric body through the sense of beauty, and the astral body through the feeling for goodness.

To speak first of truthfulness. The cultivation of truth should be a fundamental characteristic of all who really strive to unite in an Anthroposophical Society. It must first of all be acquired in life itself, and it must be something different for those who wish to develop gratitude to the beings who nurtured them in ancient times from what it is for the ignorant who prefer to remain in ignorance.

Those who do not wish to hear these things may be those who assimilate facts in accordance with their prejudices; when they desire it they may make false statements about an event or a man's character. But he who wishes to develop inner truthfulness may never go beyond what the facts of the outer world tell him. And, strictly speaking, he must always take care so to formulate his words that in respect to the outer world he only relates the facts which he has proved.

Only think how much it is the custom for people to-day to presuppose something that pleases them, and then to suppose that it is so! Anthroposophists must accustom themselves to separate all their prejudices from the true course of the facts and to describe only the pure facts. In this way Anthroposophists would of themselves act correctively in a world in which falsehood is only too often the custom.

Only think of all that is reported in the newspapers. The newspapers feel bound to report everything, no matter whether it can be proved or not. And then, when something is related, we often feel that no effort has been made to discover if the facts of the matter have been proved. If we point to this we often meet with the retort, "Why shouldn't it be true?" With such

an attitude as this we cannot acquire inner truthfulness. Anthroposophists especially should develop the capacity to describe events of the outer world in strictest accordance with the truth. Were this aim to be followed in the civilised world of the present day it would have a very remarkable result. If, through some miracle, it were to happen that a number of people were forced to coin their words in such a way as to correspond exactly to the facts, there would be widespread silence. For modern talk seldom corresponds to proved facts, but arises from all manner of opinions and passions.

It is the truth that everything we add to the outer facts apparent to the senses, everything that does not correspond to the actual facts, obliterates within us the capacity for attaining higher knowledge.

It once happened that at a gathering of students of law a little scene was carefully prepared and enacted before about twenty people. Then these twenty people were asked to write an account of what they had seen. Of course it was known exactly what had been done, for each detail had been carefully studied beforehand. Twenty people had to write an account of it afterwards. Three described it fairly accurately, seventeen wrongly. That was in a gathering of law students, where but three managed to see a fact correctly! When at the present time we listen to twenty people describing one after another something they are supposed to have seen, what they describe does not as a rule correspond in the least to the facts. We shall leave out of account altogether unusual experiences. For it has indeed happened in the fever of war that a man has taken the evening star shimmering through a cloud to be an enemy aeroplane. Certainly, such a thing may happen in a time of excitement; it is an obvious mistake. But even in everyday life great mistakes are constantly being made in regard to little things.

The growth of anthroposophical life depends upon men really acquiring this sense for the facts; it depends upon men training themselves gradually to acquire this sense for the facts, so that having observed the actual course of an outer occurrence, they do not paint in ghosts in addition when describing it afterwards. We need only read the newspapers to-day! Spectres have, of course, been done away with, but reports given in the newspapers as reliable news, are in reality nothing but spectres, phantoms of the worst kind. And the stories people relate are very often phantoms too. The first and most elementary thing we require for the ascent into the

higher world is the acquisition of the sense for actual fact in the outer world. In this way only do we develop what is described in our last lecture [1] as truthfulness.

And the real feeling for beauty, as I tried to describe it vividly in my lecture, is developed in no other way than by beginning to observe the objects and beings in the world more closely, — by noticing why the bird has a beak, why the fish has that remarkable formation in front, in which a delicate jaw is hidden, etc., etc. Only by really learning to share in the life of Nature do we acquire the sense for beauty.

But it is impossible to gain a spiritual truth without a certain measure of goodness, of a sense of goodness. For man must be capable of a deep interest in his fellow men — as I was saying, morality only begins when a man feels in his own astral body the sorrows which cause the lines of care on his neighbour's brow. This is where morality begins; otherwise it is only an imitation of conventional rules or customs. What is described in my "Philosophy of Spiritual Activity" as moral action, is connected with this sympathetic experience in one's own astral body of the furrow of care, or the wrinkle caused by the smile on the countenance of another. Without this submersion of one's soul in the being of the other, it is impossible to develop the sense for the true life of the spirit.

It would therefore be an excellent foundation for the development of spirituality to have an Anthroposophical Society which is a reality, one in which each member so confronts another that he really experiences in himself that devotion to Anthroposophy felt by the other; and if the present all too human failings were not carried into the Anthroposophical Society. If the Anthroposophical Society were really a new creation whose members recognise one another as Anthroposophists — then indeed the Anthroposophical Society would be true reality. It would then be impossible for cliques and their like to appear in this society, or antipathy to a person on account of such a thing as the shape of his nose. These things which are customary in external life have entered to a large extent into the Society. In a real Anthroposophical Society personal relationships would have for their foundation mutual spiritual experiences. But the first step is the development of the sense for truth in regard to facts — which fundamentally means absolute accuracy — responsibility for one's own utterances and faithful and exact reports of the words of others.

This sense for truth is one thing. The second is the sense for the recognition of the real place of each being in the world of which it is a part — to perceive the water with the fish, the air with the bird, and then further to the sense for the understanding of our fellow men. For the sense for goodness, which is this sympathetic experience of what interests another and lives in his soul, is the third thing. Then would the Anthroposophical Society be a place where an endeavour is made towards the gradual development of the physical body, the etheric body and the astral body, each in accordance with its own purposes and its own nature. Then there would be a real beginning towards something that I have had to characterise again and again. The Anthroposophical Society should not be a society that merely enrolls new members by giving each a card bearing his name and a number; it should be something that is really permeated by a common spirituality containing within itself at least the power to increase in strength and to surpass other forms of spirituality, so that at length it would mean more spiritually to a man that he should be an anthroposophist than that he should be Russian, English or German. Then only is unity really achieved.

At the present time the historic element is not yet considered essential. But it is the task of man in our time to come to the realisation of his place in history and to know that the Christian principle of universal humanity must be taken seriously: otherwise the earth loses its purpose and its inner significance. We may start by thinking of the elementary spiritual beings who long ago nurtured and fostered our human nature and remembering them with gratitude. These beings, during the last few centuries, have lost their connection with man in the civilised world of Europe and America. Man must again learn to feel gratitude towards the spiritual world. We can only arrive at the right social conditions on the earth by developing feelings of deep gratitude and love towards the beings of the spiritual world, feelings which can be present when we acquire knowledge of these beings. Then, too, feelings between man and man will change. They will be quite different from the present attitude which has had its origin in earlier conditions and has developed during recent centuries. For to-day man really regards every other human being more or less as a stranger and only himself as of importance. Yet in reality he does not know himself at all! Though he does not acknowledge it he can really only say: "Oh, I like myself best of all." If asked: "What is it in you that you like best of all?" he could only reply, "well, I must leave that to the scientist or the doctor to explain." But unconsciously, in his feelings, man really lives only in himself.

This attitude is just the opposite of what an Anthroposophical Society can give.

We must first of all realise that man must come out of himself, that the peculiarities of other men, — at least to some extent, — must interest him just as much as his own. Without this an Anthroposophical Society cannot exist. Members may be received into the Society, and, by means of rules, they may continue to hold together for a time; but that is not reality. Realities do not arise through accepting members and these members having cards on which it is stated that they are Anthroposophists. Realities never arise through anything that is written or printed, but through that which lives. The written or printed word only counts when it is an expression of life. If it is an expression of life, then a reality exists; but if what is written and printed is merely written and printed matter, the significance of which is determined by convention, then it is a corpse. For the moment I write something down I "moult" my thoughts. We know what "moulting" means; when a bird casts its feathers something dead is thrown off. When something is written down, that is a kind of "moulting". At the present time people are only too ready to "moult" their thoughts. They desire to express everything in writing. But it would be very difficult for a bird, if it had just moulted, to moult again at once. If someone were to try to make a canary moult again when it had just moulted, he would have to make imitation feathers for the purpose. Such is the case to-day. Because people only want to have dead moulted thoughts we are really no longer dealing with realities but with counterfeit realities. What men produce are chiefly imitations of reality. It is enough to drive one to despair to measure these against genuine reality. It is no longer the human being, the man, who is speaking but the government official or the solicitor or the barrister. Abstract categories speak — the "young lady", or the Dutchman or the Russian. What we must strive for is that the "man" shall speak, and not the Privy Councillor, the member of the government board, the Russian, the German, the Frenchman nor the Englishman. But first of all there must be the "man" there. But a man does not really become man so long as he only knows himself. The remarkable thing is, that just as we cannot breathe the air which we ourselves produce, neither can we live out the human being who fills our own skin, whom we feel within ourselves. We cannot breathe the air we ourselves produce; neither can we really live the human being we produce within ourselves. Our social relationships are not determined by ourselves, but by the character of others — and through what we experience in common with them. That is true humanity; that is true human life! Were we to desire to live what we produce only within ourselves, that would be the same as deciding to breathe into a vessel in

order to breathe over again the same air we have ourselves produced, instead of breathing the outer air. In that case, as the physical is not as merciful as the spiritual, we should very soon die. But if a man continually breathes only what he himself experiences as a man, he also dies; though he does not know that he has died psychically, or at least spiritually.

What is really needed is that the Anthroposophical Society or Movement should, as I recently said: "Stichel!" (Wake up!) In a recent lecture I said that this anthroposophical life should be an awakening. And at the same time it must be a continual avoidance of inner death, a continual appeal to the vitality of the psychic life. In this way, the Anthroposophical Society would of itself be a reality through the inner force of the spiritual and psychic life.



3

Fall and Redemption

Source: <https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA220/English/Singles/19230121p01.html>

21 January 1923, Dornach

You have seen from these lectures that I feel duty bound to speak at this time about a consciousness that must be attained if we are to accomplish one of the tasks of the Anthroposophical Society. And to begin with today, let me point to the fact that this consciousness can only be acquired if the whole task of culture and civilization is really understood today from the spiritual-scientific point of view. I have taken the most varied opportunities to try, from this point of view, to characterize what is meant by the fall of man, to which all religions refer. The religions speak of this fall of man as lying at the starting point of the historical development of mankind; and in various ways through the years we have seen how this fall of man — which I do not need to characterize in more detail today — is an expression of something that once occurred in the course of human evolution: man's becoming independent of the divine spiritual powers that guided him.

We know in fact that the consciousness of this independence first arose as the consciousness soul appeared in human evolution in the first half of the fifteenth century. We have spoken again and again in recent lectures about this point in time. But basically the whole human evolution depicted in myths and history is a kind of preparation for this significant moment of growing awareness of our freedom and independence.

This moment is a preparation for the fact that earthly humanity is meant to acquire a decision-making ability that is independent of the divine spiritual powers. And so the religions point to a cosmic-earthly event that replaces the soul-spiritual instincts — which alone were determinative in what humanity did in very early times — with just this kind of human decision making. As I said, we do not want to speak in more detail about this now, but the religions did see the matter in this way: With respect to his moral impulses the human being has placed himself in a certain opposition to his guiding spiritual powers, to the Yahweh or Jehovah powers, let us say, speaking in Old Testament terms. If we look at this

interpretation, therefore, we can present the matter as though, from a definite point in his evolution, man no longer felt that divine spiritual powers were active in him and that now he himself was active.

Consequently, with respect to his overall moral view of himself, man felt that he was sinful and that he would have been incapable of falling into sin if he had remained in his old state, in a state of instinctive guidance by divine spiritual powers. Whereas he would then have remained sinless, incapable of sinning, like a mere creature of nature, he now became capable of sinning through this independence from the divine spiritual powers. And then there arose in humanity this consciousness of sin: As a human being I am sinless only when I find my way back again to the divine spiritual powers. What I myself decide for myself is sinful *per se*, and I can attain a sinless state only by finding my way back again: to the divine spiritual powers.

This consciousness of sin then arose most strongly in the Middle Ages. And then human intellectuality, which previously had not yet been a separate faculty, began to develop. And so, in a certain way, what man developed as his intellect, as an intellectual content, also became infected — in a certain sense rightly — with this consciousness of sin. It is only that one did not *say* to oneself that the intellect, arising in human evolution since the third or fourth century A.D., was also now infected by the consciousness of sin. In the Scholastic wisdom of the Middle Ages, there evolved, to begin with, an 'unobserved' consciousness of sin in the intellect.

This Scholastic wisdom of the Middle Ages said to itself: No matter how effectively one may develop the intellect as a human being, one can still only grasp outer physical nature with it. Through mere intellect one can at best *prove* that divine spiritual powers exist; but one can know nothing of these divine spiritual powers; one can only have *faith* in these divine spiritual powers. One can have faith in what they themselves have revealed either through the Old or the New Testament.

So the human being, who earlier had felt himself to be sinful in his moral life — 'sinful' meaning separated from the divine spiritual powers — this human being, who had always felt *morally* sinful, now in his Scholastic wisdom felt himself to be *intellectually* sinful, as it were. He attributed to himself an intellectual ability that was effective only in the physical, sense-perceptible world. He said to himself: As a human being I am too base to be able to ascent through my own power into those regions of knowledge where I can also grasp the spirit.

We do not notice how connected this intellectual fall of man is to his general moral fall. But what plays into our view of human intellectuality is the direct continuation of his moral fall.

When the Scholastic wisdom passes over then into the modern scientific view of the world, the connection with the old moral fall of man is completely forgotten. And, as I have often emphasized, the strong connection actually present between modern natural-scientific concepts and the old Scholasticism is in fact denied altogether. In modern natural science one states that man has limits to his knowledge, that he must be content to extend his view of things only out upon the sense-perceptible physical world. A Dubois-Reymond, for example, and others state that the human being has limits to what he can investigate, has limits to his whole thinking, in fact.

But that is a direct continuation of Scholasticism. The only difference is that Scholasticism believed that because the human intellect is limited, one must raise oneself to something different from the intellect — to revelation, in fact — when one wants to know something about the spiritual world.

The modern natural-scientific view takes half, not the whole; it lets revelation stay where it is, but then places itself completely upon a standpoint that is possible only if one presupposes revelation. This standpoint is that the human ability to know is too base to ascend into the divine spiritual worlds.

But at the time of Scholasticism, especially at the high point of Scholasticism in the middle of the Middle Ages, the same attitude of soul was not present as that of today. One assumed then that when the human being used his intellect he could gain knowledge of the sense-perceptible world; and he sensed that he still experienced something of a flowing together of himself with the sense-perceptible world when he employed his intellect. And one believed then that if one wanted to know something about the spiritual one must ascend to revelation, which in fact could no longer be understood, i.e., could no longer be grasped intellectually. But the fact remained unnoticed — and this is where we must direct *our* attention! — that spirituality flowed into the concepts that the Schoolmen, set up about the sense world. The concepts of the Schoolmen were not as unspiritual as ours are today. The Schoolmen still approached the human being with the concepts that they formed for themselves about nature, so that the human being was not yet completely excluded from knowledge. For, at least in the Realist stream, the Schoolmen totally believed that

thoughts are given us from outside, that they are not fabricated from within. Today we believe that thoughts are not given from outside but are fabricated from within. Through this fact we have gradually arrived at a point in our evolution where we have dropped everything that does not relate to the outer sense world.

And, you see, the Darwinian theory of evolution is the final consequence of this dropping of everything unrelated to the outer sense world. Goethe made a beginning for a real evolutionary teaching that extended as far as man. When you take up his writing in this direction, you will see that he only stumbled when he tried to take up the human being. He wrote excellent botanical studies. He wrote many correct things about animals. But something always went wrong when he tried to take up the human being. The intellect that is trained only upon the sense world is not adequate to the study of man. Precisely Goethe shows this to a high degree. Even Goethe can say nothing about the human being. His teaching on metamorphosis does not extend as far as the human being. You know how, within the anthroposophical world view, we have had to broaden this teaching on metamorphosis, entirely in a Goethean sense, but going much further.

What has modern intellectualism actually achieved in natural science? It has only come as far as grasping the evolution of animals up to the apes, and then added on the human being without being able inwardly to encompass him. The closer people came to the higher animals, so to speak, the less able their concepts became to grasp anything. And it is absolutely untrue to say, for example, that they even understand the higher animals. They only believe that they understand them.

And so our understanding of the human being gradually dropped completely out of our understanding of the world, because understanding dropped out of our concepts. Our concepts became less and less spiritual, and the unspiritual concepts that regard the human being as the mere endpoint of the animal kingdom represent the content of all our thinking today. These concepts are already instilled into our children in the early grades, and our inability to look at the essential being of man thus becomes part of the general culture.

Now you know that I once attempted to grasp the whole matter of knowledge at another point. This was when I wrote *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* and its prelude *Truth and Science* although the first references are present already in my *The Science of Knowing: Outline of an*

Epistemology Implicit in the Goethean World View written in the 1880's. I tried to turn the matter in a completely different direction. I tried to show what the modern person can raise himself to, when — not in a traditional sense, but out of free inner activity — he attains pure thinking, when he, attains this pure, willed thinking which is something positive and real, when this thinking works in him. And in *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* I sought, in fact, to find our moral impulses in this purified thinking.

So that our evolution proceeded formerly in such a way that we more and more viewed man as being too base to act morally, and we extended this baseness also into our intellectuality.

Expressing this graphically, one could say: The human being developed in such a way that what he knew about himself became less and less substantial. It grew thinner and thinner (light color). But below the surface, something continued to develop (red) that lives, not in abstract thinking, but in real thinking.



("rot" translates "red")

Now, at the end of the 19th century, we had arrived at the point of no longer noticing at all what I have drawn here in red; and through what I have drawn here in a light color, we no longer believed ourselves connected with anything of a divine spiritual nature. Man's consciousness of sin had torn him out of the divine spiritual element; the historical forces that were emerging could not take him back. But with *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* I wanted to say: Just look for once into the depths of the human soul and you will find that something has remained with us: pure thinking, namely, the real, energetic thinking that originates from man himself, that is no longer mere thinking, that is filled with experience, filled with feeling, and that ultimately expresses itself in the will. I wanted to say that this thinking can become the impulse for moral action. And for this

reason I spoke of the moral intuition which is the ultimate outcome of what otherwise is only moral imagination. But what is actually intended by *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* can become really alive only if we can reverse the path that we took as we split ourselves off more and more from the divine spiritual content of the world, split ourselves off all the way down to intellectuality. When we again find the spirituality in nature, then we will also find the human being again.

I therefore once expressed in a lecture that I held many years ago in Mannheim that mankind, in fact, in its present development, is on the point of reversing the fall of man. What I said was hardly noticed, but consisted in the following: The fall of man was understood to be a moral fall, which ultimately influenced the intellect also. The intellect felt itself to be at the limits of its knowledge. And it is basically one and the same thing — only in a somewhat different form — if the old theology speaks of sin or if Dubois-Reymond speaks of the limits of our ability to know nature. I indicated how one must grasp the spiritual — which, to be sure, has been filtered down into pure thinking — and how, from there, one can reverse the fall of man. I showed how, through spiritualizing the intellect, one can work one's way back up to the divine spiritual.

Whereas in earlier ages one pointed to the moral fall of man and thought about the development of mankind in terms of this moral fall of man, we today must think about an ideal of mankind: about the rectifying of the fall of man along a path of the spiritualization of our knowing activity, along a path of knowing the spiritual content of the world again. Through the moral fall of man, the human being distanced himself from the gods. Through the *path of knowledge* he must find again the pathway of the gods. Man must turn his descent into an ascent. Out of the purely grasped spirit of his own being, man must understand, with inner energy and power, the goal, the ideal, of again taking the fall of man seriously. For, the fall of man should be taken seriously. It extends right into what natural science says today. We must find the courage to add to the fall of man, through the power of our knowing activity, a raising of man out of sin. We must find the courage to work out a way to raise ourselves out of sin, using what can come to us through a real and genuine spiritual-scientific knowledge of modern times.

One could say, therefore: If we look back into the development of mankind, we see that human consciousness posits a fall of man at the beginning of the historical development of mankind on earth. But the fall must be made right again at some point: It must be opposed by a raising

of man. And this raising of man can only go forth out of the age of the consciousness soul. In our day, therefore, the historic moment has arrived when the highest ideal of mankind must be the *spiritual raising of ourselves out of sin*. Without this, the development of mankind can proceed no further.

That is what I once discussed in that lecture in Mannheim. I said that, in modern times, especially in natural-scientific views, an intellectual fall of man has occurred, in addition to the moral fall of man. And this intellectual fall is the great historical sign that a spiritual raising of man must begin.

But what does this spiritual raising of man mean? It means nothing other, in fact, than really understanding Christ. Those who still understood something about him, who had not — like modern theology — lost Christ completely, said of Christ that he came to earth, that he incarnated into an earthly body as a being of a higher kind. They took up what was proclaimed about Christ in written traditions. They spoke, in fact, about the mystery of Golgotha.

Today the time has come when Christ must be understood. But we resist this understanding of Christ, and the form this resistance takes is extraordinarily characteristic. You see, if even a spark of what Christ really is still lived in those who say that they understand Christ, what would happen? They would have to be clear about the fact that Christ, as a heavenly being, descended to earth; he therefore did not speak to man in an earthly language, but in a heavenly one. We must therefore make an effort to understand him. We must make an effort to speak a cosmic, extraterrestrial language. That means that we must not limit our knowledge merely to the earth, for, the earth was in fact a new land for Christ. We must extend our knowledge out into the cosmos. We must learn to understand the *elements*. We must learn to understand the *movements of the planets*. We must learn to understand the *star constellations*, and their influence on what happens on earth. Then we draw near to the language that Christ spoke.

That is something, however, that coincides with our spiritual raising of man. For why was man reduced to understanding only what lives on earth? Because he was conscious of sin, in fact, because he considered himself too base to be able to grasp the world in its extraterrestrial spirituality. And that is actually why people speak as though man can know nothing except the earthly. I characterized this yesterday by saying: We understand a fish only in a bowl, and a bird only in a cage. Certainly there is no

consciousness present in our civilized natural science that the human being can raise himself above this purely earthly knowledge; for, this science mocks any effort to go beyond the earthly. If one even begins to speak about the stars, the terrible mockery sets in right away, as a matter of course, from the natural-scientific side.

If we want to hear correct statements about the relation of man to the animals, we must already turn our eye to the extraterrestrial world, for only the plants are still explainable in earthly terms; the animals are not. Therefore I had to say earlier that we do not even understand the apes correctly, that we can no longer explain the animals. If one wants to understand the animals, one must take recourse to the extraterrestrial, for the animals are ruled by forces that are extraterrestrial. I showed you this yesterday with respect to the fish. I told you how moon and sun forces work into the water and shape him out of the water, if I may put it so. And in the same way, the bird out of the air. As soon as one turns to the elements, one also meets the extraterrestrial. The whole animal world is explainable in terms of the extraterrestrial. And even more so the human being. But when one begins to speak of the extraterrestrial, then the mockery sets in at once.

The courage to speak again about the extraterrestrial must grow within a truly spiritual-scientific view; for, to be a spiritual scientist today is actually more a matter of courage than of intellectuality. Basically it is a moral issue, because what must be opposed is something moral: the moral fall of man, in fact.

And so we must say that we must in fact first learn the language of Christ, the language *ton ouranon*, the language of the heavens, in Greek terms. We must relearn this language in order to make sense out of what Christ wanted to do on earth.

Whereas up till now one has spoken about Christianity and described the history of Christianity, the point now is to understand Christ, to understand him as an extraterrestrial being. And that is identical with what we can call the ideal of raising ourselves from sin.

Now, to be sure, there is something very problematical about formulating this ideal, for you know in fact that the consciousness of sin once made people humble. But in modern times they are hardly ever humble. Often those who think themselves the most humble are the most proud of all. The greatest pride today is evident in those who strive for a so-called

'simplicity' in life. They set themselves above everything that is sought by the humble soul that lifts itself inwardly to real, spiritual truths, and they say: Everything must be sought in utter simplicity. Such naive natures — and they also regard themselves as naive natures — are often the most proud of all today. But nevertheless, during the time of real consciousness of sin there once were humble people; humility was still regarded as something that mattered in human affairs. And so, without justification, pride has arisen. Why? Yes, I can answer that in the same words I used here recently. Why has pride arisen? It has arisen because one has not heard the words "Huckle, get up!" [From the Oberufer Christmas plays.] One simply fell asleep. Whereas earlier one felt oneself, with full intensity and *wakefulness*, to be a sinner, one now fell into a gentle sleep and only dreamed still of a consciousness of sin. Formerly one was awake in one's consciousness of sin; one said to oneself: Man is sinful if he does not undertake actions that will again bring him onto the path to the divine spiritual powers. One was awake then. One may have different views about this today, but the fact is that one was awake in one's acknowledgment of sinfulness. But then one dozed off, and the dreams arrived, and the dreams murmured: Causality rules in the world; one event always causes the following one. And so finally we pursue what we see in the starry heavens as attraction and repulsion of the heavenly bodies; we take this all the way down into the molecule; and then we imagine a kind of little cosmos of molecules and atoms.

And the dreaming went further. And then the dream concluded by saying: We can know nothing except what outer sense experience gives us. And it was labeled 'supernaturalism' if anyone went beyond sense experiences. But where supernaturalism begins, science ends.

And then, at gatherings of natural scientists, these dreams were delivered in croaking tirades like Dubois-Reymond's *Limits of Knowledge*. And then, when the dream's last notes were sounded — a dream does not always resound so agreeably; sometimes it is a real nightmare — when the dream concluded with "Where supernaturalism begins, science ends," then not only the speaker but the whole natural-scientific public sank down from the dream into blessed sleep. One no longer needed any inner impulse for active inner knowledge. One could console oneself by accepting that there are limits, in fact, to what we can know about nature, and that we cannot transcend these limits. The time had arrived when one could now say: "Huckle, get up! The sky is cracking!" But our modern civilization replies:

"Let it crack! It's old enough to have cracked before!" Yes, this is how things really are. We have arrived at a total sleepiness, in our knowing activity.

But into this sleepiness there must sound what is now being declared by spiritual-scientific anthroposophical knowledge. To begin with, there must arise in knowledge the realization that man is in a position to set up the ideal within himself that we can raise ourselves from sin. And that in turn is connected with the fact that along with a possible waking up, pride — which up till now has only been present, to be sure, in a dreamlike way — will grow more than ever. And (I say this of course without making any insinuations) it has sometimes been the case that in anthroposophical circles the raising of man has not yet come to full fruition. Sometimes, in fact, this pride has reached — I will not say a respectable — a quite unrespectable size. For, it simply lies in human nature for pride to flourish rather than the positive side.

And so, along with the recognition that the raising of man is a necessity, we must also see that we now need to take up into ourselves in full consciousness the training in humility which we once exercised. And we can do that. For, when pride arises out of knowledge, that is always a sign that something in one's knowledge is indeed terribly wrong. For when knowledge is truly present, it makes one humble in a completely natural way. It is out of pride that one sets up a program of reform today, when in some social movement, let's say, or in the woman's movement one knows ahead of time what is possible, right, necessary, and best, and then sets up a program, point by point. One knows everything about the matter. One does not think of oneself at all as proud when each person declares himself to know it all. But in true knowledge, one remains pretty humble, for one knows that true knowledge is acquired only in the course of time, to use a trivial expression.

If one lives in knowledge, one knows, with what difficulty — sometimes over decades — one has attained the simplest truths. There, quite inwardly through the matter itself, one does not become proud. But nevertheless, because a full consciousness is being demanded precisely of the Anthroposophical Society for humanity's great ideal today of raising ourselves from sin, watchfulness — not Hucklism, but watchfulness — must also be awakened against any pride that might arise.

We need today a strong inclination to truly grasp the essential being of knowledge so that, by virtue of a few anthroposophical catchwords like 'physical body,' 'etheric body,' 'reincarnation,' et cetera, we do not immediately become paragons of pride. This watchfulness with respect to ordinary pride must really be cultivated as a new moral content. This must be taken up into our meditation. For if the raising of man is actually to occur, then the experiences we have with the physical world must lead us over into the spiritual world. For, these experiences must lead us to offer ourselves devotedly, with the innermost powers of our soul. They must not lead us, however, to dictate program truths. Above all, they must penetrate into a feeling of responsibility for every single word that one utters about the spiritual world. Then the striving must reign to truly carry up into the realm of spiritual knowledge the truthfulness that, to begin with, one acquired for oneself in dealing with external, sense-perceptible facts. Whoever has not accustomed himself to remaining with the facts in the physical sense world and to basing himself upon them also does not accustom himself to truthfulness when speaking about the spirit. For in the spiritual world, one can no longer accustom oneself to truthfulness; one must bring it with one.

But you see, on the one hand today, due to the state of consciousness in our civilization, facts are hardly taken into account, and, on the other hand, science simply suppresses those facts that lead onto the right path. Let us take just one out of many such facts: There are insects that are themselves vegetarian when fully grown. They eat no meat, not even other insects. When the mother insect is ready to lay her fertilized eggs, she lays them into the body of another insect, that is then filled with the eggs that the insect mother has inserted into it. The eggs are now in a separate insect. Now the eggs do not hatch out into mature adults, but as little worms. But at first they are in the other insect. These little worms, that will only later metamorphose into adult insects, are not vegetarian. They could not be vegetarian. They must devour the flesh of the other insect. Only when they emerge and transform themselves are they able to do without the flesh of other insects. Picture that: the insect mother is herself a vegetarian. She knows nothing in her consciousness about eating meat, but she lays her eggs for the next generation into another insect. And furthermore; if these insects were now, for example, to eat away the stomach of the host insect, they would soon have nothing more to eat, because the host insect would die. If they ate away any vital organ, the insect could not live. So what do these insects do when they hatch out? They avoid all the vital organs and

eat only what the host insect can do without and still live. Then, when these little insects mature, they crawl out, become vegetarian, and proceed to do what their mother did.

Yes, one must acknowledge that intelligence holds sway in nature. And if you really study nature, you can find this intelligence holding sway everywhere. And you will then think more humbly about your own intelligence, for first of all, it is not as great as the intelligence ruling in nature, and secondly, it is only like a little bit of water that one has drawn from a lake and put into a water jug. The human being, in fact, is just such a water jug, that has drawn intelligence from nature. Intelligence is everywhere in nature; everything, everywhere is wisdom. A person who ascribes intelligence exclusively to himself is about as clever as someone who declares: You're saying that there is water out there in the lake or in the brook? Nonsense! There is no water in them. Only in my jug is there any water. The jug created the water.

So, the human being thinks that he creates intelligence, whereas he only draws intelligence from the universal sea of intelligence.

It is necessary, therefore, to truly keep our eye on the facts of nature. But facts are left out when the Darwinian theory is promoted, when today's materialistic views are being formulated; for, the facts contradict the modern materialistic view at every point. Therefore one suppresses these facts. One recounts them, to be sure, but actually aside from science, anecdotally. Therefore they do not gain the validity in our general education that they must have. And so one not only does not truly present the facts that one has, but adds a further dishonesty by leaving out the decisive facts, i.e., by suppressing them.

But if the raising of man is to be accomplished, then we must educate ourselves in truthfulness in the sense world first of all and then carry this education, this habitude, with us into the spiritual world. Then we will also be able to be truthful in the spiritual world. Otherwise we will tell people the most unbelievable stories about the spiritual world. If we are accustomed in the physical world to being imprecise, untrue, and inexact, then we will recount nothing but untruths about the spiritual world.

. You see, if one grasps in this way the ideal whose reality can become conscious to the Anthroposophical Society, and if what arises from this consciousness becomes a force in our Society, then, even in people who wish us the worst, the opinion that the Anthroposophical Society could be a

sect will disappear. Now of course our opponents will say all kinds of things that are untrue. But as long as we are giving cause for what they say, it cannot be a matter of indifference to us whether their statements are true or not.

Now, through its very nature, the Anthroposophical Society has thoroughly worked its way out of the sectarianism in which it certainly was caught up at first, especially while it was still connected to the Theosophical Society. It is only that many members to this day have not noticed this fact and love sectarianism. And so it has come about that even older anthroposophical members who were beside themselves when the Anthroposophical Society was transformed from a sectarian one into one that was conscious of its world task, even those who were beside themselves have quite recently gone aside again. The Movement for Religious Renewal, when it follows its essential nature, may be ever so far removed from sectarianism. But this Movement for Religious Renewal has given even a number of older anthroposophists cause to say to themselves: Yes, the sectarian element is being eradicated more and more from the Anthroposophical Society. But we can cultivate it again here! And so precisely through anthroposophists, the Movement for Religious Renewal is being turned into the crassest sectarianism, which truly does not need to be the case.

One can see how, therefore, if the Anthroposophical Society wants to become a reality, we must positively develop the courage to raise ourselves again into the spiritual world. Then art and religion will flourish in the Anthroposophical Society. Although for now even our artistic forms have been taken from us [through the burning of the Goetheanum building on the night of December 31, 1922], these forms live on, in fact, in the being of the anthroposophical movement itself and must continually be found again, and ever again.

In the same way, a true religious deepening lives in those who find their way back into the spiritual world, who take seriously the raising of man. But what we must eradicate in ourselves is the inclination to sectarianism, for this inclination is always egotistical. It always wants to avoid the trouble of penetrating into the reality of the spirit and wants to settle for a mystical reveling that basically is an egotistical voluptuousness. And all the talk about the Anthroposophical Society becoming much too intellectual is actually based on the fact that those who say this want, indeed, to avoid the thoroughgoing experience of a spiritual content, and would much rather enjoy the egotistical voluptuousness of soulful reveling in a mystical,

nebulous indefiniteness. Selflessness is necessary for true anthroposophy. It is mere egotism of soul when this true anthroposophy is opposed by anthroposophical members themselves who then all the more drive anthroposophy into something sectarian that is only meant, in fact, to satisfy a voluptuousness of soul that is egotistical through and through.

You see those are the things, with respect to our tasks, to which we should turn our attention. By doing so, we lose nothing of the warmth, the artistic sense, or the religious inwardness of our anthroposophical striving. But *that* will be avoided which must be avoided: the inclination to sectarianism. And this inclination to sectarianism, even though it often arrived in a roundabout way through pure cliquishness, has brought so much into the Society that splits it apart. But cliquishness also arose in the anthroposophical movement only because of its kinship — a distant one to be sure — with the sectarian inclination. We must return to the cultivation of a certain world consciousness so that only our opponents, who mean to tell untruths, can still call the Anthroposophical Society a sect. We must arrive at the point of being able to strictly banish the sectarian character trait from the anthroposophical movement. But we should banish it in such a way that when something arises like the Movement for Religious Renewal, which is not meant to be sectarian, it is not gripped right away by sectarianism just because one can more easily give it a sectarian direction than one can the Anthroposophical Society itself.

Those are the things that we must think about keenly today. From the innermost being of anthroposophy, we must understand the extent to which anthroposophy can give us, not a sectarian consciousness, but rather a *world consciousness*. Therefore I had to speak these days precisely about the more intimate tasks of the Anthroposophical Society.



4 Man's Fall and Redemption

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26 January 1923, Dornach

In my last lectures, I spoke of man's fall into sin and of an ascent from sin. I spoke of this ascent as something that must arise in the present age from human consciousness in general, as a kind of ideal for man's striving and willing. I have pointed out the more formal aspect of the fall of man, as it appears in the present time, by showing how the fall of man influences intellectual life. What people say concerning the limitations of our knowledge of Nature, really arises from the view that man has no inner strength enabling him to reach the spiritual, and that he must therefore renounce all efforts that might lift him above earthly contemplation. I said that when people speak to-day of the limits of knowledge, this is only the modern intellectual interpretation of how man was cast down into sin; this was felt in older times and particularly during the Middle Ages. To-day I should like to speak more from a material aspect, in order to show that modern humanity cannot reach the goal of the evolution of the earth, if the views acquired in a more recent age — especially in the course of an intellectual development — do not change. Through the consciousness of sin, the general consciousness of to-day has, to a certain extent, suffered this very fall of man. Modern intellectualism already bears the marks of this fall and decay; indeed, the decay is so strong that, unless the intellectual civilisation of the present time changes, there is no hope of attaining mankind's goal in the evolution of the earth. To-day it is necessary to know that in the depths of the human soul forces are living that are, as it were, better than the present state of the consciousness of our civilisation. It is necessary to contemplate quite clearly the nature of the consciousness of our civilisation.

The consciousness of our civilisation arose, on the one hand, from a particular conception of the thinking human being, and, on the other hand, from a particular conception of the willing human being. To-day man uses his thinking chiefly in order to know as much as possible of the outer kingdoms of Nature, and to grasp human life with the methods of thinking

gained through the usual way of looking at Nature. To-day natural science teaches us to think, and we consider social life, too, in the light of this thinking, acquired through the natural sciences as they are known to-day.

Many people believe that this conception of the thinking human being, of man who observes Nature and thinks, is an unprejudiced conception. All kinds of things are mentioned that science is unprejudiced, and so on. But I have shown repeatedly that these arguments are not of much value. For, everything that a thinker applies when he is bent on his scientific investigations (according to which other people then arrange their life) has evolved from earlier ways of thinking. Modern thinking is the direct outcome of mediaeval thinking. I have pointed out already that even the arguments of the opponents of mediaeval thinking are thought out with the methods of thinking that have evolved from mediaeval thinking. An essential trait of mediaeval thinking which entered modern thinking is that the activity of thought is contemplated only in the form in which it is applied in the observation of the outer phenomena of Nature. The process of thinking is ignored altogether and there is no philosophy leading to the contemplation of thinking itself. No notice at all is taken of the process of thought and of its inner living force.

The reason for this lies in the considerations that I have already set forth. Once I said that a modern man's thoughts on Nature are really corpses, all our thoughts on the kingdoms of Nature are dead thoughts. The life of these thought corpses lies in man's pre-earthly existence. The thoughts that we form to-day on the kingdoms of Nature and on the life of man are dead while we are thinking them; they were endowed with life in our pre-earthly existence.

The abstract, lifeless thoughts that we form here on earth in accordance with modern habits of thinking were alive, were living elementary beings during our pre-earthly existence, before we descended to a physical incarnation on earth. Then, we lived in these thoughts as living beings, just as to-day we live in our blood. During our life on earth, these thoughts are dead and for this reason they are abstract. But our thinking is dead only as long as we apply it to Nature outside: as soon as we look into our own selves it appears to us as something living, for it continues working there, within us, in a way which remains concealed from the usual consciousness of to-day. There it continues to elaborate what existed during our pre-earthly life. The forces that seize our organism when we incarnate on earth, are the forces of these living thoughts. The force of these living, pre-earthly thoughts makes us grow and forms our organs. Thus, when the

philosophers of a theory of knowledge speak of thinking, they speak of a lifeless thinking. Were they to speak of the true nature of thinking; not of its corpse, they would realise the necessity of considering man's inner life. There they would discover that the force of thinking, which becomes active when a human being is born or conceived, is not complete in itself and independent, because this inner activity of thought is the continuation of the living force of a pre-earthly thinking.

Even when we observe the tiny child (I will not now consider the embryo in the mother's body) and its dreamy, slumbering life on earth, we can see the living force of pre-earthly thinking in its growth and even in its fretful tempers, provided we have eyes to see. Then we shall understand why the child slumbers dreamily and only begins to think later on. This is so, because in the beginning of its life, when the child does nothing but sleep and dream, thoughts take hold of its entire organism. When the organism gradually grows firmer and harder, the thoughts, no longer seize the earthly and watery elements in the organism, but only the air element and the fire or warmth element. Thus we may say that in the tiny child thought takes possession of all four elements. The later development of a child consists in this, that thought takes hold only of the elements of air and fire. When an adult thinks, his force of thinking is contained only in the continuation of the breathing process and of the process which spreads warmth throughout his body.

Thus the force of thinking abandons the firmer parts of the physical organism for the air-like, evanescent, imponderable parts of the body. Thus thinking became the independent element that it now is, and bears us through the life between birth and death. The continuation of the pre-earthly force of thinking asserts itself only when we are asleep, i.e. when the weaker force of thinking acquired on earth no longer works in the warmth and air of the body. Thus we may say that modern man will understand something of the true nature of thinking only if he really advances towards an inner contemplation of man, of himself. Any other theory of knowledge is quite abstract.

If we bear this in mind rightly we must say that whenever we contemplate the activity that forms thoughts and ideas, our gaze opens out into pre-earthly existence.

Mediaeval thinking, still possessing a certain amount of strength, was not allowed to enter pre-earthly existence. Man's pre-existence was declared dogmatically as a heresy. Something that is forced upon mankind for

centuries gradually becomes a habit. Think of the more recent evolution of humanity — take, for instance, the year 1413; people habitually refrained from allowing their thoughts to follow lines that might lead them to a pre-earthly existence, because they were not allowed to think of pre-earthly existence. People entirely lost the habit of directing their thoughts to a pre-earthly existence. If men had been allowed to think of pre-earthly life (they were forbidden this, up to 1413), evolution would have taken quite another direction. In this case we should very probably have seen this is a paradox, but it is true indeed we may say that undoubtedly we should have seen that when Darwinism arose in 1858, with its exterior theories on Nature's evolution, the thought of pre-earthly existence would have flashed up from all the kingdoms of Nature, as the result of a habit of thinking that took into consideration a pre-earthly existence. In the light of the knowledge of human pre-existence, another kind of natural science would have arisen. But men were no longer accustomed to consider pre-earthly life, and a science of Nature arose which considered man — as I have often set forth — as the last link in the chain of animal evolution. It could not reach a pre-earthly, individual life, because the animal has no pre-earthly, individual life.

Therefore we can say: When the intellectual age began to dawn, the old conception of the fall of mankind was responsible for the veto on all thoughts concerning pre-existence. Then science arose as the immediate offspring of this misunderstood fall of man. Our science is sinful, it is the direct outcome of the misunderstanding relating to the fall of man. This implies that the earth cannot reach the goal of its evolution as long as the natural sciences remain as they are; man would develop a consciousness that is not born of his union with a divine-spiritual origin, but of his separation from this divine-spiritual origin.

Hence present-day talk of the limitations of knowledge is not only a theoretical fact, for what is developing under the influence of intellectualism positively shows something that is pushing mankind below its level. Speaking in mediaeval terms, we should say that the natural sciences have gone to the devil.

Indeed, history speaks in a very peculiar way. When the natural sciences and their brilliant results arose (I do not mean to contest them to-day), those who still possessed some feeling for the true nature of man were afraid that natural science might lead them to the devil. The fear of that time — a last remnant of which can be seen in Faust, when he says farewell to the Bible and turns to Nature — consisted in this, that man

might approach a knowledge of Nature under the sign of man's fall and not under the sign of an ascent from sin. The root of the matter really lies far deeper than one generally thinks. Whereas in the early Middle Ages there were all kinds of traditions consisting in the fear that the devilish poodle might stick to the heels of the scientist, mankind has now become sleepy, and does not even think of these matters.

This is the material aspect of the question. The view that there are limits to a knowledge of Nature is not only a theory; the fall and decay of mankind, due to its fall in the intellectual-empirical sphere, indeed exists to-day.

If this were not so, we should not have our modern theory of evolution. Normal methods of research would show, *reality* would show the following: There are, let us say, fish, lower mammals, higher mammals, man. To-day, this represents more or less the straight line of evolution. But the facts do not show this at all. You will find, along this whole line of evolution, that the facts do not coincide.

Marvels are revealed by a real scientific investigation of Nature; what scientists say about Nature is not true. For, if we consider the facts without any prejudice we obtain the following: Man, higher mammals, lower mammals, fish. (Of course, I am omitting details.) Thus we descend from man to the higher mammals, the lower mammals, etc. until we reach the source of origin of all, where everything is spiritual, and in the further evolution of man we can see that his origin is in the spirit. Gradually man assumed a higher spirituality. The lower beings, also, have their origin in the spirit, but they have not assumed a higher spirituality. Facts show us this.

Man
Higher Mammals
Lower Mammals
Fish.

Correct views of these facts could have been gained if human habits of thinking had not obeyed the veto on belief in pre-existence or pre-earthly life. Then, for instance, a mind like Darwin could not possibly have reached

the conclusions set forth above; he would have reached other conclusions deriving from habits of thought, not from necessities dictated by scientific investigation.

Goethe's theory of metamorphosis could thus have been continued in a straight line. I have always pointed out to you that Goethe was unable to develop his theory of metamorphosis. If you observe with an unprejudiced mind how matters stood with Goethe, you will find that he was unable to continue. He observed the plant in its development and found the primordial plant (Urpflanze). Then he approached the human being and tried to study the metamorphosis of the human bones. But he came to a standstill and could not go on.

If you peruse Goethe's writings on the morphology of the human bony system you will see that, on the one hand, his ideas are full of genius. The cleft skull of a sheep which he found on the Lido in Venice, showed him that the skull-bones are transformed vertebrae, but he could not develop his idea further than this.

I have drawn your attention to some notes that I found in the Goethe-Archives when I was staying at Weimar. In these notes Goethe says that the entire human brain is a transformed spinal ganglion. Again, he left it at this point. These notes are jotted down in pencil in a note-book and the last pencil-marks plainly show Goethe's discontent and his wish to go further. But scientific research was not advanced enough for this. To-day it is advanced enough and has reached long ago the point of facing this problem. When we contemplate the human being, even in his earliest embryonic stages, we find that the form of the present skull-bones cannot possibly have evolved from the vertebrae of the spine. This is quite out of the question. Anyone who knows something of modern embryology argues as follows: what we see in man to-day, does not justify the statement that the skull-bones are transformed vertebrae. For this reason we can indeed say that when Gegenbauer investigated this matter once more at a later date, results proved that as far as the skull-bones and especially the facial bones were concerned, matters stood quite differently from what Goethe had assumed.

But if we know that the present shape of the skull-bones leads us back to the bones of the body of the preceding incarnation, we can understand this metamorphosis. Exterior morphology itself then leads us into the teaching of repeated lives on earth. This lies in a straight line with Goethe's theory of metamorphosis. But the stream of evolution that finally led to Darwin

and still rules official science, cannot advance as far as truth. For the misunderstood fall of man has ruined thinking and has caused its decay. The question is far more serious than one is inclined to imagine to-day.

We must realise that the consciousness of mankind has changed in the course of time. For instance, we may describe something as beautiful. But if we ask a philosopher of today to explain what beauty is (for he should know something about these things, should he not?), we shall receive the most incredibly abstract explanation. "Beautiful" is a word which we sometimes use rightly, instinctively, out of our feeling. But modern man has not the slightest notion of what, for instance, a Greek imagined when he spoke of the beautiful, in his meaning of the word. We do not even know what the Greek meant by "Cosmos." For him it was something quite concrete. Take our word "Universe." What a confused jumble of thoughts it contains! When the Greek spoke of the Cosmos, this word held within it something beautiful, decorative, adorning, artistic. The Greek knew that when he spoke of the whole universe he could not do otherwise than characterise it with the idea of beauty. Cosmos does not only mean Universe — it means Nature's order of laws which has become universal beauty. This lies in the word "Cosmos."

When the Greek saw before him a beautiful work of art, or when he wished to mould the form of a human being, how did he set to work? By forming it in beauty. Even in Plato's definitions we can feel what the Greek meant when he wished to form the human being artistically. The expression that Plato used means more or less the following: "Here on earth man is not at all what he should be. He comes from heaven and I have so portrayed his form that men may see in it his heavenly origin." The Greek imagined man in his beauty, as if he had just descended from heaven, where of course, his exterior form does not resemble that of ordinary human beings. Here on earth human beings do not look as if they had just descended from heaven. Their form shows everywhere the Cain-mark, the mark of man's fall. This is the Greek conception. In our age, when we have forgotten man's connection with a pre-earthly, heavenly existence, we may not even think of such a thing.

Thus we may say that "beautiful" meant for the Greek that which reveals its heavenly meaning. In this way the idea of beauty becomes concrete. For us today it is abstract. In fact, there has been an interesting dispute between two authorities on aesthetics — the so-called "V" Vischer (because he spelt his name with a "V"), the Swabian Vischer, a very clever man, who wrote an important book on aesthetics (important, in the meaning of our

age), and the formalist Robert Zimmermann, who wrote another book on aesthetics. The former, V-Vischer defines beauty as the manifestation of the idea in sensible form. Zimmermann defines beauty as the concordance of the parts within the whole. He defines it therefore more according to form, Vischer more according to content.

These definitions are really all like the famous personage who drew himself up into the air by his own forelock. What is the meaning of the expression "the appearance of the idea in sensible form?" First we must know what is meant by "the idea." If the thought-corpse that humanity possesses as "idea" were to appear in physical shape, nothing would appear. But when we ask in the Greek sense: what is a beautiful human being? this does indeed signify something. A beautiful human being is one whose human shape is idealised to such an extent that it resembles a god. This is a beautiful man, in the Greek sense. The Greek definition has a meaning and gives us something concrete.

What really matters is that we should become aware of the change in the content of man's consciousness and in his soul-disposition in the course of time. Modern man believes that the Greek thought just as he thinks now. When people write the history of Greek philosophy — Zeller, for instance, who wrote an excellent history of Greek philosophy (excellent, in the meaning of our present age) — they write of Plato as if he had taught in the 19th century at the Berlin University, like Zeller himself, and not at the Platonic Academy. When we have really grasped this concretely, we see how impossible it is, for obviously Plato could not have taught at the Berlin University in the 19th century. Yet all that tradition relates of Plato is changed into conceptions of the 19th century, and people do not realise that they must transport their whole disposition of soul into an entirely different age, if they really wish to understand Plato.

If we acquire for ourselves a consciousness of the development of man's soul-disposition, we shall no longer think it an absurdity to say: In reality, human beings have fallen completely into sin, as far as their thoughts about external Nature and man himself are concerned.

Here we must remember something which people today never bear in mind — indeed, something which they may even look upon as a distorted idea. We must remember that the theoretical knowledge of to-day, which has become popular and which rules in every head even in the farthest

corner of the world and in the remotest villages, contains something that can only be redeemed through the Christ. Christianity must first be understood in this sphere.

If we were to approach a modern scientist, expecting him to understand that his thinking must be saved by the Christ, he would probably put his hands to his head and say: "The deed of Christ may have an influence on a great many things in the world, but we cannot admit that it took place in order to redeem man from the fall into sin on the part of natural science." Even when theologians write scientific books (there are numerous examples in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one on ants, another on the brain, etc., and in most cases these books are excellent, better than those of the scientists, because the style is more readable), these books also breathe out, even more strongly, the need of taking a true Christology seriously. This means that particularly in the intellectual sphere we need a true ascent from sin, which must work against man's fall.

Thus we see that intellectualism has been contaminated by what has arisen out of the misunderstandings relating to the consciousness of sin — not out of the *Fall* as such, but from the misunderstandings with regard to the consciousness of sin. This consciousness of sin, which can be misunderstood so easily, must place the Christ in the centre of the evolution of the earth, as a higher Being, and from this point it must find the way out from the Fall. This requires a deeper and more detailed study of human evolution, also in the spiritual sphere.

You see, if we study mediaeval scholasticism as it is usually studied to-day, let us say as far back as Augustine, we shall achieve nothing. Nothing can result, because nothing is seen except that the modern scientific consciousness continues to evolve. The higher things, extending beyond this, are ignored.

In this hall I once tried to give an account of mediaeval scholasticism, showing all the connections. I gave a short course of lectures on Thomism and all that is connected with it. But it is a painful fact, and one that is of little help to our anthroposophical movement, that such ideas are not taken up. The relationship between the brilliant scientific conditions of to-day and the new impulse which must enter science is not sought. If this is not sought, then our scientific laboratories, which have cost so much real sacrifice, will remain unfruitful.

For these, progress would best be achieved by taking up such ideas and by avoiding futile discussions on atomism. In all spheres of fact, modern science has reached a point where it strives to cast aside the mass of sterile thoughts contained in modern scientific literature. Enough is known of the human being, anatomically and physiologically, to reach, by the right methods of thoughts, even such a bold conclusion as that of the metamorphosis of the form of the head from the bodily form of the preceding life. Naturally, if we cling to the material aspect, we shall not reach this point. Then we shall argue, very intelligently, that the bones must in this case remain physical matter, in order that they may undergo a gradual material metamorphosis in the grave! It is important to bear in mind that the material form is an external form and that it is the formative forces that undergo a metamorphosis.

On the one hand thinking has been fettered, because darkness has been thrown over pre-existence. On the other hand, we are concerned with post-existence, or the life after death. Life after death can be understood only with the aid of super-sensible knowledge. If super-sensible knowledge is rejected, life after death remains an article of faith, accepted purely on the ground of authority. A real understanding of the process of thinking leads to a pre-existent life, provided such thoughts are not forbidden. A knowledge of post-existent life can, however, only be acquired through super-sensible knowledge. Here the method described in my "[Knowledge of the Higher Worlds](#)" must be introduced. But this method is rejected by the consciousness of our times.

Thus two influences are at work: on the one hand, the continued effects of the decree prohibiting thought on man's pre-existence; on the other hand, the rejection of super-sensible knowledge. If both continue to work, the super-sensible world will remain an unexplored region, inaccessible to knowledge, i.e. it will remain an article of faith, and Christianity, too, will remain a matter of faith, not of knowledge. And Science, that claims the name of "science," will not allow itself to have anything to do with the Christ. Thus we have our present-day conditions.

At the beginning of to-day's considerations, I said, with regard to the consciousness that is filled to-day with intellectualism, that humanity has slipped entirely into the consequences of the Fall. If this persists, humanity will be unable to raise itself. This means that it will not reach the goal of the evolution of the Earth. Modern science makes it impossible to reach the goal of the evolution of the Earth. Nevertheless, the depths of the human soul are still untouched: If man appeals to these soul-depths and develops

super-sensible knowledge in the spirit of the Christ-impulse he will attain redemption once more, even in the intellectual sphere redemption from the intellectual forces, that have fallen — if I may express it in this way — into sin.

Consequently, the first thing which is needed is to realise that intellectual and empirical scientific research must become permeated with spirituality. But this spirituality cannot reach man as long as the content of space is investigated merely according to its spatial relationships, and the events taking place in the course of time are investigated merely in their chronological sequence.

If you study the shape of the human head, especially with regard to its bony structure, and compare it with the remainder of the skeleton (skull-bones compared to cylindrical bones, vertebrae and ribs) you will obtain no result whatever. You must go beyond time and space, to conceptions formed in spiritual science, for these grasp the human being as he passes from one earthly life to another. Then you will realise that to-day we may look upon the human skull-bones as transformed vertebrae. But the vertebrae of the present skeleton of a human being can never change into skull-bones in the sphere of earthly existence. They must first decay and become spiritual, in order to change into skull-bones in the next life on earth.

An instinctively intuitive mind like Goethe's sees in the skull-bones the metamorphosis of vertebrae. But spiritual science is needed in order to pursue this intuitive vision as far as the domain of facts. Goethe's theory of metamorphosis acquires significance only in the light of spiritual science. For this reason it could not satisfy even Goethe. This is why a knowledge gained through anthroposophical science is the only one that can bring man into a right relationship to the Fall and the re-ascent from sin. For this reason too, anthroposophical ideas are to-day something which seeks to enter into human evolution not only in the form of thoughts but as the content of life.



5 Realism and Nominalism

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The spiritual life of the Middle Ages, from which the modern one derives, is essentially contained — as far as Europe is concerned — in what we call Scholasticism, that Scholasticism of which I have repeatedly spoken. At the height of the scholastic age two directions can be distinguished: Realism and Nominalism.

If we take the meaning of the word Realism, as it is often understood today, we do not grasp at once what was meant by medieval scholastic Realism. It was not called Realism because it approved only of the outer sense-reality and considered everything else an illusion; quite the contrary was the case — it was called Realism because it considered man's ideas on the things and processes of the world as something *real*, whereas Nominalism considered these ideas as mere names which signified nothing real.

Let us look at this matter quite clearly. In earlier days I explained the conceptions of Realism, by using the arguments of my old friend, Vincenz Knauer. Vincenz Knauer held that people who consider only the outer sense-reality, or that which can be found in the world as material substance, will not be able to understand what takes place, for instance, in the case of a caged wolf, which is fed exclusively on lamb's flesh for a long time. After a certain time the wolf has changed his old substance; this would consist entirely of lamb's flesh and in reality the wolf should turn into a lamb, if its substance is now lamb's substance! But this does not happen, for the wolf remains a wolf — that is, the material aspect does not matter; what matters is the *form*, which consists of the same substance in the lamb's case and in the wolf's case. We discover the difference between lamb and wolf because we gain a conception of the lamb and a conception of the wolf. But when someone says that ideas and conceptions are nothing at all, and that the material aspect of things is the only one that matters, then there should be no difference between lamb and wolf as far

as the material substance is concerned, for this has passed over from the lamb into the wolf! If an idea really means nothing at all, the wolf should become a lamb if it keeps on eating lamb's flesh.

This induced Vincenz Knauer, who was a Realist in the medieval scholastic sense, to form the following conception: — What matters, is the form in which the substance is coordinated; this is the idea, or the concept. Also the medieval scholastic Realists were of this opinion. They said that ideas and concepts were something *real*, and that is why they called themselves *Realists*.

Their radical opponents were the Nominalists. They argued that there is nothing outside sense-reality, and that ideas and concepts are mere names through which we grasp the outer things of sense-reality.

We might adopt the following argument: — Let us take Nominalism and then Realism, such as we find it, for instance, in Thomas Aquinas, or in other scholastic philosophers; if we contemplate these two spiritual currents in quite an abstract way, their contrast will not be very evident. We might look upon them as two different human aspects. In the present day we are satisfied with such things because we are no longer kindled and warmed by what is expressed in these spiritual currents. But these things contain something very important. Let us take the Realists who argued that ideas and conceptions — that is, forms taken up by the sensory substance — are realities. The scholastic philosophers already considered ideas and thoughts as something abstract, but they called these abstractions a reality, because they were the result of earlier conceptions, far more concrete and essential.

In earlier ages, people did not merely look at the *idea* "wolf", but at the real group-soul "wolf", living in the spiritual world. This was a real being. But scholastic philosophers had subtilized this real being of an earlier age into the abstract idea. Nevertheless, the realistic scholastic philosophers still felt that, the idea does not contain a nothingness, but a reality. This reality indeed descended from earlier quite real beings, but people were then still aware of this descendancy or progeny. In the same way the ideas of Plato (which were far more alive and essentially endowed with Being than the medieval scholastic ideas) were the descendants of the ancient Persian Archangeloi-Beings, who lived and operated in the universe as Anschaspans. They were very real beings. For Plato they had grown more dim, and for the medieval scholastic philosophers they had grown abstract. This was the last stage of the old clairvoyance. Of course, medieval realistic

scholasticism was no longer based upon clairvoyance, but what it had preserved traditionally, as its real ideas and conceptions, living in the stones, in the plants, in animals and in physical man, was still considered as something spiritual, although this spirituality was very thin indeed. When the age of abstraction or of intellectualism approached, the Nominalists discovered that they were not able to connect anything real with thoughts and ideas. For them these were mere names, coined for the convenience of man.

Medieval scholastic Realism, let us say, of a Thomas Aquinas, has not found a continuation in the more modern world conception, for man no longer considers ideas and thoughts as something real. If we were to ask people whether they considered thoughts and ideas as something real, we would only obtain an answer by placing the question somewhat differently. For instance, by asking someone who is firmly rooted in modern culture: — "Would you be satisfied if, after your death, you were to continue living merely as a thought or an idea?" In this case he would surely feel very unreal after death! This was not so for the realistic scholastic philosophers. For them, thoughts and ideas were real to such an extent, that they could not conceive that, as a mere thought or idea, they might lose themselves in the universe, after death. But as stated, this medieval scholastic Realism was not continued. In a modern world conception, everything consists of Nominalism. Nominalism has gained the upper hand more and more. And modern man (he does not know this, because he does not concern himself any more about such ideas) is a Nominalist in the widest meaning.

This has a certain deeper significance. One might say that the very passage from Realism to Nominalism — or better, the victory of Nominalism in our modern civilization — signifies that humanity has become completely powerless in regard to the grasping of the spiritual. For, naturally, just as the name "Smith" has nothing to do with the person standing before us, who is somehow called "Smith", so have the ideas "wolf", "lion", conceived as mere *names*, no meaning whatever as far as reality is concerned. The passage from Realism to Nominalism expresses the entire process of the loss of spirit in our modern civilization. Take the following instance, and you will see that the entire meaning is lost as soon as Realism loses its meaning.

If I still find real ideas in the stone, in the plant, in the animals, and in physical man — or better still, if I find in them the ideas as realities — I can place the following question: — Is it possible that the thoughts that live in stones and plants, were once the thoughts of the Divine Being who

created stones and plants? But if I see in thoughts and ideas mere names which man gives to stones and plants, I cut myself off from the Divine Being, and can no longer take it for granted that during the act of cognition I somehow enter in connection with the Divine Being.

If I am a scholastic Realist, I argue as follows: — I plunge into the mineral world, into the vegetable world and into the animal world; I form thoughts on quartz, sulphide of mercury and malachite. I form thoughts on the wolf, the hyena and the lion. I derive these from what I perceive through my senses. If these thoughts are something which a god originally placed into the stones and plants and animals, then my thoughts follow the divine thoughts. That is, in my thinking I create a link with the divinity.

If I stand on the earth as a forlorn human being, and perhaps imitate to some extent the lion's roar in the word "lion", I myself give the lion this name; then, however, my knowledge contains no connection whatever with the divine spiritual creator of the beings. This implies that modern humanity has lost the capacity of finding something spiritual in Nature; the last trace of this was lost with scholastic Realism.

If we go back to the days in which men still had an insight into the true nature of such things through atavistic clairvoyance, we will find that the ancient Mysteries consisted more or less in the following conception: the Mysteries saw in all things a creative productive principle, which was looked upon as the "Father-principle". When a human being proceeded from what his senses could perceive to the super-sensible, he really felt that he was proceeding to the divine Father-principle.

Only when scholastic Realism lost its meaning, it became possible to speak of atheism within the European civilization. For it was impossible to speak of atheism as long as people still found real thoughts in the things around them. There were already atheists among the Greeks; but they were not real atheists like the modern ones. Their atheism was not clearly defined. But it must also be said that in Greece we often find the first flashes of lightning, as if from an elementary human emotion, precursory of things which found their real justification during a later stage of human evolution. The actual theoretical atheism only arose when Realism, scholastic Realism, decayed.

However, this scholastic Realism continued to live in the divine, Father-principle, although the Mystery of Golgotha was enacted thirteen or fourteen centuries ago.

But the Mystery of Golgotha — I have often spoken of this — could really be grasped only through the knowledge of an older age. For this reason, those who wished to grasp the Mystery of Golgotha through what remained from the ancient Mystery wisdom of God the Father, looked upon the Christ merely as the Son of the Father.

Please consider carefully the thought which we shall form now. Imagine that someone tells you something concerning a person called Miller; you are only told that he is the son of the old Miller. Hence, the only thing you know about him is that he is the son of Miller. You wish to know more about him from the person who has told you this. But he keeps on telling you: — The old Miller is such and such a person, and he describes all kinds of qualities and concludes by saying — and the young Miller is his son. It was more or less the same when people spoke of the Mystery of Golgotha according to the ancient Father-principle. Nature was characterized in such a way that people said — the divine creative Father-principle lives in Nature, and Christ is the Son. Essentially, even the strongest Realists could not characterize the Christ otherwise than by saying that he was the Son of the Father. This is an essential point.

Then came a kind of reaction to all these forms of thought adhering to the stream which came from the Mystery of Golgotha, but which grasped it according to the Father-principle. As a kind of counter-stream, came all that which asserted itself as the evangelic principle, as protestantism, etc., during the passage from medieval life to modern life. A chief quality among all the qualities of this evangelization, or protestantism, is this that more importance was given to the fact that people wished to see the Christ in his own being. They did not base themselves on the old theology which considered the Christ only as the Son of the Father, according to the Father-principle, but they searched the Gospels in order to know the Christ as an independent Being, from the description of his deeds and the communication of the words of Christ. Really, this is what lies at the foundation of the Wycliffe and Comenius currents in German protestantism: — to consider the Christ as an independent Being.

However, the time for a spiritual way of looking at things had passed. Nominalism took hold of all minds and people were no longer able to find in the Gospels the divine spiritual being of the Christ. Modern theology lost this divine spiritual more and more. As I have often said, theologians looked upon the Christ as the "meek man of Nazareth". Indeed, if you take Harnach's book — "The Essence of Christianity", you will find that it contains a relapse; for in this book a modern theologian again describes

the Christ very much after the Father-principle. In Harnach's book, the "Essence of Christianity", we could substitute the word "Christ" wherever we read the word "God-Father" — this would make no great difference.

As long as the "wisdom of the Father" considered the Christ as the Son of God, people possessed in a certain sense a way of thinking which had a direct bearing on reality. However, when they wished to understand the Christ himself, in his divine spiritual being, the spiritual conception was already lost. They did not approach the Christ at all. For instance, the following case is very interesting (I do not know if many of you have noted it): — when one of those who wished at first to take part in the movement for a religious renewal, — but he did not take part in the end —, when the chief pastor of Nuremberg, Geyer, once held a lecture in Basle, he confessed openly that modern protestant theologians did not possess Christ — but only a universal God. This is what Geyer said, because he honestly confessed that people indeed spoke of the Christ, but the Father-principle was in reality the only thing that remained to them. This is connected with the fact that the human being who still looks at Nature spiritually (for he brings the spirit with him at birth) can only find the Father-principle in Nature. But since the decay of scholastic Realism he cannot even find this. Not even the Father-principle can be found, and atheistic opinions arose.

If we do not wish to remain by the description of the Christ, as being merely the Son of God, and wish instead to grasp this Son in his own nature, then we must not consider ourselves merely such as we are through birth; we must instead experience, during earthly life itself, a kind of inner awakening, no matter how weak this may be. We must pass through the following facts of consciousness and say to ourselves: — if you remain such as you were through birth, and see Nature merely through your eyes and your other senses and then consider Nature with your intellect, you are not a full human being, you cannot feel yourself fully as a human being. First you must awaken something in you which lies deeper still. You cannot be content with what you bring with you at birth. You must instead bring forth again in full consciousness what lies buried in greater depths.

One might say, that if we educate a human being only according to his innate capacities, we do not really educate him to be a complete human being. A child will grow into a full human being only if we teach him to look for something in the depths of his being, something he brings to the surface as an inner light, which is kindled during life on earth. Why is it so?

Because the Christ who has gone through the Mystery of Golgotha, and is connected with earthly life, dwells in the depths of man. If we undertake this new awakening, we find the living Christ, who does not enter the usual consciousness which we bring with us at birth, and the consciousness that develops out of this innate consciousness. The Christ must be raised out of the depths` of the soul. The consciousness of Christ must arise in the life of the soul, then we shall really be able to say what I have often mentioned: — If we do not find the Father, we are not healthy, but are born with certain deficiencies. If we are atheists, this implies to a certain extent, that our bodies are ill. All atheists are physically ill to a certain extent. If we do not find the Christ, this is destiny and not illness, because it is an *experience* to find the Christ, not a mere observation. We find the Father-principle by observing what we ought to see in Nature. But we find the Christ, when we experience resurrection. The Christ enters this experience of resurrection as an independent Being, not merely as the Son of the Father. Then we learn to know that if we keep merely to the Father, in our quality of modern human beings, we cannot feel ourselves as complete human beings. The Father sent the Son to the earth in order that the Son might fulfill his works on earth. Can you not feel how the Christ becomes an independent being in the fulfillment of the Father's works?

In the present time, Spiritual Science alone enables us to understand the entire process of resurrection — to understand it practically, as an experience. Spiritual Science wishes to bring these very experiences to conscious knowledge out of the depths of the soul; they bring light into the Christ-experience.

Thus we may say, that with the end of scholastic Realism, it was no longer possible to grasp the principle of the Father-wisdom. Anthroposophical Realism, or that kind of Realism which again considers the spirit as something real, will at last be able to see the Son as an independent Being and to look upon the Christ as a Being perfect in itself. This will enable us to find in Christ the divine spiritual, in an independent way.

You see, this Father-principle really played the greatest imaginable part in older times. The theology which developed out of the ancient Mystery-wisdom was really interested only in the Father-principle. What kind of thoughts were predominant in the past? — Whether the Son is at one with the Father from all eternity, or whether he arose in Time and was born into Time. People thought about his descent from the Father. Consider the old history of dogmas; you will find throughout that the greatest value is

placed on the question of Christ's descent. When the Third Person of the Trinity, the Spirit, was considered, people asked themselves whether the Spirit proceeded from the Father, with the Son or through the Son, etc. The problem was always connected with the genealogy of these three Godly Persons — that is, with what is connected with descent, and can be comprised in the Father-principle. During the strife between scholastic Realism and scholastic Nominalism, these old ideas of the Spirit's descent from the Father and from the Son were no longer understood. For you see, now they were *three* Persons. These three Persons who represent Godly Persons, were supposed to form one Godhead. The Realists comprised these three Godly Persons in one idea. For them, the idea was something real, hence the one God was something real for their knowledge. The Nominalists could not very well understand the Three Persons of the one God — consisting of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. When they summarized this Godhead, they obtained a mere word, or name. Thus the three Godly Persons became separate Persons for them, and the time in which scholastic Realism strove against scholastic Nominalism was also the time in which no real idea could be formed concerning this Godly Trinity. A living conception of the Godly Trinity was lost.

When Nominalism gained the upper hand, people understood nothing more of similar ideas, and took up the old ideas according to this or to that traditional belief; they were unable to form any real thought. And when the Christ came more to the fore in the protestant faith — although his divine spiritual being could no longer be grasped, because Nominalism prevailed — it was quite impossible to have any idea at all concerning the Three Persons. The old dogma of the Trinity was scattered.

The things had a great significance for mankind in the age when spiritual feelings were predominant, and played a great part in the human souls for their happiness and unhappiness. These things were pushed completely in the background during the age of modern narrow-mindedness. Are modern people interested in the connection between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, unless the problem happens to enter into theological quarrels? Modern man thinks that he is a good Christian, yet he does not worry about the relationships of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He cannot understand at all that once this was one of mankind's burning soul-problems. He has grown narrow-minded, and for this reason we can term the age of Nominalism the narrow-minded age of European civilization, for narrow-minded people have no real feeling for the spiritual, that continually rouses the soul. These kinds of people live only in their habits. It is not possible to live entirely without spirit, yet the narrow-minded people would like to live without any

spirit at all — get up without the spirit — breakfast without the spirit — go to the office without the spirit — lunch without the spirit — play billiards in the afternoon without the spirit — in fact they would like to do everything without the spirit! Nevertheless the spirit permeates the whole of life, but narrow-minded people do not bother about this — it does not interest them.

Hence we may argue: Anthroposophy should therefore strive to maintain the Universal-Divine. But it does not do this. It finds the divine-spiritual in God the Father; it also finds this divine-spiritual in God the Son. If we compare the conceptions of Anthroposophy with the earlier wisdom of the Father we will find more or less the following situation: — Please do not mind my using a somewhat trivial expression, but I should like to say, that, as far as Christ was concerned, the wisdom of the Father asked above all — "Who was his Father? Let us find out who his Father was and then we shall know him." Anthroposophy is, of course, placed into modern life, and in working out natural sciences it should of course continue the wisdom of the Father. But Anthroposophy works out the wisdom of the Christ and begins with the Christ. Anthroposophy studies, if I may use this expression, history, and finds in history a descending evolution. It finds the Mystery of Golgotha and from thence an ascending evolution. In the Mystery of Golgotha it finds the central point and meaning of the entire history of man on earth. When Anthroposophy studies Nature it calls the old Father-principle into new life, but when it studies history it finds the Christ. Now it has learned two things. It is just as if I were to travel into a city where I make the acquaintance of an older man; then I travel into another city and I learn to know a younger man. I become acquainted with the older and with the younger, each one for himself. At first they interest me, each one for himself. Afterwards I discover a certain likeness between them. I follow this up and find that the younger man is the son of the older one. In Anthroposophy it is just the same — it learns to know the Father, and later on it learns to know the connection between the two; whereas the ancient wisdom of the Father proceeded from the Father and learned to know the connection between Father and Son at the very outset.

You see, in regard to all things, Anthroposophy must really find a new way, and if we really wish to enter into Anthroposophy, it is necessary to change the way of thinking and of feeling in respect to most things. In Anthroposophy, it is not enough if anthroposophists consider on the one hand a more or less materialistic world conception, or a world conception based more or less on ancient traditional beliefs, and then pass on to Anthroposophy, because this appeals to them more than other teachings.

But they are mistaken. We must not only go from one conception to the other — from the materialistic monistic conception to the anthroposophical one — and then say that the latter is the best. Instead we must realize that what enables us to understand the monistic materialistic conception does not enable us to understand the anthroposophical conception. You see, theosophists believed that the understanding of the materialistic monistic conception enabled them also to understand the spiritual. For this reason we have the peculiar phenomenon that in the monistic materialistic world conception people argue as follows: — everything is matter; man consists only of matter — the material substance of the blood, of the nerves, etc.

Everything is matter. Theosophists — I mean the members of the Theosophical Society — say instead: — No, this is a materialistic view; there is the spirit. Now they begin to describe man according to the spirit: — the physical body which is dense, then the etheric body somewhat thinner, a kind of mist, a thin mist — these are in reality quite materialistic ideas! Now comes the astral body, again somewhat thinner, yet this is only a somewhat thin material substance, etc. This leads them up a ladder, yet they obtain merely a material substance that grows thinner and thinner. This too is a materialistic view. For the result is always "matter", even though this grows thinner and thinner. This is materialism, but people call it "spirit". Materialism at least is honest, and calls the matter "matter", whereas, in the other case, spiritual names are given to what people conceive materialistically.

When we look at spiritual images, we must realize that we cannot contemplate these in the same way as we contemplate physical images; a new way of thinking must be found.

Things become very interesting at a special point in the history of the Theosophical Society. Materialism speaks of atoms. These atoms were imagined in many ways and strong materialists, who took into consideration the material quality of the body, formed all kinds of ideas about these atoms. One of these materialists built up a Theory of Atoms and imagined the atom in a kind of oscillating condition, as if some fine material substance were spinning round in spirals.

If you study Leadbeater's ideas on atoms, you will find a great resemblance with this theory.

An essay which appeared recently in an English periodical discussed the question of whether Leadbeater's atom was actually "seen", or whether Leadbeater contented himself with reading the book on the Theory of Atoms and translating it into a "spiritual" language.

These things must be taken seriously. It matters very much that we should examine ourselves, in order to see if we still have materialistic tendencies and merely call them by all kinds of spiritual names. The essential point is to change our ways of thinking and of feeling — otherwise we cannot reach a really spiritual way of looking at things. This gives us an outlook, a perspective, that will help us to achieve the rise from sin as opposed to the fall into sin.



6 Concerning Electricity

Source: <https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA220/English/Singles/19230128p01.html>

28 January 1923, Dornach

The cultural ingredient that now permeates our whole external civilization began to rise to the surface at the turn of the 18th and 19th century. Think of the immense contrast between the present time and that time when a certain physicist prepared a frog's leg which accidentally came into contact with the window ... the frog's leg quivered, and so he discovered electricity! How long ago was that? — Less than 150 years ago, yet electricity is now a cultural ingredient. Indeed, it is far more than this! You see, when the men of my age were young fellows, not one of them dreamt of speaking of the atoms in the sphere of physics otherwise than of tiny, unelastic, or even elastic spheres colliding with one another, and so forth, and then they calculated the results of these collisions. At that time, no one would have dreamt of conceiving the atom without further ado in the way which we conceive of it today: namely, as an electron, as an entity consisting altogether of electricity.

Human thought has spun itself altogether into electricity, and this occurred not so very long ago. Today we speak of the atoms as if they were small suns, centres around which electricity accumulates; we speak of electrons. Thus we suspect electricity everywhere, when we penetrate into the world's mechanism. This is where our civilization so closely connects itself with a definite manner of thinking. If people would not travel on electric tramcars they would not think that the atoms are full of electricity.

If we now observe the connections that existed before the present age of electricity, we may say that they allowed the natural scientist of that time to imagine, at least abstractly, the spiritual in Nature. Although a tiny rest of scholastic realism remained, electricity then began to affect man's nerves, expelling from them everything that tended towards the spiritual.

Things went still further. Even light, the honest light that surges through the world's spaces, was gradually defamed and brought into the ill repute of resembling electricity! When we speak today, as I am speaking now,

then the people whose heads are deeply submerged in the electric wave of civilization necessarily believe that this is utter nonsense. But this is only due to the fact that the people whose heads consider such things as nonsense drag themselves along (like dogs whose tongues are hanging out because of the heat) with a load of history, a load of historical concepts on their backs, so that they cannot speak in an unprejudiced way, from out of the immediate present.

You see, when we speak of electricity, we enter a sphere that presents a different aspect to the imaginative vision than that of the other spheres of Nature. So long as man remained within the light, within the world of sound, that is to say, in the spheres of optics and acoustics, it was not necessary to judge morally that which appeared in a stone, a plant, or an animal, either as colours in the sphere of light, or as sound in the world of tones; it was not necessary to judge these things morally, because he still possessed an echo, weak though it was, of the reality of concepts and ideas. Electricity, however, drove out this echo. And if today we are, on the one hand, unable to discover a reality in the world of moral impulses, we are, on the other hand, even less able to discover a moral essence in that sphere which is now considered to be the most important constituent of Nature.

Today, if we were to ascribe a real power to moral impulses, if we were to say that they contain a force enabling them to become sensory reality in the same way in which a plant's seed becomes sensory reality, we would almost be looked upon as fools. And if someone were to come along today and ascribe moral impulses to the forces of Nature, he would be looked upon as a complete fool! But if you have ever allowed an electric current to pass through your nervous system, so as to experience it consciously with a genuine power of vision, you will realize that electricity in Nature is not merely a current but that electricity in Nature is, at the same time, a moral element. When we enter the sphere of electricity, we penetrate simultaneously into a moral sphere. If you connect your knuckle at any point with a closed current, you will immediately feel that your inner life extends to an inner sphere of your being, where the moral element comes to the surface, so that the electricity pertaining to the human being cannot be sought in any other sphere than that sphere which is also the source of the moral impulses. Those who can experience the whole extent of electricity, experience at the same time the moral element in Nature. Modern physicists have conjured and juggled about with electricity in a strange way, without the least suspicion. They imagine the atom as something electric, and through the general state of consciousness of the

present time, they forget that whenever they think of an atom as an electric entity, they must ascribe a moral impulse to this atom, indeed, to every atom. At the same time, they must raise it to the rank of a moral entity. ...But I am not speaking correctly ... for, in reality, when we transform an atom into an electron, we do not transform it into a moral, but into an IMMORAL entity! Electricity contains, to be sure, moral impulses, impulses of Nature, but these impulses are IMMORAL; they are instincts of evil, which must be overcome by the higher world.

The greatest contrast to electricity is LIGHT. If we look upon light as electricity we confuse good and evil. We lose sight of the true conception of evil in the order of Nature, if we do not realize that through the electrification of the atoms we transform them into carriers of evil; we do not only transform them into carriers of death, as explained in my last lecture, but into carriers of evil. When we think of them as atoms, in general, when we imagine matter in the form of atoms, we transform these atoms into carriers of death; but when we electrify matter, Nature is conceived as something evil. For electric atoms are little demons of Evil. This, however, does not tell us much. For it does not express the fact that the modern explanation of Nature set out along a path that really unites it with Evil. Those strange people at the end of the Middle Ages, who were so much afraid of Agrippa von Nettesheim, Trithem of Sponheim, and others, so that they saw them walking about with Faust's malevolent poodle, expressed this very clumsily, but although their thoughts may have been wrong, their feelings were not altogether wrong. For, when we listen to a modern physicist blandly explaining that Nature consists of electrons, we merely listen to him explaining that Nature really consists of little demons of Evil! And if we acknowledge Nature in this form, we raise Evil to the rank of the ruling world-divinity.

As modern men who do not proceed in accordance with old traditional ideas, but in accordance with reality, we would come across the fact that the electric element in Nature is endowed with morality in the same way in which moral impulses are endowed with life, with a life of Nature, so that, later on, they take on real shape, become a real world. In the same way in which the moral element one day acquires real shape in Nature, so the electric element once contained a moral reality. If we contemplate electricity today, we contemplate the images of a past moral reality that have turned into something evil.

If Anthroposophy were to adopt a fanatic attitude, if Anthroposophy were ascetic, it would thunder against the modern civilization based on electricity. Of course, this would be nonsense, for only world-conceptions that do not reckon with reality can speak in that way. They may say: "Oh, this is ahrimanic! Let us avoid it!" — But this can only be done in an abstract way. For the very people who thunder against Ahriman, and tell us to beware of him, go downstairs after their sectarian meeting and enter an electric tramcar! So that all their thundering against Ahriman, no matter how holy it may sound, is (excuse the trivial expression) simply rubbish. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that we must live with Ahriman. But we must live with him in the right way, that is to say, we must not allow him to have the upper hand.

The final scene of my first Mystery Play can show you what it means to lack consciousness in certain things. (See [The Portal of Initiation](#)) Read this final scene once more, and you will see that it is a different matter whether I lull myself in unconsciousness over a fact, or whether I grasp it consciously. Ahriman and Lucifer have the greatest power over us if we do not know anything about them, so that they can handle us, without our being aware of it. This is expressed in the final scene of my Mystery Play. The ahrimanic electricity can therefore overwhelm civilized man only so long as he blandly and unconsciously electrifies the atoms and thinks that this is quite harmless. But in so doing, he does not realize that he is imagining Nature as a complex of little demons of Evil.

When even the light is conceived of electrically, as has been done in a recent modern theory, then the qualities of Evil are attributed to the divinity of Good. It is really terrifying to see to what a great extent the modern contemplation of Nature has unawares become a "demonology," a worship of demons! We should realize this, for the essential thing is CONSCIOUSNESS: we live in the age of the consciousness-soul.



Notes

1. [△](#) English translation published by Anthroposophic Press, Inc. New York, with the title: Man and the World of Stars. The spiritual Communion of Mankind.
2. [△](#) Ten lectures given from 6 to 15 September 1922. A précis of the contents written by Dr. Steiner himself is translated into English and published with the title: Cosmology, Religion and Philosophy.
3. [△](#) A Course of nine lectures given in Dornach during December 1922 and January 1923, entitled: Natural Science in the History of the World. Its moment of origin and subsequent development. A translation by George Adams is contained in Anthroposophical Movement, vols. VI (1929) and VII (1930).
4. [△](#) Eighteen lectures, January 1921, entitled: The Relation of the different Sciences to Astronomy. When the German text is published by the Nachlassverwaltung, the bibliographical number will be 323. A provisional translation is available in typescript only.



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