

LECTURES ON

THE GOSPEL  
OF ST. LUKE

RUDOLF STEINER

# THE GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE

**RUDOLF STEINER**

Ten lectures given in Basle

15th–26September 1909

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## **The Gospel of St. Luke**

The following lecture-course was given by Rudolf Steiner to an audience familiar with the general background and terminology of his anthroposophical teaching. It should be remembered that in his autobiography, *The Course of My Life*, he emphasises the distinction between his written works on the one hand and, on the other, reports of lectures which were given as oral communications and were not originally intended for print. For an intelligent appreciation of the lectures — and very specially so in the case of those contained in the present volume — it should be borne in mind that certain premises were taken for granted when the words were spoken. ‘These premises,’ Rudolf Steiner writes, ‘include, at the very least, the anthroposophical knowledge of Man and of the Cosmos in its spiritual essence; also what may be called “anthroposophical history”, told as an outcome of research into the spiritual world.’

On each of the Gospels Rudolf Steiner gave more than one special course, as well as innumerable lectures on the mysteries connected with the figure of Christ-Jesus in celestial and earthly history. All these courses and lectures lead into the deepest secrets of Christianity and as well as the earlier, fundamental work, *Christianity as Mystical Fact*, are indispensable for reference at every stage of the study of Spiritual Science.

A list of publications in English translation relevant to the themes of the following lectures, and a summarised plan of the Complete Centenary Edition of Rudolf Steiner's works in the original German will be found at the end of the present volume.

## CONTENTS

### *Synopsis*

**Lecture One** Initiates and Clairvoyants. The various Aspects of Initiation. The four Gospels considered in the light of spiritual-scientific investigation *15th September, 1909*

**Lecture Two** The Gospel of St. Luke: an Expression of the Principle of Love and Compassion. The Missions of the Bodhisattvas and of the Buddha *16th September, 1909*

**Lecture Three** The Influx of Buddhistic Conceptions into the Gospel of St. Luke. The Teaching of Buddha. The Eightfold Path *17th September 1909*

**Lecture Four** Sanctuaries of Leadership in ancient Atlantis. The Nirmanakaya of Buddha and the Nathan Jesus-child. The Adam-soul before the Fall. The Reincarnation of Zarathustra in the Solomon Jesus-child *18th September, 1909*

**Lecture Five** The great Streams inspired by Buddha and by Zarathustra converge in Jesus of Nazareth. The Nathan Jesus and the Solomon Jesus *19th September, 1909*

**Lecture Six** The Mission of the Hebrews. Buddha's Teaching concerning the Ennoblement of Man's Inner Nature, and Zarathustra's Teaching concerning the Cosmos. Elijah and John the Baptist *20th September, 1909*

**Lecture Seven** The two Jesus-Children. The Incarnation of the Christ in Jesus of Nazareth. Vishva Karman, Ahura Mazdao, Jahve. The Lodge of the Twelve Bodhisattvas and the 'Thirteenth' *21st September 1909*

**Lecture Eight** The Evolution of Consciousness in Humanity during the post-Atlantean Epoch. The Mission of Spiritual Science: Mastery of the Physical by the Spiritual. Illness and Healing. The Influences proceeding from the Christ-Ego *24th September, 1909*

**Lecture Nine** The Law given on Sinai: the last prophetic Announcement of the Ego. Buddha's Teaching of Compassion and Love. The Wheel of the Law. Christ the Bringer of the living Power of Love *25th September, 1909*

**Lecture Ten** Christianity and the Teaching of Reincarnation and Karma. Jonah and Solomon: Examples of two modes of Initiation in olden Times. The Christ Principle and the new mode of Initiation. The Event of Golgotha: Initiation resented on the outer Plane of World-History *26th September, 1909*

## **SYNOPSIS**

The purpose of the following synopsis is to facilitate reference to particular subjects dealt with in the several lectures, the headings being in the order in which the themes occur. Page numbers have not been included for the reason that the main themes often weave between the foreground and the background several times in a lecture and the paragraphs dealing with them should in every single case be read in their contexts.

D.S.O.

### ***Lecture One***

Initiates and Clairvoyants. Differences in the nature of experiences at each of the three stages of higher Knowledge: Imagination, Inspiration, Intuition. The Christ Event depicted in each Gospel from the standpoints of the different forms of supersensible Knowledge: e.g. the Gospel of St. John is based chiefly upon Inspirational and Intuitive cognition, and less upon pictures derived from the world of Imagination. The Gospel of St. Luke is founded upon the communications of 'seers' (clairvoyants), of those who were 'servants of the Word'. The Gospels are not the source of anthroposophical knowledge — which consists in the results derived from actual ascent into and investigation of the supersensible world. Reading the 'Akashic Chronicle' in which is recorded "everything that has ever happened in the evolution of the

world, the earth and humanity”. Investigation of the Akashic Chronicle is full of complications, especially when concerned with previous incarnations of a human being; the antecedents of physical, etheric and astral bodies, as well as of the Ego, must be traced. This also applies in the case of the Being known as Jesus of Nazareth, or, after the Baptism, as Christ Jesus. Differing accounts of the childhood of Jesus in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke. The findings of spiritual investigation in connection with events prior to the Baptism and the descent of the Christ into the three bodies of Jesus of Nazareth.

### ***Lecture Two.***

The Gospel of St. John, a text for mystics. The Gospel of St. Luke: a book for the multitude, for simple hearts and souls; a source of consolation for the oppressed. “Love is revealed to a greater extent in the Gospel of St. Luke than in any other Christian text.” Many pictorial representations of Christian truths in art are inspired by this Gospel. An account of the appearance of the angel and heavenly host announcing the birth of the Saviour to the shepherds. Correct rendering of the words (Luke II, 14) would be: ‘The Divine Beings manifest themselves from on high, that peace may reign below on the Earth among men who are filled with good will.’ Convergence of spiritual streams in the events of Palestine. The picture of the angelic host portrays one of the spiritual streams that flowed through the evolution of humanity. This spiritual stream is Buddhism — the religion of compassion and love. Description of the nature, the earlier development, the spiritual powers and the mission of the Bodhisattva who in his twenty-ninth year became Buddha, six hundred years before our era. Account of his power of astral vision; his escape from his father's palace; his experiences in the world and



temptation by the, demon Mara. Legend of the horse, symbolizing faculties bestowed from above and not yet developed from a man's own soul. The teaching of compassion and love, embodied as a human quality, arose when 'under the Bodhi tree' the Bodhisattva became Buddha. He does not thereafter return to earthly incarnation but from spiritual worlds participates in happenings on Earth. It was the glorified Buddha who appeared to the shepherds in vision and rayed down his power upon the child born to parents descended from the priestly (Nathan) line of the House of David. The, prophecy of the sage Asita in India that after his death the child horn as the Bodhisattva would become Buddha. Asita was born again as Simeon to whose spiritual vision the glorified Buddha was revealed above the head of the Nathan Jesus-child on the occasion of the presentation in the temple. (Luke II, 25–32. )

### ***Lecture Three***

The spiritual achievements of Buddhism stream from the Gospel of St. Luke but in an even higher form. Compassion and love in the highest sense of the words are the ideal of Buddhism. Love transformed into deed is the ideal presented in the Gospel of St. Luke. Christ Jesus depicted as the Physician of body and soul. Buddhism appears in this Gospel as though rejuvenated. The Bodhisattva and his participation in the evolution of humanity before becoming Buddha in his final incarnation on Earth. Remembrance of his incarnations. Knowledge previously possessed must be freshly acquired in each incarnation according to the needs of the time. The attainment of Buddha-hood signified the complete descent of the Bodhisattva into a human physical body. The teachings of the great Buddha were eventually to become powers universally possessed by men, arising from within themselves

and from thence streaming back into the cosmos. In Buddha these powers were incarnate for the first time. This is a fact of far-reaching importance for the whole evolution of the Earth and of humanity. The Buddha's inaugural sermon at Benares. The essentials of Buddha's teaching expressed in the principles of the Eightfold Path. Legend of the 'hare in the moon'. The Buddha's influence continues to work after his final incarnation on the Earth. The names of the spiritual sheaths of a Being such as the Bodhisattva who became Buddha: DHARMAKAYA (before the attainment of Buddhahood); SAMBHOJAKAYA ('body of perfection'); NIRMANAKAYA ('body of transformation'). Revelation of the Nirmanakaya of Buddha to the shepherds and its union with the astral sheath detached from the twelve-year-old Nathan Jesus-child. Rejuvenation of Buddhism. The finding of Jesus in the temple and the change manifest in him.

### ***Lecture Four***

The scene in the temple. The unique nature of the Jesus-child descended from the Nathan line of the House of David. Preservation of the fresh forces of childhood. Earlier planetary embodiments of the Earth and of primeval epochs in evolution. Separation of Sun and Moon from the Earth (reference should be made to *Occult Science — an Outline*, Chapter IV). Separation of Moon was necessary to enable man to become the bearer of an Ego. Before that separation, human souls (all but the very strongest) were obliged to leave the Earth for a time because of its increasing solidification. Unable to find suitable bodies, these souls were transferred to the other planets — to Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury — whence at a later time they gradually returned to the Earth. 'An ancestral human pair' — Adam and Eve. The Atantean Oracles and the task performed by the

Manu, the great Initiate of the Sun Oracle, to ensure the continuation of civilization in the post-Atlantean epoch. The Holy Rishis of India. Zarathustra: the inaugurator of ancient Persian civilization; a later incarnation in ancient Chaldea and still later as Jesus of the Solomon line of the House of David. Hermes received the astral body, and Moses the etheric body of Zarathustra. The Rishis spoke of 'Vishva Karman' and Zarathustra proclaimed as 'Ahura Mazdao' the Being who later appeared as Christ. The Nathan Jesus and the great 'Mother-Lodge' of humanity. The effects of the Luciferic influence. The 'Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil' and the 'Tree of Life'. The Fall of Man. Certain forces in the 'Adam-soul' were withdrawn and remained guiltless; they were conducted as a 'provisional Ego' to the child described in the Gospel of St. Luke. Joseph, the father, is therefore given a lineage extending back to Adam, who is himself 'born of God'. This secret was also known to St. Paul and underlies his reference to the 'Old Adam' and the 'New Adam'. (See I Cor. XV, 45–7.) The Adam-soul as it was before the Fall was in the Nathan Jesus-child. Buddhism rejuvenated by the youthful forces of this child when his astral sheath united with the Nirmanakaya of Buddha. Two lines of descent from David: the Nathan (or priestly) line and the Solomon (or kingly) line. The child Jesus of St. Luke's Gospel descended from the Nathan line; the child Jesus of St. Matthew's Gospel from the Solomon line. Both children were born in Bethlehem. Reincarnation of Zarathustra in the Solomon Jesus-child.

### ***Lecture Five***

Fusion of Buddhism and Zoroastrianism made possible through the births of the two Jesus-children in Palestine. Interval of 'a few months' between the two births. Both the Nathan Jesus (Gospel of St. Luke) and John the Baptist were

born *after* the massacre of the innocents. The Solomon Jesus (Gospel of St. Matthew) and the flight into Egypt to avoid the massacre. Contrast between Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. Through his pupils Hermes and Moses, Zarathustra made provision for the Egyptian civilization-epoch and also influenced the civilization of the Hebrews. Hermes bore within him the astral body of Zarathustra; Moses, bearing the etheric body of Zarathustra, was able to present in *Genesis*, mighty pictures of happenings in Time. Zarathustra born in Chaldea about 600 B.C. as Zarathas or Nazarathos; his pupils there were 'Wise Men' or 'Magi' whose wisdom revealed to them in a later incarnation that their teacher had been born in Bethlehem (as the Solomon Jesus). Their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Through the flight into Egypt, the Zarathustra-Ego was able to reunite with the forces once sacrificed by him to Hermes and Moses. After the return from Egypt the family of the Solomon Jesus settled in Nazareth near the family of the Nathan Jesus and the two boys grew up in close proximity. Qualities transmitted by heredity: will and power by the paternal element; inwardness by the maternal element. Annunciation of the birth of the Solomon Jesus was to the father, and of the Nathan Jesus to the mother. The birth and mission of John the Baptist. The relationship between the soul-being in the Nathan Jesus and the Ego in John the Baptist. The meeting between Mary and Elisabeth. Contrasting natures of the two Jesus-children: the Solomon Jesus gifted with prematurely advanced understanding of the outer world; the Nathan Jesus with infinite depth of feeling. The, twelve-year-old boy in the temple, when the Ego of Zarathustra left the body of the Solomon Jesus and passed into that of the Nathan Jesus. That was the point of time when the Nirmanakaya of Buddha united with the castoff astral sheath of the Nathan Jesus. Deaths of the mother of the Nathan Jesus, the father of the Solomon Jesus, and the Solomon Jesus-boy from whom the Ego had departed; later

on, death of the father of the Nathan Jesus. The Zarathustra-Individuality lived in the body of the Nathan Jesus until the Baptism by John. Union of the soul of the mother of the Nathan Jesus with the mother now remaining to the Zarathustra-Individuality.

### ***Lecture Six***

The significance of the Bodhisattva who became Buddha. Principles of the Eightfold Path had been revealed from above before the achievement of Buddha made it possible for men consciously to discover them within themselves. The body of a Bodhisattva never encloses the whole of his being. When the last Bodhisattva became Buddha he descended fully into a human organism. Beings for whom human embodiment was too limited to receive the whole Individuality were said to be “filled with the Holy Spirit”. This can rightly be said of Buddha in his previous incarnations as Bodhisattva. The “etheric substance withdrawn from Adam before the Fall” was preserved and merged into the Nathan Jesus-child. (See also previous lecture.) Overshadowing by the Nirmanakaya of Buddha. Influence exercised upon the birth of John the Baptist. Contrast between the teaching given through Buddha to the people of India, and through Moses to the ancient Hebrews. Provision for spiritual streams to fructify each other: the development of one is held back, to receive at a later time what the other has achieved. In the Ten Commandments the ancient Hebrews received *Laws from outside*, whereas the Indian people had been taught to recognize the *inner Law* — Dharma. Zarathustra's teachings in ancient Persia and subsequently in Chaldea. His influence, through Moses, upon Hebrew doctrine. The concept of human guilt. The Book of Job. The nature of the Prophets — Individualities ‘impelled by the Spirit’. Elijah reborn as John the Baptist. The visit of Mary

to Elisabeth. The Nirmanakaya of Buddha, hovering above the embryo of the Nathan Jesus, worked upon Elisabeth and through her upon the Ego of the child who was the former Elijah and was to be born as John the Baptist. (See also the previous lecture.) Blossoming of Buddha's teaching in that given by John on the banks of the Jordan. Love inherent in blood-relationship was to be expanded into love that passes from soul to soul, transcending ties of blood. Abandonment of all family ties by the Zarathustra-Individuality, first as the Solomon Jesus and subsequently in the body of the Nathan Jesus. The proclamation of universal human love.

### ***Lecture Seven***

The development of the Nathan Jesus-child. Definite periods of seven years in normal human life. Importance of the thirty-fifth year. Development of the Nathan Jesus somewhat accelerated: puberty took place in the twelfth instead of the fourteenth year. The Zarathustra-Ego, filled with cosmological wisdom, passed into the body of the Nathan Jesus in the twelfth year of life and elaborated the faculties in that soul to the highest degree of excellence. At the Baptism by John the Zarathustra-Ego left the body of the Nathan Jesus into which the Christ then entered. Soon after the Zarathustra-Ego had passed into the body of the Nathan Jesus, the Solomon Jesus-boy died; his etheric body was taken by the mother of the Nathan Jesus with her into the spiritual world when she too died — at approximately the same time as the Solomon Jesus. Having left the body of the Nathan Jesus at the Baptism by John, the Zarathustra-Individuality united with the etheric body that had originally been his in the body of the Solomon Jesus. This led to the existence of the Being known as the “Master Jesus” who in quickly recurring incarnations has become the Inspirer of the great spiritual figures in

Christianity. The Baptism by John and the descent of the Christ into the sheaths of the Nathan Jesus. Christ, the Sun-Spirit, known to the holy Rishis as Vishva Karman and to Zarathustra as Ahura Mazdao, descended gradually to the Earth from the Sun and was revealed to Moses on Sinai as Jahve — the reflection of Christ. Preparation of a body fit to receive this Being. The Bodhisattva who became Gautama Buddha was succeeded by the Bodhisattva who will become the Maitrcya Buddha. The Lodge of the Twelve Bodhisattvas, and their missions. The Christ is the 'Thirteenth' from whom the Bodhisattvas receive what they have to carry into Earth evolution. At the Baptism in the Jordan the heavenly 'Thirteenth' apprurd un the Earth. The 'Fall into Sin' and the penetration of the Luciferic forces into the human astral body. Part of the It hole body withdrawn from the arbitrary control of man. The four ethers: Life-Ether, Tone- or Number-Ether, Light-Ether, Fire-Ether, and their correspondences with the functions of man's life of soul. Zarathustra proclaimed the future descent to Earth of the Divine-Creative Word, 'Hanover'. At the Baptism in the Jordan the Word became flesh.

### ***Lecture Eight***

Essential to recognize that great changes have taken place in the nature and constitution of man through the ages, particularly from the time of Atlantis onwards. In ancient Indian civilization the etheric body still projected beyond the physical body and was much less firmly knit with it than at present. This made clairvoyant consciousness possible and the soul-forces were able to exert far greater power over the processes in the human physical body. Having meanwhile penetrated deeply into the physical body, the etheric body is now on the point of emerging again. This is the cause of many of the semi-psychic, semi-bodily diseases — the so-called 'nervous' diseases — of our time. Intense effect produced by

words of love or hatred in very early post-Atlantean times. In our present age the effects made by spiritual truths will increase in strength and in the future the soul-and-spirit will gain great power over the physical. "Spiritual Science is the great remedy for souls as they live on into the future." The process of healing in the primeval Indian epoch: effects made upon the soul could be transmitted to the etheric body and by it to the physical. In the Graeco-Latin epoch the power of soul-and-spirit over the body was about equal to that of the body over the soul. In our present, fifth post-Atlantean epoch, the physical has gained predominance over the soul. A new consciousness must develop. In the sixth epoch, the spiritual will regain dominion over the physical. The parable of the Sower. Great spiritual truths can be unveiled only gradually. In the Graeco-Latin epoch the human organism was still, in many cases, amenable to spiritual influences; hence that was the right moment for Christ Jesus to appear. Suitable physical organisms were essential for Christ and also for the Buddha. Far-reaching significance of the Eightfold Path and its connection with the sixteen-petalled lotus-flower in reran. Christ brought into the world a power of Egohood able to penetrate the human sheaths so completely that the whole organism could be affected. By His mere presence Christ healed diseases that originated in different members of man's being. Astral body: transgressions manifested in the disease called 'possession' in the Gospel of St. Luke. Etheric body: defects expressed in paralysis. "Thy sins are forgiven thee!" Influences able to reach the physical body are the most deeply hidden of all. The healing of the daughter of Jairus. Her karmic connection with the woman who had been healed by touching the hem of Christ's garment. The healings described in the Gospel of St. Luke are evidences of the mastery of the Christ-Ego over the astral, etheric and physical bodies. Attainment of such mastery is the Ideal of human evolution.



## ***Lecture Nine***

At the time of Christ Jesus a radical change took place in humanity; a more gradual change is in process in our own day. Fallacy of statement that 'Nature makes no jumps'. The 'jump' now taking place is indicated by the fact that the human heart is longing for the spiritual-scientific explanation of the Bible. When Christ Jesus appeared, the Ego had long been membered into man but was not fully self-conscious. The Law proclaimed from Sinai affected the astral body and was the last prophetic announcement of the Ego. Had Christ Jesus not come to the Earth, the Ego would have become empty of all content, utterly given over to egoistic impulses. The Deed of Christ on the Earth was so to stimulate the development of the Ego in man that the power of Love should stream from it. Christ bade men understand the 'signs of the times' and recognize the transition taking place in humanity, instead of clinging to the 'old leaven' preserved by the Scribes and Pharisees. The parable of the unjust steward. (Luke XVI, 1–16.) Importance of recognizing those who in the modern age are the representatives of Mammon, the god of hindrance. What Buddha brought to mankind was the wisdom, the *teaching* of Love; Christ brought Love itself as a living *power* which was eventually to flow from the Egos of men themselves into the world. The 'power of Faith' is possessed by one who receives Christ into himself in such a way that Love overflows from his Ego. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" — a cardinal principle of Christianity. (Matt. XII, 34.) The successor of the Bodhisattva who attained Buddhahood five or six centuries before our era will become the Maitreya Buddha in about three thousand years reckoned from the present time. He will be able to fulfil his mission in evolution if a sufficient number of human beings have developed within themselves not only the wisdom of the Eightfold Path but from whose hearts the living Substance of

Love overflows into the world. The mission of the Bodhisattvas and of the Buddha: to bring the 'Wisdom of Love' to the Earth. The mission of Christ: the redemption of souls through the 'Power of Love' He brought to the Earth.

### ***Lecture Ten***

Great truths must be imparted in a form suitable for the epoch in which, they are communicated. Humanity has only now become sufficiently mature to understand the spiritual content of the laws of Karma and Reincarnation. Instead of being presented as abstract doctrines, feelings for such truths were, to begin with, awakened in the human soul. Whereas before the coming of Christ men had received revelations and experienced their effects in the astral, etheric and physical bodies, the Ego was now gradually to become fully conscious. Having Himself given the impulse, Christ Jesus made provision for Individualities to appear in later times to meet the spiritual needs of evolving humanity. The 'awakening' of Lazarus who continued to work as John. Different modes of Initiation. The 'awakening' of the young man of Nain was an Initiation of a special kind; his soul was transformed but its powers did not come to fruition until the next incarnation, when he became a great religious Teacher. Permeation of Christianity with the teachings of Reincarnation and Karma. The Law of Sinai was addressed to and worked upon the astral body in men. The coming of Christ enabled the Ego to work as an entirely new force. John the Baptist: the last to transmit, in its purest, noblest form, the teaching belonging to past ages. Christ's testimony of John. (Luke VII, 24–8.) One part only of the human being derives from the union of the male and female parental seeds. "There is in each human being something that does not arise from the seed but is a 'virgin birth', flowing from another source into the process of

germination.” This is connected with faculties that are not inherited but derived from the kingdom of Heaven. Two ways of experiencing the spiritual world in pre-Christian times: through Initiation while out of the body, symbolized by the ‘Sign of Jonah’, and through revelation from above, symbolized by the ‘Sign of Solomon’. The Queen of Sheba: the representative of those possessing the heritage of dim clairvoyance. Through the new element brought by Christ, the spiritual world was eventually to become directly manifest to the Ego, but this could come to pass only gradually. The scene of the Transfiguration: Christ finds the disciples asleep. “The Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men,” means that the Ego was to be given over to men for the fulfilment of their mission on Earth. The Christ-power must unite with what has remained childlike in man from times before the Luciferic influence took effect. The old teachings were to be replaced by new teachings, understood, to begin with, through the power of Faith. In the Event of Golgotha the old Initiation, hitherto enacted in the secrecy of the Mysteries was transferred to the open arena of world-history and enacted for all humanity. The blood that flowed from the wounds of Christ Jesus on Golgotha signified the sacrifice of the surplus egoism in human nature. The outpouring of Infinite Love described in the Gospel of St. Luke. The truths of Love, Faith, Hope. Spiritual science an instrument for understanding the treasures given to humanity. Love and Peace: the most beautiful mirror-image of Divine Mysteries revealed on Earth and streaming back from human hearts to the heights of the spiritual World.

## LECTURE ONE

*Initiates and Clairvoyants. The various Aspects of Initiation. The Four Gospels considered in the light of spiritual-scientific Investigation.*

During our last meeting here some time ago we spoke of the deeper currents of Christianity with particular reference to the Gospel of St. John and of the great images and ideas accessible to man when he reflects deeply upon this unique text. [1] More than once it has been emphasized that the very depths of Christianity are illuminated by that Gospel and some of those who have heard lecture-courses on the same subject might feel inclined to ask: If the viewpoint reached through studying the Gospel of St. John may truly be called the most profound, can it be widened or enriched in any way by study of the other three Gospels of St. Luke, St. Matthew and St. Mark? Again, those who tend to be mentally lazy might ask: If the deepest depths of Christianity are to be found in the Gospel of St. John, is it still necessary to study Christianity as presented in the other Gospels, especially in the apparently less profound Gospel of St. Luke?

Anyone who might put this question believing such an attitude to be worthy of consideration would be labouring under a complete misapprehension. The scope of Christianity itself is infinite and light can be shed upon it from the most diverse standpoints. Furthermore, as the present course of lectures will show, although the Gospel of St. John is a document of untold profundity, there are facts which can be learnt from the Gospel of St. Luke and not from that of St.

John. The ideas which in the lectures on the Gospel of St. John we came to recognize as among the most profound in Christianity, do not by any means comprise all its depths. It is possible to penetrate these depths from another starting-point altogether, basing our studies on the Gospel of St. Luke viewed in the light of Anthroposophy.

Let us once again recall facts in support of the statement that there is something to be gained from the Gospel of St. Luke even if the depths of the Gospel of St. John have been exhaustively studied. A fact revealed to the student of Anthroposophy by every line of the Gospel of St. John is that records such as the Gospels were composed by individuals who, as initiates and clairvoyants, possessed deeper insight than other men into the nature of existence. In everyday parlance the terms 'initiate' and 'clairvoyant' may be synonymous. But if our studies of Anthroposophy are to lead us into the deeper strata of spiritual life, we must distinguish between one who is an 'initiate' and one who is a 'clairvoyant', for they represent two, distinct categories, of human beings who have found their way into the spheres of supersensible existence. There is a difference between an initiate and a clairvoyant, although an initiate may at the same time be a clairvoyant, and a clairvoyant an initiate of a certain grade. To distinguish with exactitude between these two categories of human beings you must recall the facts described in my book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*, [2] remembering that strictly speaking there are three stages on the path leading beyond ordinary perception of the world.

The first kind of knowledge accessible to man can be described by saying: he beholds the world through his senses and assimilates what he perceives by means of his intellect and the other faculties of his soul. Beyond this, there are three further stages of knowledge, of cognition: the first is the stage of Imagination, Imaginative Cognition, the second is the stage

of Inspiration, and the third is the stage of Intuition — but the term ‘Intuition’ must be understood in its true sense.

The faculty of Imaginative Cognition is possessed by one before whose eye of spirit all that lies behind the world of the senses is unfolded in mighty, cosmic pictures — but these pictures do not in the least resemble anything we call by this name in everyday life. Apart from the difference that the pictures revealed by Imaginative Cognition are independent of the laws of three-dimensional space, other characteristics make it impossible for them to be compared with anything in the world of the senses.

An idea of the world of Imagination may be gained in the following way. Suppose someone were able to extract from a plant in front of him everything perceptible to the sense of sight as ‘colour’, so that this hovered freely in the air. If he were to do nothing more than draw out the colour from the plant, a lifeless colour-form would hover before him. But to the clairvoyant such a colour-form is anything but a lifeless picture, for when he extracts the colour from the objects, then, through the preparation he has undergone and the exercises he has practised, this colour-picture begins to be animated by spirit just as in the physical world it was filled by the living substance of the plant. He then has before him, not a lifeless colour-form but freely moving coloured light, glistening, sparkling, full of inner life; each colour is the expression of the particular nature of a spiritual being imperceptible in the world of the physical senses. That is to say, the colour in the physical plant becomes for the clairvoyant the expression of spiritual beings. Now imagine a world filled with such colour-forms, reflected in manifold ways and in perpetual metamorphosis; your vision must not be confined to the colours, as it might be when confronting a painting of glimmering colourreflections, but you must imagine it all as the expression of beings of soul-and-spirit, so that you can say

to yourselves: 'When a green colour-picture flashes up it expresses to me the fact that an *intellectual* being is behind it; or when a reddish colour-picture flashes up it is to me the expression of a being with a fiery, violent nature.' Now imagine this whole sea of interweaving colours I might equally well say a sea of interplaying sensations of tone, taste, or smell, for all these are the expressions of beings of soul-and-spirit behind them — and you have what is called the 'Imaginative' world, the world of Imagination. It is nothing to which the word 'imagination' (fancy) in its ordinary sense could be applied; it is a real world, requiring a mode of comprehension different from that derived from the senses.

Within this world of Imagination you encounter everything that is behind the sense-world and is imperceptible to the physical senses — for instance, the etheric and astral bodies. A man whose knowledge of the world is derived from this clairvoyant, Imaginative perception, becomes acquainted with the outward aspect of higher beings, just as you become acquainted with the outward, physical aspect of a man in the physical world who, let us say, passes in front of you in the street. You know more about him when there is an opportunity of talking with him. His words then give you an impression differing from the one he makes upon you when you look at him in the street. In the case of many a man whom you pass by (to mention this one example only) you cannot observe whether his soul is moved by inner joy or grief, sorrow or delight. But you can discover this if you converse with him. In the one case his outward aspect is conveyed to you through everything you can perceive without his assistance; in the other case he expresses his very self to you. The same applies to the beings of the supersensible world. A clairvoyant who comes to recognize these beings through Imaginative Cognition knows only their outward aspect. But he hears them give expression to their very selves when he

rises from Imaginative Knowledge to Knowledge through Inspiration. He then has actual intercourse with these beings. They communicate to him from their inmost selves *what* and *who* they are. Inspiration is therefore a higher stage of knowledge than Imagination, and more is learnt about the beings of the world of soul-and-spirit at the stage of Inspiration than can be learnt through Imagination.

A still higher stage of knowledge is that of Intuition — but the word must be taken in its spiritual-scientific sense, not in that of day-to-day parlance, when anything that occurs to one, however hazy and nebulous, may be called ‘intuition’. In our sense, Intuition is a form of knowledge thanks to which we not only listen spiritually to what the beings communicate to us, but we become one with the very beings themselves. This is a very lofty stage of spiritual knowledge for it requires, at the outset, that there shall be in the human being that quality of universal love which causes him to make no distinction between himself and the other beings in his spiritual environment, but to pour forth his very self into the environment; thus he no longer remains outside but lives *within* the beings with whom he has spiritual communion. Because this can take place only in a spiritual world, the expression ‘Intuition’, i.e. ‘to dwell in the God’ is entirely appropriate. Thus there are three stages of knowledge of the supersensible worlds: Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition.

It is possible, of course, to attain all these three stages of supersensible knowledge, but it may also be that in some one incarnation the stage of Imagination only is reached. Then the spheres of the spiritual world attainable through Inspiration and Intuition remain hidden from the clairvoyant concerned. In our present age it is not usual for a person to be led to the higher stages of spiritual experience before having passed through the stage of Imagination; it is hardly possible for anyone to omit the stage of Imagination and be led at once to



the stages of Inspiration and Intuition. But what would not be appropriate to-day, could happen and actually did happen in certain other periods of the evolution of man.

There were times when Imagination on the one hand and Inspiration and Intuition on the other were apportioned to different individuals. In certain Mystery-centres there were men whose eyes of spirit were open in such a way that they were clairvoyant in the sphere of Imagination and that world of symbolical pictures was accessible to them. Because with this grade of clairvoyance, such men said: 'For this incarnation I renounce the attainment of the higher stages of Inspiration and Intuition', they made themselves capable of seeing clearly and with exactitude in the world of Imagination. They underwent much training in order to develop vision of that world. But one thing was essential for them. Anyone who wants to confine his vision to the world of Imagination and gives up any attempt to advance to Inspiration and Intuition, lives in a world of uncertainty. This world of flowing Imaginations is, so to say, boundless, and if left to its own resources the soul floats hither and thither without being really aware of its direction or goal. In those times, therefore, and among peoples where certain human beings renounced the higher stages of knowledge, it was necessary for those whose clairvoyance had reached the stage of Imagination to attach themselves with utter devotion to leaders whose capacities of spiritual perception were open to Inspiration and Intuition. For Inspiration and Intuition alone can give such certainty in regard to the spiritual world that a man knows with full assurance: Thither leads the path — towards a definite goal! Without Inspiration it is not possible to say: There is the path; I must follow it in order to reach a goal! Whoever, therefore, cannot say this must entrust himself to the wise guidance of someone who says it to him. Hence in so many quarters it is constantly emphasized, and rightly so, that

whoever rises, to begin with, to the stage of Imagination, must attach himself inwardly to a Guru — a leader who gives both direction and aim to his experiences. It was also advisable in certain epochs — but this is no longer the case to-day — to allow other individuals to omit the stage of Imagination and to lead them at once to Inspiration or, if possible, to Intuition. Such men renounced the possibility of perceiving the Imaginative pictures of the spiritual world around them; they lent themselves only to such impressions from the spiritual world as issue from the inner life of the beings there. They listened with their ears of spirit to the utterances of the beings of the spiritual world. Suppose there is a screen between you and another man whom you do not see but only hear him speaking behind the screen. It is certainly possible to renounce pictorial vision of the spiritual world in order to be led more quickly to the stage of hearing the utterances of the spiritual beings. No matter whether a person sees the pictures of the world of Imagination or not — if he is able to apprehend with spiritual ears what the beings in the spiritual world communicate regarding themselves, we say of him that he is endowed with the power to hear the ‘inner word’ — in contrast to the outer word used in the physical world between man and man.

We can thus conceive that there are people who, without beholding the world of Imaginations, are endowed with the power to apprehend the inner word and can hear and communicate the utterances of spiritual beings. There were periods in the evolution of humanity when, within the Mysteries, these two forms of supersensible cognition worked in co-operation. Each individual who had renounced the faculty of perception possessed by another, could develop greater clarity and definition in his own faculty and at certain periods this resulted in a truly wonderful co-operation within the Mysteries. There were clairvoyants who had specially

trained themselves to see the world of Imaginative pictures, and there were others who, having passed over the world of Imagination, had trained themselves to receive the inner word into their souls through Inspiration. And so the one could communicate to the other the experiences made possible by his particular training. This was possible in times when some degree of confidence reigned between one man and another; to-day it is out of the question, simply because of the character of our age. Nowadays one man has not such strong belief in another that he would listen to his descriptions of the pictures of the world of Imagination and then, honestly believing those descriptions to be accurate, supplement them with what he himself knows through Inspiration. Nowadays, everyone wants to see it all himself — and that is natural in our age. Very few people would be satisfied with a one-sided development of Imagination such as was taken for granted in certain epochs. In our present time, therefore, it is necessary for a man to be led through the three stages of higher knowledge without omitting any one of them.

At each stage of supersensible knowledge we encounter the great mysteries connected with the Christ Event, about which all three forms of cognition — Imaginative, Inspirational, Intuitive — have infinitely much to say.

If with this in mind we turn our attention to the four Gospels, we may say that the Gospel of St. John is written from the vantage-point of one who in the fullest sense was an Initiate, cognisant at the stage of Intuition of the mysteries of the supersensible world, and who therefore describes the Christ Event as revealed by the vision of Intuition. But if close attention is paid to the distinctive characteristics of St. John's Gospel it will have to be admitted that the features standing out most clearly are presented from the standpoint of Inspiration and Intuition, while everything originating from the pictures of Imagination is shadowy and lacks definition.

Thus if we disregard what was still revealed to him through Imagination, we may call the writer of St. John's Gospel the messenger of everything relating to the Christ Event that is vouchsafed to one endowed with the power of apprehending the inner word at the stage of Intuition. Hence he describes the mysteries of Christ's Kingdom as receiving their character through the inner Word, or Logos. Knowledge through Inspiration and Intuition is the source of the Gospel of St. John.

It is different in the case of the other three Gospels, and not one of their writers expressed his message as clearly as did the writer of the Gospel of St. Luke. In a short but remarkable preface it is said, in effect, that many others had previously attempted to collect and set forth the stories in circulation concerning the events in Palestine; but that for the sake of accuracy and order the writer of this Gospel is now undertaking to present the things which ... and now come significant words ... could be understood by those who from the beginning were 'eye-witnesses and servants (ministers) of the Word' — that is the usual rendering. The aim of the writer of this Gospel is therefore to communicate what eye-witnesses — it would be better to say 'seers' (*Selbstseher*) — and servants of the Word had to say. In the sense of St. Luke's Gospel, 'seers' are men who through Imaginative Cognition can penetrate into the world of pictures and there behold the Christ Event; people specially trained to perceive these Imaginations are seers with accurate and clear vision at the same time as being 'servants of the Word' — a significant phrase — and the writer of St. Luke's Gospel uses their communications as a foundation. He does not say 'possessors' of the Word, because such persons would have reached the stage of Inspiration in the fullest sense; he says 'servants' of the Word — people who could count less upon Inspirations than upon Imaginations in their own knowledge but for whom

communications from the world of Inspiration were nevertheless available. The results of Inspirational Cognition were communicated to them and they could proclaim what their inspired teachers had made known to them. They were 'servants', not 'possessors' of the Word.

Thus the Gospel of St. Luke is founded upon the communications of seers, themselves knowers of the world of Imagination; they are those who, having learnt to express their visions of that world through means made possible by their inspired teachers, had themselves become 'servants of the Word'.

Here again is an example of the exactitude of the Gospel records and of the need to understand the words in the strictly literal sense. In texts based upon spiritual knowledge, everything is exact to a degree often undreamed of by modern man.

But we must now again remember — as always when such matters are considered from the anthroposophical standpoint — that, for spiritual science, the Gospels themselves are not original sources of knowledge in the actual sense. One who stands strictly on the ground of spiritual science will not necessarily take a statement to be the truth simply because it stands in the Gospels. The spiritual scientist does not draw his knowledge from written documents but from the yields of spiritual investigation. Communications made by beings of the spiritual world to the initiate and the clairvoyant in the present age — these are the sources of knowledge for spiritual science. And in a certain respect these sources are the same in our age as in the times just described to you. Hence in our age too, those who have insight into the world of Imagination may be called clairvoyants, but only those who can rise to the stages of Inspiration and Intuition can be called 'Initiates'. In our present age the expressions 'clairvoyant' and 'initiate' are

not necessarily synonymous.

The content of the Gospel of St. John could be based only upon knowledge possessed by an Initiate capable of rising to the stages of Inspiration and Intuition. The contents of the other three Gospels could be based upon the communications of persons endowed with Imaginative clairvoyance but not yet able themselves to rise to the stages of Inspiration and Intuition. If therefore we adhere strictly to this distinction, St. John's Gospel is based upon Initiation, and the other three, especially that of St. Luke — according to what the writer himself says — upon Clairvoyance. Because this is the case, and because everything that is revealed to the vision of a highly trained clairvoyant is introduced, this Gospel gives us well-defined pictures of what is contained in the Gospel of St. John in faint impressions only. In order to make the difference even more obvious, let me say the following.

Although it would hardly ever be the case to-day, let us suppose a man were initiated in such a way that the worlds of Inspiration and of Intuition were open to him but that he was not clairvoyant in the world of Imagination. Suppose such a man met another, perhaps not initiated but to whom the whole world of Imaginations was open. This man would be able to communicate a great deal to the first who might possibly only be able to explain it through Inspiration but could not himself see it, having no faculty of clairvoyance. There are many today who are clairvoyant without being initiates; the reverse is hardly ever the case. Nevertheless it might conceivably happen that someone who had been initiated, could not, although possessing the gift of clairvoyance, for some reason or other perceive the Imaginations in a particular instance. A clairvoyant would then be able to tell such a man a great deal as yet unknown to him.

It must be strongly emphasized that Anthroposophy relies upon no other source than that of the Initiates, and that the texts of the Gospels are not the actual sources of its knowledge. The fount of anthroposophical knowledge is investigated to-day independently of any historical records. But then we turn to the records and compare the findings of spiritual-scientific research with them. What Anthroposophy can at all times discover about the Christ Event without the help of any documentary record is found again in the Gospel of St. John, presented in a most sublime way. Hence its supreme value, for it shows us that at the time when it was composed a man was living who wrote as one initiated into the spiritual world can write to-day. The same voice, as it were, that can be heard to-day, sounds across to us from the depths of the centuries.

The same can be said of the other Gospels, including that of St. Luke. It is not the pictures delineated by the writer of the Gospel of St. Luke that are for us the source of knowledge of the higher worlds; the source for us lies in the results of ascent into the supersensible world. When we speak of the Christ Event, a source for us is also that great tableau of pictures and Imaginations appearing when we direct our gaze to the beginning of our era. We compare what thus reveals itself with the pictures and Imaginations described in the Gospel of St. Luke; and this course of lectures will show how the Imaginative pictures accessible to man to-day compare with the descriptions given in that Gospel.

The truth is that there is only one source for spiritual investigation when directed to the events of the past. This source does not lie in external records; no stones dug out of the earth, no documents preserved in archives, no treatises written by historians either with or without insight — none of

these things is the source of spiritual science. What we are able to read in the imperishable *Akashic Chronicle* — that is the source of spiritual science. The possibility exists of knowing what has happened in the past without reference to external records. Modern man has thus two ways of acquiring information about the past. He can take the documents and the historical records when he wants to learn something about outer events, or the religious scripts when he wants to learn something about the conditions of spiritual life. Or else he can ask: What have those men to say before whose spiritual vision lies that imperishable Chronicle known as the 'Akashic Chronicle' — that mighty tableau in which there is registered whatever has at any time come to pass in the evolution of the world, of the earth and of humanity?

Whoever raises his consciousness into the spiritual world learns gradually to read this chronicle. It is no ordinary script. Think of the course of events, just as they happened, presented to your spiritual vision; think, let us say, of the Emperor Augustus and all his deeds standing before you in a cloud-like picture. The picture stands there before the spiritual-scientific investigator and he can at any time evoke the experience anew. He requires no external evidence. He need only direct his gaze to a definite point in cosmic or human happenings and the events will present themselves to him in a spiritual picture. In this way the spiritual gaze can survey the ages of the past, and what is there perceived is recorded as the findings of spiritual investigation.

What happened at the beginning of our era can be perceived by spiritual vision and compared, for example, with what is related in the Gospel of St. Luke. Then the spiritual investigator recognizes that at that time too there were seers able to behold the past; and moreover the accounts they give of happenings in their own times can be compared with what is revealed today by spiritual investigation of the Akashic



## Chronicle.

Again and again it must be realized that we do not have recourse to outer records but to the actual findings of spiritual investigation and that we then try to rediscover these results in the outer records. The value of the records themselves is thereby enhanced and we can come to a decision about the truth of their contents on the strength of our own investigations. They lie before us as, even more faithful expression of the truth because we ourselves are able to recognize the truth. But a statement such as this must not be made without at the same time affirming that this 'reading in the Akashic Chronicle' is by no means as easy as observation of events in the physical world! With the help of an example I should like to give you an idea of certain difficulties that may arise.

We know from elementary Anthroposophy that man consists of physical body, etheric body, astral body and Ego. The moment we are no longer observing man on the physical plane but rise into the spiritual world, the difficulties begin. When we have a human being physically before us, we see a unity formed by physical body, etheric body, astral body and Ego. Whoever observes a human being during waking life has all this before him as *unity*, but if it is necessary for some reason to rise into the higher worlds in order to observe a human being, the difficulties at once begin. Suppose, for example, we wish to observe a human being in his totality while he is asleep during the night, and rise into the world of Imagination in order, let us say, to perceive his astral body — which is now outside the physical body. The human being is now divided into two. What I am describing will seldom occur in this particular form, for observation of the human being is comparatively easy, but it will help to convey an idea of the difficulties in question.

Suppose someone goes into a room where a number of people are asleep. He sees their physical bodies lying there and, if he is clairvoyant, their etheric bodies too; at a higher stage of clairvoyance he sees their astral bodies. But in the astral world everything interpenetrates — including, of course, the astral bodies of human beings. Although it would not often happen to a trained clairvoyant, when looking at a number of sleeping people he might mistake which astral body belonged to some particular physical body below. As I said, it is an unlikely occurrence because this is one of the first stages of actual vision and because anyone who attains it is well trained in how to distinguish in such a case. But the difficulties become very considerable when spiritual beings — not human beings — are observed in the spiritual world. As a matter of fact the difficulties are already great if a human being is to be observed, not as he is at present, but in his totality, as he passes through incarnations. Thus if you observe a human being now living and ask yourself: Where was his Ego in his previous incarnation? you have to go through the Devachanic world to reach his former incarnation. You must be able to establish which Ego has always belonged to the preceding incarnations of the person in question. You must hold together, in an intricate way, the continuous Ego and the various stages down on the Earth. Mistakes are very possible here and error can very easily occur when looking for an Ego in its earlier bodies. In the higher worlds, therefore, it is not easy to maintain the connection between everything belonging to a human personality and his former incarnations as inscribed in the Akashic Chronicle.

Suppose someone has before him a man — let us call him John Smith — and as a clairvoyant or initiate he asks: ‘Who were the physical ancestors of this man?’ — Let us assume that all external records have been lost and there is only the Akashic Chronicle upon which to rely. It would be a matter of

having to discover from the Akashic Chronicle the physical ancestors of the man — the father, mother, grandfather, and so on, in order to see how the physical body evolved in the line of physical descent. But then there might be the further question: ‘What were the earlier *incarnations* of this man?’ To answer that question an entirely different path must be taken than when looking for the physical ancestors. It may be necessary to go back through long, long ages in order to arrive at the previous incarnations of the *Ego*.

Already you have two streams: the physical body as it stands before you is not a completely new creation, for it springs from the ancestors in the line of physical heredity; nor is the Ego a completely new creation, for it is linked with its previous incarnations. The same holds good for the intermediate members, the etheric and astral bodies. Most of you know that the etheric body is not a completely new creation but that it too may have taken a path leading through the most diverse forms. The etheric body of Zarathustra reappeared in Moses. [3] It was the same etheric body. If we were to seek out the physical ancestors of Moses this would give us one line; if we were to seek out the ancestors of the *etheric body* of Moses we should get another, quite different line; here we should come to the etheric body of Zarathustra and to other etheric bodies. Just as we have to trace quite different lines for the physical body and the etheric body, the same applies to the astral body. Each separate member of the human being might lead to very diverse streams. Thus the etheric body may be the etheric reembodiment of an etheric body that belonged to a different individuality altogether — not by any means the same in which the Ego was formerly incarnated. And the same can be said of the astral body.

When we rise into the higher worlds in order to investigate the several members of a human being, the individual streams all take different directions, and in following them we come to

very intricate processes in the spiritual world. Whoever wishes to understand a human being from the vantage-point of spiritual investigation, must describe him not merely as a descendant of his ancestors, not merely as having derived his etheric body or his astral body from this or that being, but he must describe the paths taken by all these four members until they unite in the present individual. This cannot be done all at once. For instance, we may trace the path followed by the etheric body and reach important conclusions. Someone else may trace the path of the astral body. The one may lay more stress on the etheric body, the other on the astral body, and frame his descriptions accordingly. To those who do not notice everything said about an individual by men who are clairvoyant, it will make no difference whether one says this and another that; it will seem to them that the same entity is being described. In their eyes the one who describes the physical personality only and the other who describes the etheric body are both speaking of the same being — John Smith.

All this can give you an idea of the complexity of circumstances and conditions encountered when it is a question of describing the nature of any phenomenon in the world — whether a human or any other being — from the standpoint of clairvoyant research or Initiation-knowledge. I was obliged to say the foregoing because it will help you to understand that only the most extensive investigation in the Akashic Chronicle can present any being in full clarity to the eyes of spirit.

The Being who stands before us as the Gospel of St. John describes Him — no matter whether we speak of Him as Jesus of Nazareth before the Baptism by John or as Christ after the Baptism — that Being stands before us with an Ego, an astral body, an etheric body and physical body. To give a full description according to the Akashic Chronicle of the Being

who was Christ Jesus, we must trace the paths traversed by the four members of His nature in the course of the evolution of humanity. Only then can we rightly understand Him. It is here a question of grasping the meaning of the information regarding the Christ Event given by modern spiritual-scientific investigation, for light must be shed on apparent contradictions in the four Gospels.

I have often pointed out why purely materialistic research cannot recognize the supreme value and profundity of the Gospel of St. John: it is because those who carry out this research cannot understand that a higher Initiate sees differently, more deeply, than the others. Those who have doubts about the Gospel of St. John attempt to establish a kind of conformity between the three synoptic Gospels. But conformity will be difficult to establish and sustain if it is based only upon the external, material happenings. What will be of particular importance in tomorrow's lecture, namely the life of Jesus of Nazareth *before* the Baptism by John, is described by two Evangelists, by the writers of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, and external, materialistic observation will find differences there that are in no way less than those which must be assumed to exist between the Gospel of St. John and the other three Gospels.

Let us take the facts: The writer of the Gospel of St. Matthew relates how the birth of the Creator of Christianity was announced beforehand, how the birth took place, how Magi, having seen the 'star', came from the East, being led by the star to the place where the Redeemer was born; he describes how Herod's attention was aroused and how, in order to escape the massacre of the babes in Bethlehem, the parents of the Redeemer fled with the child to Egypt; when Herod was dead it was made known to Joseph, the father of Jesus, that they might return, but for fear of Herod's successor they went to Nazareth instead of returning to Bethlehem.

To-day I will leave aside the Baptist's proclamation, but I want to draw attention to the fact that if we compare the Gospels of St. Luke and St. Matthew we find the annunciation of Jesus of Nazareth described quite differently; the one Gospel relates that it was made to Mary, the other that it was made to Joseph. From the Gospel of St. Luke we learn that the parents of Jesus of Nazareth lived at that place and went to Bethlehem on the occasion of the enrolling. While they were there, Jesus was born. Then came the circumcision, after eight days — nothing is said about a flight into Egypt — and a short time afterwards the child was presented in the temple; the customary offering having been made, the parents returned with the child to Nazareth. A remarkable incident is then described — how on the occasion of a visit with his parents to Jerusalem the twelve-year-old Jesus remained behind in the temple, how his parents sought and found him there among those who expounded the scriptures, how among the learned doctors of the Law he gave evidence of profound knowledge of the scriptures. Then it is related how the parents took the child home with them again, how he grew up ... and we hear nothing particular about him from that time until the Baptism by John.

Here we have two accounts of Jesus of Nazareth *before* the Christ descended into him. Whoever wishes to reconcile the accounts must consider how, according to the ordinary materialistic view, he can reconcile the story in the Gospel of St. Matthew that directly after the birth of Jesus his parents, Joseph and Mary, fled with the child into Egypt and subsequently returned, with the other story of the presentation in the temple narrated by St. Luke.

In these lectures we shall find that what seems a complete contradiction to the ordinary mind will be revealed as truth in the light of spiritual investigation. *Both accounts are true!* — although presented as accounts of events in the physical world

they are in apparent contradiction. Precisely the three synoptic Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke ought to compel people to adopt a spiritual conception of events in the history of humanity. For it is surely obvious that nothing is attained by ignoring apparent contradictions in such records or by speaking of 'fiction' when realities prove too great an obstacle.

We shall have opportunity here to speak of things of which there was no occasion to speak in detail when we were studying the Gospel of St. John namely, the events that took place before the Baptism by John and the descent of the Christ into the three bodies of Jesus of Nazareth. Many riddles of vital significance concerning the essence of Christianity will find their solution when — as the outcome of research into the Akashic Chronicle — we hear of the being and nature of Jesus of Nazareth before the Christ took possession of his three bodies.

Tomorrow we shall begin by considering the nature and the life of Jesus of Nazareth as revealed in the Akashic Chronicle, and then ask ourselves: How does the knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth compare with what is described in the Gospel of St. Luke as imparted by those who at that time were 'seers' or 'servants' of the Word, of the Logos?

## **Notes:**

1 This lecture-course was given by Dr. Steiner in Basle, November 1907. It has not been published in English. Other lecture-courses on the same subject, published in English, were given by him in Hamburg, May 1908, and in **Cassel, June–July 1909**. (See list of publications at the end of this volume.)

2 Revised edition, 1963. (Rudolf Steiner Press, London.)

3 See also Lectures Four and Five.



## LECTURE TWO

*The Gospel of St. Luke: an Expression of the Principle of Love and Compassion. The Missions of the Bodhisattvas and of the Buddha.*

Throughout the Christian era the Gospel of St. John was the text that made the strongest impression upon those who were trying to deepen their understanding of the cosmic mysteries of Christianity. This was the Gospel used by all the Christian mystics who were striving to mould their lives in accordance with its presentation of the personality and nature of Christ Jesus.

In the course of the centuries a somewhat different attitude was adopted by Christian humanity to the Gospel of St. Luke — an attitude altogether in keeping with the indications given in the last lecture, from another point of view, regarding the contrast between these two Gospels. Whereas the Gospel of St. John was in a certain sense a text for mystics, the Gospel of St. Luke was always a devotional book for humble folk, for those whose simplicity and innocence of heart enabled them to rise into the sphere of truly Christian feeling. The Gospel of St. Luke has been a book of devotion throughout the centuries. For all those who were bowed down with sorrow or suffering it was a fount of consolation, speaking with such tenderness of the great Comforter, the great Benefactor of mankind, the Saviour of the heavy-laden and oppressed. It was a book to which especially those who longed to be filled with Christian love turned their hearts and minds, because the power of love is revealed more clearly in this Gospel than in any other

Christian document. Those who were in any way conscious — and strictly speaking this applies to everyone — of having the burden of some guilt upon their hearts, at all times found consolation and edification when they turned to the Gospel of St. Luke and understood its message. They could say to themselves: Christ Jesus came not only for the righteous but also for sinners; He sat with publicans and transgressors. Whereas much preparation is necessary before the full power of St. John's Gospel can be realized, it may be said of St. Luke's Gospel that no nature is too immature to be aware of the warmth streaming from it. From the earliest times this Gospel was an inspiration to the most childlike of men. All that remains childlike in the human soul from tenderest youth to ripest age has always felt drawn to the Gospel of St. Luke. And as regards pictorial representations of Christian truths and what art has acquired from these truths, we find that although much is derived from the other Gospels, the indications for the most intimate messages conveyed to the human heart by forms of art, by paintings, are to be found precisely in the Gospel of St. Luke. The portrayals of the deep connection between Christ Jesus and John the Baptist have their source in this imperishable Gospel. Anyone who allows it to work upon his soul will find that from beginning to end it gives expression to the principle of love, compassion and innocence — in a certain sense, childlike innocence. Where else do we find such a tender portrayal of the childlike nature as in what is said of the childhood of Jesus of Nazareth in the Gospel of St. Luke? The reason will become clear as we penetrate more deeply into the words of this wonderful text.

It will be necessary now to say certain things that may seem paradoxical to those of you who have heard other lectures or courses of lectures given by me on the same subject. But if you will wait for the explanations to be given in the next lectures, you will realize that what I shall say is in harmony with what

you have previously heard from me about Christ Jesus and Jesus of Nazareth. The whole complicated range of truth cannot be presented all at once, and today I shall have to indicate an aspect of the Christian truths that may seem not to tally exactly with what has been said on some previous occasion. Our procedure must be, first to show how the separate currents of truth have developed and then the mutual agreement and harmony that finally become apparent. The Gospel of St. John was deliberately our starting-point, and I was naturally unable to indicate more than part of the truth in the various courses of lectures. What was said still holds good, as we shall see, although our attention to-day must be turned to an unusual aspect of Christian truths.

A wonderful passage in the Gospel of St. Luke describes how an Angel appeared to the shepherds in the fields and announced to them that the Saviour of the world was born. Then come the words: 'And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host.' Picture the scene to yourselves: as the shepherds look upwards the heavens open and the Beings of the spiritual world are revealed in sublime pictures.

What was the proclamation to the shepherds? It was clothed in momentous words, words that resounded through the whole of evolution and have become the Christmas message. Rightly rendered, these words would be as follows: 'The Divine Beings manifest themselves from on high, that peace may reign on the Earth below among men who are filled with good will!' The usual expression, 'glory' is entirely out of place here. The sentence is correct in the form I have now given, and the contrast should be clearly emphasized. What the shepherds saw was the manifestation of spiritual Beings from on high, and the revelation occurred when it did in order that peace might pour into human hearts that were filled with a good will. As we shall see, many mysteries of Christianity are

embodied in these words, provided only they are rightly understood. But certain preliminaries are necessary if light is to be thrown on this momentous proclamation. Above all we must endeavour to study the accounts available to clairvoyant faculties from the Akashic Chronicle. With opened eyes of spirit we must contemplate the epoch when Christ Jesus came to humanity, and ask ourselves: What was the historical background and the source of the spiritual impulse poured into Earth evolution at that time?

Currents of spiritual life from many different sides converged and flowed into the evolution of humanity at that point. The very diverse world-conceptions that had arisen in various regions of the Earth in the course of the ages converged in Palestine as though into one central point and came to expression in the events there. We may therefore ask: What are the sources of these streams?

It was indicated yesterday that in the Gospel of St. Luke we have the fruits of Imaginative Cognition, and that this knowledge is gained in the form of *pictures*. In the events just mentioned a picture is placed before us of the manifestation to the shepherds of spiritual Beings from on high: first, the picture is of a spiritual Being, an Angel, who is followed by a 'heavenly host'. Here we must ask: What does a clairvoyant initiated into the mysteries of existence see in this picture — which he can always evoke again at will — when he gazes into the Akashic Chronicle? What was it that was revealed to the shepherds? What was this angelic host, and whence did it come?

This picture portrays one of the great spiritual streams that flowed through the process of evolution, gradually rising higher and higher, until at the time of the events in Palestine its light could shine down upon the Earth only from spiritual heights. From the angelic host revealed to the shepherds, we

are led back, in deciphering the Akashic Chronicle, to one of the greatest streams of spiritual life in the evolution of humanity, a stream which, several centuries before the coming of Christ, spread far and wide in the form of Buddhism. An investigator of the Akashic Chronicle who traces back into previous ages the origin of the revelation to the shepherds, is led, strange as it will seem to you, to the 'Enlightenment' of the great Buddha. The light that shone out in India, setting men's hearts and minds astir as the religion of love and compassion, as a great world-conception, and even to-day is spiritual nourishment for a very large section of humanity — that light appeared again in the revelation to the shepherds! For it too was to stream into the revelation in Palestine. The account given at the beginning of St. Luke's Gospel cannot be understood unless we consider (again from the vantage-point of spiritual-scientific research) the significance of Buddha and what his revelation actually brought about in the course of human evolution.

When Buddha was born in the East, five to six centuries before our era, there appeared in him an Individuality who had lived many times on Earth and in the course of his previous incarnations had already reached the very lofty stage of human development designated by an Oriental expression as that of a 'Bodhisattva'. Some of you have heard lectures on different aspects of the nature of the Bodhisattvas. In the lecture-course *Spiritual Hierarchies and their Reflection in the physical World*, given in Düsseldorf some months ago, I spoke of how the Bodhisattvas are related to the whole of cosmic evolution; in Munich, in the lecture-course *The East in the Light of the West* [1] they were referred to from a different point of view. To-day we shall consider the nature of the Bodhisattvas from still another side and you will gradually perceive the harmony between the single truths.

He who became a Buddha had first to be a Bodhisattva; individual development to the rank of Buddhahood is preceded by the stage of 'Bodhisattva'. We will now think of the nature of the Bodhisattvas in relation to the evolution of humanity considered from the viewpoint of spiritual science.

The capacities and faculties possessed and developed by human beings in any particular epoch were not always in existence. To believe that the same faculties possessed by man to-day were also present in primeval times is due to incapacity and unwillingness to see beyond the present. Man's faculties, everything he is able to accomplish and know, vary from epoch to epoch. His faculties to-day are developed to the point where with his own power of reasoning he is justified in saying: 'I recognize this or that truth by means of my intelligence and my reason; I can recognize what is, moral or immoral, logical or illogical in a certain respect. But it would be a mistake to believe that these capacities for distinguishing the logical from the illogical or the moral from the immoral, were always to be found in human nature. They came into existence and developed gradually. What man can accomplish to-day by means of his *own* capacities, he had at one time to be taught — as a child is taught by its parents or teachers — by Beings who though incarnated among men were more highly developed by virtue of their spiritual faculties and could hold converse in the Mysteries with divine-spiritual Beings even loftier than themselves. Individualities who, though themselves incarnated in physical bodies, could have intercourse with still higher, non-incarnated Individualities, existed at all times. For example, before men acquired the faculty of logical thinking by means of which they themselves are able to think logically to-day, they were obliged to learn from certain teachers. These teachers themselves were not able to think logically through faculties developed in the physical body itself, but only through their intercourse in the

Mysteries with divine-spiritual Beings in higher realms. Such teachers proclaimed the principles of logic and morality from revelations they received from higher worlds in times before men themselves were able, out of their own earthly nature, to think logically or discover the principles of morality. The Bodhisattvas are one category of Beings who, though incarnated in physical bodies, have inter-course with divine-spiritual Beings in order to bring down and impart to men what they themselves learn from their divine Teachers. The Bodhisattva is, a Being incarnated in a human body, whose faculties enable him to commune with divine-spiritual Beings.

Before Gautama Buddha became a 'Buddha', he was a Bodhisattva, that is to say, an Individuality who, in the Mysteries, was able to commune with higher, divine-spiritual Beings. In remote, primeval ages of Earth evolution, a Being such as the Bodhisattva was entrusted in the higher world with a definite task, a definite mission, which he continues to discharge.

When the Earth was still in early stages of development, even before the Atlantean and Lemurian epochs, the Bodhisattva who was incarnated and became Buddha six hundred years before our era, was assigned a task which he never abandoned. From epoch to epoch, through every age, his work was to impart to Earth evolution as much as the beings concerned enabled it to receive. For each Bodhisattva there comes a time when, with the mission entrusted to him in the primeval past, he reaches a definite point — the point when what he has been able to let flow into humanity 'from above' can become a faculty of man's *own*. A human faculty to-day was once a faculty of divine-spiritual Beings brought down to man from spiritual heights by the Bodhisattvas. Hence there comes a time when a spiritual emissary such as a Bodhisattva can say; 'I have accomplished my mission. Humanity has now received that for which it has been prepared through many,

many epochs.' Having reached this point, the Bodhisattva can become 'Buddha'. That is to say, the time has come when he, as a Being with the particular mission to which I have referred, need no longer incarnate in a human physical body; he has incarnated for the last time in such a body and need not incarnate again as a spiritual emissary in the above sense.

This point of time arrived for Gautama Buddha. The task assigned to him had led him again and again down to the Earth; but he appeared in his final incarnation as Bodhisattva when, after his Enlightenment, he became Buddha. He incarnated in a human body that had developed to the highest possible stage those faculties which hitherto had had to be bestowed from above, but were now gradually to become *human* faculties in the fullest sense. When a Bodhisattva has succeeded through his foregoing development in making a human body so perfect that it can itself evolve the faculties connected with his particular mission, he need not incarnate again. He then hovers in spiritual realms, sending his influence into humanity, furthering and guiding human affairs. Henceforth it is the task of men to develop the gifts formerly bestowed upon them from heavenly heights, saying to themselves: 'We must now ourselves develop in a way that will further elaborate the faculties acquired in full measure for the first time in the incarnation when the Bodhisattva became Buddha.'

When the Being who works through successive epochs as Bodhisattva appears as one into whose human nature every faculty that previously flowed down from heavenly heights has been integrated and can now be expressed through him as an *individual* — that Being is a 'Buddha'. All this is revealed by Gautama Buddha. Had he, as Bodhisattva, withdrawn earlier from his mission, men could no longer have been blessed by the bestowal of these faculties from on high. But when evolution had progressed so far that these faculties could be



present in a single human being on Earth, the seed was laid that would enable men in the future to develop them in their own natures. Thus the Individuality who, as long as he was a Bodhisattva, did not enter fully into the human form but towered upwards into heavenly heights — this Individuality now for the first time drew completely into human nature and was fully embodied in that one incarnation. But then he again withdrew. For with this incarnation as Buddha a certain quatum of revelations had been given to humanity, thereafter to be developed further in men themselves. Hence the Bodhisattva, having become Buddha, might withdraw from the Earth to spiritual heights, might abide there and guide the affairs of humanity from regions where only a certain power of clairvoyance is able to behold him.

What, then, was the task of that supremely great Individuality usually called the 'Buddha'?

If we want to understand the task and mission of this Buddha in the sense of true esoterism, we must realize the following. The cognitive faculty of mankind has developed gradually. Attention has repeatedly been drawn to the fact that in the Atlantean epoch a large proportion of humanity was clairvoyant and able to gaze into the spiritual worlds, and that certain remnants of this old clairvoyance were still present in post-Atlantean times. After the Atlantean epoch, in the periods of the civilizations of ancient India, Persia, Egypt and Chaldea — even as late as the Graeco-Latin age — there were numbers of human beings, many more than modern man would ever imagine, who possessed the heritage of this old clairvoyance; the astral plane was open to them and they could see into the hidden depths of existence. Perception of man's etheric body was quite usual in the Graeco-Latin age; numbers of people were able to see the human head surrounded by an etheric cloud that has gradually become entirely concealed within the head. But humanity was to

advance to a form of knowledge acquired through the outer senses and through the spiritual faculties connected with the senses. Man was gradually to emerge altogether from the spiritual world and to engage in pure sense-observation, in intellectual, logical thinking. By degrees he was to make his way to non-clairvoyant cognition, because he must pass through this stage in order to regain clairvoyant knowledge in the future. But such knowledge will then be united with the fruits of cognition based upon the senses and the intellect.

At the present time we are living in an intermediate period. We look back to a past when man was clairvoyant, and to a future when this will again be the case. In our present age the majority of human beings are dependent upon what they perceive with their senses and grasp with their intellect. There are, of course, certain heights even in sensory perception and in knowledge yielded by the intellect and reasoning mind; everywhere there are 'degrees of knowledge'. One person in a certain incarnation passes through his existence on Earth with little insight into what is moral, and little compassion for his fellow-men. We say of him that he is at a low stage of morality. Another passes through life with very slightly developed intellectual capacities; we call him a person of low intelligence. But these powers of intellectual cognition are capable of rising to a very lofty level. A man whom, in Fichte's sense, we call a 'moral genius' reaches the highest level of moral Imagination but there are many intermediate stages. Without possessing clairvoyant faculties we can reach this height only by ennobling powers that are at the disposal of ordinary humanity. These stages had to be attained by man in the course of Earth evolution. What man knows to-day to a certain extent through his own intelligence and also what he attains through his own moral strength, namely the consciousness that he must have compassion with the sufferings and sorrows of others — this consciousness could

not have been acquired by a human being in primeval times through his own efforts. It can be said to-day that such insight is unfolded by a healthy moral sense, even without clairvoyance, and to an increasing extent men will come to realize not only that compassion is the very highest virtue but that without love humanity can make no progress.

Man's moral sense will grow steadily stronger. But there were epochs in the past when he would never have understood by himself that compassion and love belong to a very high stage of development. It was therefore necessary for spiritual Beings such as the Bodhisattvas to incarnate in human forms. Revelations of the power of compassion and love came to such Beings from the higher worlds and they were able to teach men how to act accordingly. What men have come to recognize to-day through their *own* powers as the lofty virtues of compassion and love — this had to be taught, through epoch after epoch, from heavenly heights.

The Teacher of love and compassion in times when men themselves did not yet realize the nature of those virtues was the Bodhisattva who incarnated for the last time as Gautama Buddha. Buddha was formerly the Bodhisattva, the Teacher of love and compassion. He was the Teacher throughout the epochs just referred to, when men still possessed a certain natural clairvoyance. As Bodhisattva he incarnated in bodies endowed with powers of clairvoyance. Then, when he became Buddha and looked back into these previous incarnations, he could describe the experiences of his inmost soul when it gazed into the depths of existence hidden behind sense-phenomena. He possessed this faculty in previous embodiments and was born with it into the family of Sakya from which his father, Suddhodana, descended. When Gautama was born he was still a Bodhisattva, that is to say he came at the stage of development reached in his previous incarnations. He who is usually called the 'Buddha' was born

to his father Suddhodana and his mother Mayadevi as a Bodhisattva and possessed the faculty of clairvoyance in a high degree even as a child. He was always able to gaze into the depths of existence.

Let us realize that in the course of human evolution this capacity to gaze into the depths of existence has assumed very definite forms. It was the mission of humanity in earthly evolution to allow the old, dim clairvoyance gradually to die away; vestiges that persisted did not, therefore, retain the best elements of that ancient faculty. The best elements were the first to be lost. What remained was often a lower form of vision of the astral world, a vision of those demonic forces which drag man's instincts and passions to a lower level. Through Initiation we can look into the spiritual world and perceive forces and beings that are connected with the finest thoughts and sentiments of men, but we also perceive the spiritual powers behind unbridled passions, sensuality, consuming egoism. The vestiges of clairvoyance in the majority of human beings — it was different, of course, in the Initiates — led to vision of these wild, demonic powers behind the lower human passions. Whoever is able to see into the spiritual world can of course perceive all this himself; true vision depends upon the development of human faculties. But the one vision cannot be attained without the other.

As a Bodhisattva the Buddha had been obliged to incarnate in a body constituted as other human bodies were at that time. The body in which he incarnated provided him with the power to look deeply into the astral substrata of existence and even as a child he was able to perceive all the astral forces underlying the unbridled passions of men, their consuming lusts and sensuality. He had been protected from witnessing physical depravity in the outer world, with its accompanying sufferings and sorrows. Confined to his father's palace, shielded from every unpleasant experience, he was indulged

and pampered in a way considered fitting for his rank. But this seclusion only enhanced his power of vision, and while he was carefully protected and everything indicative of pain and sickness hidden from him, his eyes of spirit were able to gaze at the astral pictures hovering around him of all the wild, degrading passions of men. Whoever can read the external biography of Buddha with genuine esoteric insight will surmise this. It must be emphasized that in exoteric accounts there is often a great deal that cannot be understood without knowledge of the esoteric foundations — and this applies very particularly to the life of Buddha.

It must seem strange to Orientalists and others who study the life of Buddha to read that he was surrounded in the palace by 'forty thousand dancing-girls and eighty-four thousand women'. That statement is to be found in books sold to-day for a few shillings and the writers are obviously not particularly astonished at the existence of such a harem! What is the explanation? It is not realized that this points to the intensity of the experiences that arose in Buddha through his astral visions. Guarded from childhood against all knowledge of sorrow and suffering in the world of physical humanity, he perceived everything as spiritual forces in the spiritual world. He saw all this because he was born into a body such as could be produced at that time; but from the outset he was proof against the delusive pictures around him, having in his previous incarnations risen to the height of a Bodhisattva. Because in this incarnation he was living as the Bodhisattva he felt impelled to go out into the world in order to see the things indicated by the pictures appearing in the astral world around him in the palace. Every picture kindled within him an urge to go out and see the world, to leave his prison. That was the impelling urge in his soul, for as Bodhisattva there was in him the lofty spiritual power connected with the mission of imparting to mankind the teaching of compassion and love,

with all its implications. Hence it was necessary for him to become acquainted with humanity in the world in which man can assimilate this teaching through moral insight. Buddha was to acquire knowledge of the life of humanity in the physical world. From Bodhisattva he was to become Buddha — as a man among men. The only possibility of achieving this was to abandon all the faculties that had remained to him from his former incarnations and to turn outwards to the physical plane in order to live there among men as a model, an ideal, an example to humanity of the development of these qualities.

Naturally, many intermediate stages are necessary before an advance from the stage of Bodhisattva to that of Buddha can be accomplished in this sense. Such an advance does not take place from one day to the next.

Buddha felt impelled to leave the palace. The story is that on one occasion he escaped from his royal prison and came across an aged man. Hitherto he had been surrounded only by the spectacle of exuberant youth, in order to induce him to believe that nothing else existed. Now, in the old man, he encountered the phenomenon of advanced age on the physical plane. Then he came across a sick man; then he saw a corpse — the manifestation of death on the physical plane. All this came before him. The legend — here once again truer than any external account — goes on to relate something very indicative of Buddha's essential nature: that when he left the palace, the horse by which he was drawn was so saddened by his decision to forsake everything that had surrounded him since his birth that it died of grief and was transported as a spiritual being into the spiritual world. [2] — A profound truth is expressed here. It would lead too far for me to explain why a horse is taken as a symbol for a spiritual power of man. I will only remind you of Plato, who speaks of a horse led by a bridle when he is using a symbol for certain human capacities that

are still bestowed from above and have not been developed by man from his own inmost self. When Buddha departed from the palace he relinquished these faculties, left them in the spiritual world whence they had always guided him. This is indicated in the picture of the horse which dies of grief and is transported into the spiritual world. But it was only gradually that Buddha could attain the rank he was destined to reach in his final incarnation on the Earth. He had first to learn on the physical plane everything that as Bodhisattva he had known only through spiritual vision.

To begin with he encountered two teachers, the one an exponent of the ancient Indian world-conception known as the Sankhya philosophy, the other an exponent of the Yoga philosophy. Buddha steeped himself in what they expounded to him. No matter how exalted a being may be, he has to become acquainted with the external achievements of humanity and although a Bodhisattva may learn more quickly, he must learn none the less. If the Bodhisattva who lived six hundred years before our era were born to-day, he would still, like a child at school, first have to learn about happenings on Earth while he was still in spiritual heights. It was essential that Buddha too, should have knowledge of what had been accomplished since his previous incarnation.

He learnt the principles of the Sankhya philosophy from the one teacher and of the Yoga philosophy from the other, thereby acquiring a certain insight into world-conceptions which solved the riddles of life for many in those days, and into their effect upon the souls of men. In the Sankhya philosophy he was able to assimilate an intricate system of logical thought, but the more he familiarized himself with it, the less did it satisfy him, until finally it seemed to him to be utterly devoid of life. He realized that he must seek elsewhere than in the traditional Sankhya philosophy for the sources of what it was his task to achieve in this incarnation.

The second system was the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali, which sought to establish connection with the Divine through certain processes in the life of the soul. Buddha devoted deep study to the Yoga philosophy as well; he assimilated it, made it part of his very being. But it too left him unsatisfied, for he perceived that it was something that had simply been handed down from ancient time. Human beings were meant, however, to acquire different faculties, to achieve moral development *themselves*. Having put the Yoga philosophy to the test in his own soul, Buddha realized that it could not satisfy the needs of his mission.

He then came into the neighbourhood of five ascetics who had striven to approach the mysteries of existence by the path of severest self-discipline, mortification and privation. Having tested this path too, Buddha was again obliged to admit that it would not satisfy the needs of his mission at that time. For a certain period he underwent all the privations and mortifications practised by the monks. He starved as they did, in order to eliminate greed and thereby evoke deeper forces which come into action when the body is weakened and then, rising up from the depths of the bodily nature, can lead a man rapidly into the spiritual world. But the stage of development he had reached enabled Buddha to perceive the futility of this mortification, fasting and starvation. Because he was a Bodhisattva, his development in previous incarnations had enabled him to bring the physical body to the highest pitch of perfection possible in that age. Hence he could experience what any man must experience when he takes this particular path into the spiritual world. Whoever pursues the Sankhya or Yoga philosophy to a certain point without having developed in himself what Buddha had previously acquired, whoever aspires to scale the pure heights of Divine Spirit through logical thinking without having first gained the requisite moral strength, will be subjected to temptation by the demon



Mara. This ordeal was undergone by Buddha as a test. At this point the human being is beset by all the devils of pride, vanity and ambition, as was Buddha when Mara stood before him. But having previously reached the lofty stage of Bodhisattva, he recognized the demon and was proof against him. Buddha could say to himself: If men continue to develop along the old path, without the new impulse contained in the teaching of compassion and love, they are bound, not being Bodhisattvas, to fall prey to the demon Mara, who pours all the forces of pride and vanity into their souls.

This was what Buddha experienced when he had worked through the Sankhya and Yoga philosophies, following them to their final conclusions. While he was with the monks, however, he had had an experience in which the demon assumed a different form, one in which he arrays before the human being an abundance of external, physical possessions — ‘the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them’ — in order to divert him from the spiritual world. Buddha found that this temptation comes precisely on the path of mortification, for the demon Mara approached him, saying: ‘Be not misled into abandoning everything that was yours as a king's son; return to the royal palace!’ Another man would have yielded to what was then presented to him, but Buddha's development was such that he could see through the tempter and his aim, could perceive what would befall humanity if men lived on as hitherto and chose the path of hunger and mortification as the only means of ascent into the spiritual world. Being himself proof against this temptation he could disclose to men the great danger that would threaten them if they chose to penetrate into the spiritual world simply by means of fasting and external measures of the kind, without the foundation of an active moral sense.

Thus while still a Bodhisattva, Buddha had advanced to those two boundary-points in development which a man who is not a Bodhisattva had better avoid altogether. Translating this into words of ordinary parlance, we may say: 'The highest knowledge is full of glory and of beauty. But see that you approach this knowledge with a clean heart, noble purpose and purified soul — otherwise the devil of pride, vanity and ambition will seize you!' The second teaching is this: 'Strive not to enter the spiritual world by any external path, through mortification or fasting, until, you have purified your moral sense — otherwise the tempter will approach you from the other side!' — These are the two teachings whose light shines from Buddha into our own age. While still a Bodhisattva he revealed the essential purpose of his mission — which was to impart the moral sense to humanity in an age when men were not yet capable of unfolding it out of their own hearts. Thus when he realized the dangers of asceticism for mankind he left the five monks and went to a place where, by an intense deepening of those faculties of human nature which can be developed without the old clairvoyance, without any capacity inherited from earlier times, he achieved the highest perfection that it will ever be possible for mankind to achieve by means of these faculties.

In the twenty-ninth year of his life, after having abandoned the path of asceticism, there dawned upon Buddha during his seven days of meditation under the 'Bodhi-tree' the great Truths that can flash up in a man when, in deep contemplation, he strives to discover what his own faculties can impart to him. There dawned upon Buddha the great teachings he then proclaimed as the *Four Truths* and the doctrine of compassion and love presented as the *Eightfold Path*. We shall be considering these teachings of Buddha later on. At the moment it will be sufficient to say that they are a kind of portrayal of the moral sense and of the purest doctrine

of compassion and love. They arose when, under the 'Bodhi-tree', the Bodhisattva of India became Buddha. The teaching of compassion and love came into existence then for the first time in the history of mankind in the form of *human faculties* which man has since been able to develop from his own very self. That is the essential point. Therefore shortly before his death Buddha said to his disciples: 'Grieve not that the Master is departing. I am leaving with you the Law of Wisdom and the Law of Discipline. For the future they will serve as substitutes for the Master.' These words mean simply: Hitherto the *Bodhisattva* has taught you what is expressed in the Law; now, having fulfilled his incarnation on Earth, he may withdraw. For men will absorb into their own hearts the teaching of the Bodhisattva and from their own hearts will be able to develop this teaching as the religion of compassion and love. That was what came to pass in India when, after seven days of inner contemplation, the Bodhisattva became Buddha; and that was what he taught in diverse forms to the pupils who were around him. The actual forms in which he gave his teaching will still have to be considered.

It was necessary for us to-day to look back to what happened six hundred years before our era because we shall neither understand the path of Christianity nor what is indicated about that path, above all by the writer of the Gospel of St. Luke, unless we follow evolution backwards from the events in Palestine to the Sermon at Benares. Since Buddha attained that rank there was no need for him to return to the Earth; since then he has been a spiritual Being, living in the spiritual world and participating in everything that has transpired on Earth. When the greatest of all happenings on the Earth was about to come to pass, there appeared to the shepherds in the fields a Being from spiritual heights who made the proclamation recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke. Then, together with the Angel, there suddenly appeared a 'heavenly

host'. The 'heavenly host' was the picture of the *glorified Buddha*, seen by the shepherds in vision; he was the Bodhisattva of ancient times, the Being in his spiritual form who for thousands and thousands of years had brought to men the message of compassion and love. Now, after his last incarnation on the Earth, he soared in spiritual heights and appeared to the shepherds together with the Angel who had announced to them the Event of Palestine.

These are the findings of spiritual investigation. It was the Bodhisattva of old who now, in the glory of Buddhahood, appeared to the shepherds. From the Akashic Chronicle we learn that in Palestine, in the 'City of David', a child was born to parents descended from the priestly line of the House of David. This child — I say it with emphasis — born of parents of whom the father at any rate was descended from the priestly line of the House of David, was to be shone upon from the very day of birth by the power radiating from Buddha in the spiritual world. We look with the shepherds into the manger where 'Jesus of Nazareth', as he is usually called, was born, and see the radiance above the little child; we know that in this picture is expressed the power of the Bodhisattva who became Buddha — the power that had formerly streamed to men and, working now upon humanity from the spiritual world, accomplished its greatest deed by shedding its lustre upon the child born at Bethlehem.

When the Individuality whose power now rayed down from spiritual heights upon the child of parents belonging to David's line was born in India long ago — when the Buddha to be was born as Bodhisattva — the whole momentous significance of the events described to-day was revealed to a sage living at that time, and what he beheld in the spiritual world caused that sage — Asita was his name — to go to the royal palace to look for the little Bodhisattva-child. When he saw the babe he foretold his mighty mission as Buddha,

predicting, to the father's dismay, that the child would not rule over his kingdom, but would become a Buddha. Then Asita began to weep, and when asked whether misfortune threatened the child, he answered: 'No, I am weeping because I am so old that I shall not live to see the day when this Saviour, the Bodhisattva, will walk the Earth as Buddha!' Asita did not live to see the Bodhisattva become Buddha and there was good reason for his grief at that time. But the same Asita who had seen the Bodhisattva as a babe in the palace of King Suddhodana, was born again as the personality who, in the Gospel of St. Luke, is referred to as Simeon in the scene of the presentation in the temple. We are told that Simeon was inspired by the Spirit to go into the temple where the child was brought to him (Luke II, 25–32). Simeon was the same being who, as Asita, had wept because in that incarnation he would not be able to see the Bodhisattva attaining Buddhahood. But it was granted to him to witness the further stage in the development of this Individuality, and having 'the Holy Spirit upon him' he was able to perceive, at the presentation in the temple, the radiance of the glorified Bodhisattva above the head of the Jesus-child of the House of David. Then he could say to himself: 'Now you need no longer grieve, for what you did not live to see at that earlier time, you now behold: the glory of the Saviour shining above this babe. Lord, now let thy servant die in peace!'

## Notes:

1 These lectures-courses were given in **April 1909**, and **August 1909**, respectively. Both have been translated into English.

2 See *Buddhism in Translation*, by Henry Clarke Warren (Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. III, second issue). This legend is given in great detail in the chapter entitled *The Great Retirement*, pp. 56–67. Difficult passages referring to "Kanthaka the king of horses" become intelligible in the light of what Dr. Steiner says here. According to the legend, Kanthaka came into existence "at the very time that the future Buddha was born" and died of a broken heart at the final parting from his master, thereupon to be reborn in heaven as the "God Kanthaka".

## LECTURE THREE

*The Influx of Buddhistic Conceptions into the Gospel of St. Luke. The Teaching of Buddha. The Eightfold Path.*

Whoever turns to the Gospel of St. Luke will, to begin with, only be able to feel dimly something of what it contains; but an inkling will then dawn on him that whole worlds, vast spiritual worlds, are revealed by this Gospel. After what was said in the last lecture, this will be obvious to us, for as we heard, spiritual research shows how the Buddhistic world-conception, with everything it was able to give to mankind, flowed into the Gospel of St. Luke. It may truly be said that Buddhism radiates from this Gospel, but in a special form, comprehensible to the simplest and most unsophisticated mind.

As could be gathered from the last lecture and will become particularly clear to-day, to understand Buddhism as presented to the world in the teachings of the great Buddha demands the application of lofty conceptions and an ascent to the pure, ethereal heights of the Spirit; a very great deal of preparation is required to grasp the essence of Buddhism. Its spiritual substance is contained in the Gospel of St. Luke in a form that can influence everyone who recognizes concepts and ideas that are essential for humanity. This will be readily understood when we get to the root of the mystery underlying the Gospel of St. Luke. Not only are the spiritual attainments of Buddhism presented to us through this Gospel; they come before us in an even nobler form, as though raised to a level higher than when they were a gift to humanity in India some

six hundred years before our era.

In the lecture yesterday we spoke of Buddhism as the purest teaching of compassion and love; from the place in the world where Buddha worked a gospel of love and compassion streamed into the whole spiritual evolution of the Earth. The gospel of love and compassion lives in the true Buddhist when his own heart feels the suffering confronting him in the outer world from all living creatures. There we encounter Buddhistic love and compassion in the fullest sense of the words; but from the Gospel of St. Luke there streams to us something that is more than this all-embracing love and compassion. It might be described as the translation of love and compassion into *deed*. Compassion in the highest sense of the word is the ideal of the Buddhist; the aim of one who lives according to the message of the Gospel of St. Luke is to unfold love that *acts*. The true Buddhist can himself share in the sufferings of the sick; from the Gospel of St. Luke comes the call to take active steps to do whatever is possible to bring about healing. Buddhism helps us to understand everything that stirs the human soul; the Gospel of St. Luke calls upon us to abstain from passing judgment, to do *more* than is done to us, to give *more* than we receive! Although in this Gospel there is the purest, most genuine Buddhism, love translated into deed must be regarded as a progression, a sublimation, of Buddhism.

This aspect of Christianity — Buddhism raised to a higher level — could be truly described only by one possessed of the heart and disposition of the writer of the Gospel of St. Luke. It was eminently possible for him to portray Christ Jesus as the Healer of body and soul because having himself worked as a physician he was able to write in the way that appealed so deeply to the hearts of men. That he recorded what he had to say about Christ Jesus from the standpoint of a physician will become more and more apparent as we penetrate into the



depths of the Gospel.

But something else strikes us when we consider what an impression this Gospel can make upon even the most childlike natures. The lofty teachings of Buddhism, to understand which mature intelligence is required, appear to us in the Gospel of St. Luke as though rejuvenated, as though born anew from a fountain of youth. Buddhism is a fruit on the tree of humanity, and when we find it again in this Gospel it seems to be like a rejuvenation of what it had previously been. It is only possible to understand this rejuvenation by paying close attention to the great Buddha's teachings themselves and discerning with spiritual eyes the powers working in Buddha's soul.

In the first place it must be remembered that the Buddha had been a Bodhisattva, that is to say, a very lofty Being able to gaze deeply into the mysteries of existence. As a Bodhisattva, the Buddha had participated in the evolution of humanity throughout the ages. When in the epoch following Atlantis the first post-Atlantean civilization was established and promoted, Buddha was already present as Bodhisattva and, acting as an intermediary, conveyed to man from the spiritual worlds the teachings indicated in the lecture yesterday. He had been present in Atlantean and even in Lemurian times. And because he had reached such a high stage of development, he was also able, during the twenty-nine years of his final existence as Bodhisattva, from his birth to the moment when he became Buddha, to recollect stage by stage all the communities in which he had lived before incarnating for the last time in India. He could look back upon his participation in the labours of humanity, upon his existence in the divine-spiritual worlds in order that he might bring down from there what it was his mission to impart to mankind. It was indicated yesterday that even an Individuality of this lofty rank must live through again, briefly at any rate, what he has

already learnt. Thus Buddha describes how while still a Bodhisattva he gradually rose to higher stages of consciousness, how his spiritual vision became ever more perfect and his enlightenment complete.

We are told how he described to his disciples the path his soul had traversed and how he was able by degrees to recollect his experiences in the past. He spoke to them somewhat as follows. ‘There was a time, O ye monks, when an all-pervading light appeared to me from the spiritual world, but as yet I could distinguish nothing in it — neither forms, nor pictures: my enlightenment was not yet pure enough. Then I began to see not only the light, but single pictures, single forms, within the light; but I could not distinguish what these forms and pictures denoted: my enlightenment was not yet pure enough. Then I began to realize that spiritual beings were expressing themselves in these forms and pictures; but again I could not distinguish to what kingdoms of the spiritual world these beings belonged: my enlightenment was not yet pure enough. Then I learnt to know to which of the various kingdoms of the spiritual world these several beings belonged; but I could not yet distinguish through what actions they had acquired their place in the spiritual realms, nor what was their condition of soul: for my enlightenment was not yet pure enough. Then came the time when I could discern through what actions these spiritual beings had acquired their place in the spiritual realms, and what was their condition of soul; but I could not yet distinguish with which particular spiritual beings I myself had lived in former times, nor how I was related to them: for my enlightenment was not yet pure enough. Then came the time when I was able to know that I was together with certain beings in particular epochs and was related to them in this way or in that: I knew what my previous lives had been. Now my enlightenment was pure!’

In this way Buddha indicated to his disciples how he had gradually worked his way to knowledge which, although he had already attained it in an earlier epoch, had nevertheless to be freshly acquired in accordance with the conditions prevailing in each successive incarnation. In Buddha's case this knowledge had necessarily to be in a form in keeping with his complete descent into a physical human body. If we enter into these things with the right feeling we shall get an inkling of the greatness and significance of the Individuality who incarnated at that time in the King's son of the family of Sakya. Buddha knew that the world he himself could again experience and behold would be inaccessible to men's ordinary faculty of vision in the immediate present and future. Only 'Initiates' — and Buddha himself was an Initiate — could gaze into the spiritual world; for normal humanity this was no longer possible. Inherited remains of the old clairvoyance had become increasingly rare. But Buddha had not come to speak to men only of what Initiates had to say; his primary mission was to convey to them knowledge of the forces that must flow *out of the human soul itself*. Hence he could not speak only of the fruits of his own enlightenment, but he said to himself: 'I must speak to men of what they can attain through the higher development of their *own inner nature* and of the faculties belonging to this epoch.

In the course of Earth evolution men will gradually come to recognize the content of Buddha's teaching as something that their own reason, their own soul, tells them. But long, long ages will have to pass before all men are mature enough to produce *out of their own souls* what Buddha was the first to bring to expression in the form of pure knowledge. For to develop certain faculties in later ages is not the same as bring them forth for the first time from the depths of the human soul. Let us take another example. To-day, even the young are able to assimilate the principles of logic and unfold

logical thinking. Logical thinking is now one of the general faculties possessed by man and developed from his own inner nature. But it was in Aristotle, the great Greek thinker, that this faculty first arose from a human soul. There is a difference between bringing forth something for the first time from the soul and bringing it forth after it has already been developing for a period in humanity.

Buddha's message to men was among the very greatest of teachings and will remain so for long, long ages. Hence the soul of a Bodhisattva, the soul of one enlightened to such a supreme degree, was needed in order that this teaching should for the first time become a living power in a human being. Only the highest degree of enlightenment could enable the soul to give birth to what was to become a universal endowment of mankind — namely, the lofty doctrine of compassion and love. Buddha's message had to be presented in words familiar to the humanity of that time, especially to the people of his homeland. Reference has already been made to the fact that at the time of Buddha the Sankhya and Yoga philosophies were being taught in India. From them were derived the terminologies and concepts in use at the time. Anyone who brought a new message had necessarily to use current parlance, and Buddha too clothed what was living within him in concepts familiar to his contemporaries. True, he re-cast these concepts into completely new forms but he was obliged to use them. The principle of all evolution must be that the future is based on the past. And so Buddha clothed his sublime wisdom in expressions customary in the Indian teachings of that time.

We must now try to picture what Buddha experienced during the seven-day period of his 'Enlightenment' under the Bodhi-tree. This teaching was to become the deepest, most intimate concern of mankind. Let us therefore try to conceive, even if with thoughts only approximately adequate, what profound

experiences were undergone by Buddha under the Bodhi-tree and then came to expression in his soul.

He might have said that there were times in the ancient past when many human beings were dimly clairvoyant and that in an even more distant past this was the case with everyone.

What does it mean — to be ‘dimly clairvoyant’, or ‘clairvoyant’? To be clairvoyant means to be able to use the organs of the *etheric body*. When a man is able to use the organs of his astral body only, he can, it is true, inwardly feel and experience profound mysteries, but there can be no actual vision. Clairvoyance cannot arise until what is experienced in the astral body makes its ‘impress’ in the etheric body. Even the old, dim clairvoyance originated from the fact that in the etheric body, which had not yet passed completely into the physical body, there were organs which it was still possible for ancient humanity to use. What, therefore, was it that men lost in the course of time? They lost the capacity to use the organs of the etheric body! They were obliged to make use of the external organs of the physical body only, experiencing in the astral body, in the form of thoughts, feelings and mental pictures, what the physical body transmitted. All this passed through the soul of the great Buddha as the expression of what he experienced. He said to himself: ‘Men have lost the capacity to use the organs of their etheric bodies. They experience in their astral bodies what they learn from the outer world through the instrumentality of their physical bodies.’

Buddha now concerned himself with this significant question: ‘When the eye perceives the colour red, when the ear hears a sound, a tone, when the sense of taste has received some impression, under normal conditions these impressions become concepts and ideas, are inwardly experienced in the astral body. If they were experienced in this way alone, they

could not, in normal circumstances, be accompanied by pain and suffering. Were man simply to abandon himself to the impressions of the outer world as the latter with its light, colours, sounds, and so forth, affects his senses, he would pass through the world without experiencing pain and suffering from the impressions made upon him. Only under certain conditions can pain and suffering be experienced by man.'

Hence the great Buddha sought to discover the conditions under which man experiences pain, suffering, cares and afflictions. When and why do the impressions of the outer world become fraught with suffering? Then he said to himself: Looking back into ancient times, it is revealed that in men's earlier incarnations on the Earth certain beings worked into their astral bodies from two sides. In the course of incarnations through the epochs of Lemuria and Atlantis, the Luciferic beings penetrated into human nature, and their influences took actual effect in the human astral body. Then, from the Atlantean epoch onwards, man was also worked upon by beings under the leadership of Ahriman. Thus in the course of his earlier incarnations, man was subjected to the influences of both the Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings. Had these beings not worked upon him, he could have acquired neither freedom nor the capacity to distinguish between good and evil, nor free will. From a higher point of view, therefore, it is fortunate that these influences were exercised upon him, although it is true that in a certain respect they led him from divine-spiritual heights more deeply into material existence than he would otherwise have descended.

The great Buddha could therefore say that man bears within himself influences due to the invasion of Lucifer on the one side and Ahriman on the other. These influences have remained with him from earlier incarnations. When, with his old clairvoyance, man was still able to gaze into the spiritual world, he perceived the influences of Lucifer and Ahriman and

could clearly distinguish them. He could say: This particular influence comes from Lucifer, this other from Ahriman. And inasmuch as with his vision of the astral world he perceived the harmful influences of Lucifer and Ahriman, he could reckon with and protect himself from them. He knew too, how he had come into contact with these Beings. There was a time — so said Buddha — when men knew whence came the influences they had borne within themselves from incarnation to incarnation since bygone ages. But with the loss of the old clairvoyance this knowledge was also lost; man is now ignorant of the influences that have worked upon his soul through the series of incarnations. The earlier clairvoyant knowledge has been replaced by ignorance. Darkness now envelops man; he cannot perceive whence come these influences of Lucifer and Ahriman, but they are there within him! He has within him something of which he knows nothing. It would be folly to deny the reality and effectiveness of something that exists, even though people are ignorant of it. The influences that have penetrated into man from incarnation to incarnation are working in him. They are there and they work through his whole life — only he is unaware of them!

What effect have these influences in man? Although he cannot actually recognize them for what they are, he feels them; there is a power within him that is the expression of what has continued from incarnation to incarnation and has entered into his present form of existence. These forces, the nature of which man cannot recognize, are represented by his desire for external life, for experience in the world, by his thirst and craving for life. Thus the ancient Luciferic and Ahrimanic influences work within man as the thirst, the craving for existence. This 'thirst for existence' continues from incarnation to incarnation. This, in effect, is what the great Buddha said. But to his intimate pupils he gave more detailed

explanations.

How he presented what he thus felt can be understood only if there has been a certain preparation through Anthroposophy. We know that when a man dies his astral body and his Ego leave the physical and etheric bodies. Then he has before him, for a certain time, the great memory-tableau of his last life in the form of a vast picture. The main part of his etheric body is then cast off as a second corpse and something like an extract or essence of this etheric body remains; he bears this extract with him through the periods of Kamaloka and Devachan and brings it back again into his next incarnation. While he is in Kamaloka there is inscribed into this life-extract everything he has experienced through his deeds, everything that has been incurred in the way of human Karma and for which he has to make compensation. All this unites with the extract of the etheric body which passes on from one incarnation to another and man brings it with him when he again comes into existence through birth. The term in Oriental literature for what we call 'etheric body' is 'Linga Sharira'. Thus it is an extract of Linga Sharira that man takes with him from incarnation to incarnation.

Buddha was able to say: At birth, the human being brings with him, in his Linga Sharira, everything it contains from his former incarnations; it is inscribed there everything of which man, in the present epoch, knows nothing and over which spreads the darkness of ignorance, although it asserts itself as the 'thirst for existence', the 'craving for life'. In what is called the 'craving for life', Buddha saw everything that comes from previous incarnations and drives man to long avidly for enjoyment in the world, so that he does not merely move through the world of colours, tones and other impressions, but yearns for this world. This force exists in man from previous incarnations. Buddha's pupils called it 'Samskara'. Buddha spoke to his intimate pupils to the following effect. — What is



characteristic of man is his ignorance, his 'non-perception' of something very significant that is in him. Because of this ignorance, this non-perception, everything that confronts man from the Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings and to which he might otherwise adopt an effective attitude, is transformed into the 'thirst for existence', into slumbering forces which rumble darkly within him from previous incarnations. Man's present thinking has developed from 'Samskara' and this is why, in the present cycle of human evolution, nobody is able, without further effort, to think objectively.

Mark well the fine distinction made clear by Buddha to his pupils: the distinction between objective thinking which has nothing but the 'object' in view, and thinking influenced by the forces arising from the Linga Sharira. Consider how you acquire your 'opinions' about things; ask yourselves how much you acquire from these things because they please you and how much because you observe them objectively. Everything acquired as an apparent truth, not as the result of objective thinking, but because old inclinations have been brought from previous incarnations — all this, according to Buddha, forms an 'inner organ of thought'. This organ of thought comprises the sum-total of what a man thinks because certain experiences in former incarnations remain in his Linga Sharira as a residue. Buddha saw in the inner being of man a kind of inner organ of thought formed from Samskara, and he said: 'It is this thought-substance that forms in man what is called his 'present individuality' — in Buddhism, 'Name and Form', or 'Kamarupa'. 'Ahamkara' is the term used in another philosophy.

Buddha spoke to his pupils somewhat as follows. In primeval times, when men were still clairvoyant and beheld the world lying behind physical existence, they all, in a certain sense, saw the same, for the objective world is the same for everyone. But when the darkness of ignorance spread over the world,

each man brought with him individual capacities which distinguished him from his fellows. This made him into a being best described as having a particular form of soul. Each human being had a name which distinguished him from another — each had an 'Ahamkara'. What is thus created in man's inner nature under the influence of what he has brought with him from former incarnations and accounts for his 'Name and Form', his individuality — this builds in him, from within outwards, Manas and the five sense-organs, the so-called '*six organs*'.

Note well that Buddha did not say: 'The eye is merely formed from within outwards'; but he said: 'Something that was in Linga Sharira and has been brought over from previous stages of existence is membered into the eye.' Hence the eye does not see with pure, unclouded vision; it would look into the world of outer existence quite differently if it were not inwardly permeated with the residue of earlier stages of existence. Hence the ear does not hear with full clarity but everything is dimmed by this residue. The result is that there is mingled into all things the desire to see this or that, to hear this or that, to taste or perceive in one way or another. Into everything man encounters in the present cycle of existence there is insinuated what has remained from earlier incarnations as 'desire'. If this element of desire were absent — so said Buddha — man would look out into the world as a divine being; he would let the world work upon him and no longer desire anything more than is granted to him, nor wish his knowledge to exceed what was bestowed upon him by the divine Powers; he would make no distinction between himself and the outer world, but would feel himself membered into it. He feels himself separated from the rest of the world only because he craves for more and different enjoyment than the world voluntarily offers him. This leads to the consciousness that he is different from the world. If he were satisfied with

what is in the world, he would not distinguish himself from it; he would feel his own existence continuing in the outer world. He would never experience what is called 'contact' with the outer world, for, not being separate from it, he could not come into 'contact' with it. The forming of the 'six organs' was responsible for the gradual establishment of 'contact with the outer world'; contact gave rise to *feeling* and feeling to the urge to cling to the outer world. But it is because man tries to cling to the outer world that pain, suffering, cares and afflictions arise.

This is what Buddha taught his pupils regarding the 'inner man' as the cause of pain, suffering, cares and afflictions. It was a delicately woven, sublime theory — but a theory that sprang directly from life, for an 'Enlightened One' had experienced it as a profound truth concerning the humanity of his time. Having guided humanity as Bodhisattva for thousands and thousands of years in accordance with the principles of love and compassion, there dawned in him when he became Buddha, knowledge of the true nature and the causes of suffering. He was able to know why man suffers, and explained this to his intimate disciples. And when his development was so advanced that he could experience the very essence and meaning of human existence in the present cycle of evolution, he summarized it all in the famous sermon at Benares with which he inaugurated his work as Buddha. There he presented in a popular form what he had previously communicated to his disciples in a more intimate way.

He spoke somewhat as follows. — Whoever knows the causes of human existence, realizes that life, as it is, must be fraught with suffering. The first teaching I have to give you concerns *suffering in the world*. The second teaching concerns the *causes of suffering*. Wherein do these causes lie? They lie in the fact that the thirst for existence insinuates itself into man from what has remained in him from previous incarnations.

*Thirst for existence* is the cause of suffering. The third teaching concerns the question: How is suffering eliminated from the world? By eliminating its cause; by extinguishing the thirst for existence proceeding from ignorance! Men have lost their former clairvoyant knowledge, have become ignorant, and it is this ignorance that conceals the spiritual world from them. Ignorance is to blame for the thirst for existence and this in turn is the cause of suffering and pain, cares and afflictions. Thirst for existence must disappear from the world if suffering is to disappear. The old knowledge has passed away from the world; men can no longer use the organs of the etheric body. But a *new knowledge* is now possible, the knowledge acquired when man immerses himself completely in what his *astral body*, thanks to its deepest forces, can give him, and with the help of what his outer sense-organs enable him to observe in the external physical world. What is thus kindled in the deepest forces, of the astral body and is developed with the co-operation of the physical body — although not actually derived from it — this alone can help man to begin with, and give him knowledge; for this knowledge is at first bestowed upon him as a gift. It was to this effect that Buddha spoke in his great inaugural sermon.

He knew that he must transmit to humanity the kind of knowledge that is attainable through the highest development of the forces of the astral body. Hence he had to teach that through deep and penetrating understanding of the forces of the astral body, man acquires knowledge that is both appropriate and possible for him but is at the same time untouched by influences from earlier incarnations. Buddha wished to impart to men a kind of knowledge that has nothing to do with what slumbers in the darkness of ignorance within the human soul as Samskara. Such knowledge is acquired by waking to life all the forces contained in the astral body in one incarnation. ‘The cause of suffering in the world’ — so said

Buddha — ‘is that something of which man knows nothing has remained behind from earlier incarnations. This legacy from earlier incarnations is the cause of man's ignorance concerning the world; it is the cause of his suffering and pain. But when he becomes conscious of the nature of the forces in his astral body, he can, if he so will, acquire a knowledge that has remained independent of all influences from earlier times — a knowledge that is his very own!’

This was the knowledge that the great Buddha wished to impart to men, and he did so in the form of what is known as the ‘Eightfold Path’. There he indicates the capacities and qualities which man must develop in order to attain, in the present cycle of human evolution, knowledge that is uninfluenced by the ever-recurring births. Thus by the power he had himself acquired, Buddha raised his soul to the heights attainable by means of the strongest forces of the astral body, and in the ‘Eightfold Path’ he showed humanity the way to a kind of knowledge uninfluenced by Samskara. He described the path as follows. —

Man attains this kind of knowledge about the world when he acquires a *right view* of things, a view that has nothing to do with sympathy or antipathy or preference of any sort. He must strive as best he can to acquire the right view of each thing, purely according to what presents itself to him outwardly. That is the first principle: the *right view* of things. Secondly, man must become independent of what has remained from earlier incarnations; he must also endeavour to judge in accordance with his right view of a thing and not be swayed by any other influences. Thus *right judgment* is the second principle. The third is that he must strive to give true expression to what he desires to communicate to the world, having first acquired the right view and right judgment of it; not only his words but every manifestation of his being must express his own right view — that and that alone. This is *right*

*speech*. The fourth principle is that man must strive to act, not according to his sympathies and antipathies, not according to the dark forces of Samskara within him, but in such a way that he lets his right view, right judgment and right speech become *deed*. This is *right action*. The fifth principle, enabling a man to liberate himself from what is within him, is that he should acquire the right vocation and station in the world. We may best understand what Buddha meant by this, if we remember how many people are dissatisfied with the tasks devolving upon them, believing that some other position would be more advantageous. But a man should be able to derive from the situation into which he is born or into which fate has placed him, the best that is possible, i.e. to acquire the right 'occupation' or 'vocation'. Whoever finds no satisfaction in the situation in which he is placed, will not be able to derive from it the power to unfold right activity in the world. This is what Buddha called *right vocation*. The sixth principle is that a man should make increasing efforts to ensure that what he acquires through right views, right judgment and so forth, shall become *habit* in him. He is born into the world with certain habits. A child gives evidence of this or that inclination or habit. But man's endeavours should be directed, not towards retaining the habits, proceeding from Samskara but towards acquiring those that gradually become his own as the result of right views, right judgment, right speech, and so on. These are the *right habits*. The seventh principle is that a man should bring order into his life through not invariably forgetting yesterday when he has to act to-day. He would never accomplish anything if he had to learn his skills anew each time. He must strive to develop recollectedness, mindfulness, regarding everything in his life. He must always turn to account what he has already learnt, he must link the present with the past. Thus along the Eightfold Path man must acquire *right mindfulness* in the sense of Buddha's teaching. The eighth quality is acquired when, without

partiality for one view or another and without being influenced by any element remaining in him from former incarnations, he surrenders himself with pure devotion to the things of the world, immerses himself in them and lets them alone speak to him. This is *right contemplation*.

This is the Eightfold Path, of which Buddha said to his disciples that if followed it would gradually lead to the extinction of the thirst for existence with its attendant suffering, and impart to the soul something that brings liberation from elements enslaving it from past lives.

We have now been able to grasp something of the spirit and origin of Buddhism. We know too what significance lies in the fact that the Bodhisattva of old became Buddha. The Bodhisattva had always allowed everything connected with his mission to flow into humanity. In very ancient times, before Buddha came into the world, men were not able to apply even their inner forces in such a way that they themselves could have developed the attributes of the Eightfold Path. Influences flowing from the spiritual world were necessary to make this possible, and it was the Bodhisattva of old who enabled these influences to stream down upon mankind. It was therefore an event of unique significance when this Bodhisattva became Buddha and now gave forth in the form of teaching what in earlier times he had caused to flow down upon men from above. He had now brought into the world a physical body able to unfold *out of itself*, forces that formerly could flow down from higher realms only. The *first body* of this kind was brought into the world by Gautama Buddha. Everything he had formerly caused to flow down from above became reality in the physical world at that time. It is a happening of great and far-reaching importance for the whole of Earth evolution when forces that have streamed down upon humanity from epoch to epoch are present one day in the bodily nature of a human being on Earth. *A power that can pass over into all*

*men is then engendered.*

In the body of Gautama Buddha lie the causes enabling men in all ages to develop in their own being the powers of the Eightfold Path. Buddha's existence ensured for men the possibility of right thinking! And whatever comes to pass in the future in this respect, until the principles of the Eightfold Path become reality in the whole of mankind, will all be thanks to that existence. What Buddha bore within himself he surrendered to men for their spiritual nourishment.

Generally speaking, no science to-day perceives these significant facts in the evolution of humanity, but they are often presented in simple fairy-tales and legends. I have emphasized more than once that fairy-tales and legends are often wiser and more truly 'scientific' than our objective science itself. In its depths the human soul has always sensed a certain truth connected with the nature of a Being such as a Bodhisattva: that, to begin with, something streams down from above, then becomes by degrees a possession of the soul and thereafter rays back again into the cosmos from the soul itself. Men who were able to feel the significance of this either dimly or clearly said to themselves: like the rays of the sun from the heavens, so did the Bodhisattva once ray down upon the Earth the forces of the doctrine of compassion and love, the forces developed through the principles of the Eightfold Path. But then the Bodhisattva descended into a human body and surrendered to men the power that was once his own possession. This power now lives in humanity and streams back into the cosmos as the rays of the sun are reflected back in the moon's light. This was felt to be of special significance in regions where it was customary to express such a truth in the form of a fairy-tale or legend. Thus the following remarkable legend was narrated in the regions where the Bodhisattva appeared.



Once upon a time the Buddha lived as a hare. It was an age when other creatures of many different species were looking for food, but it had all been consumed. The plant food which the hare itself could eat was not suitable for carnivorous creatures. The hare, who was in reality the Buddha, saw a Brahman passing by and resolved to sacrifice himself in order to provide food. At that moment the God appeared and saw the noble deed. A chasm opened and swallowed the hare. Then the God took a tincture and drew the picture of the hare on the moon. And since that time the picture of Buddha as the hare is to be seen on the face of the moon. In the West we do not speak of the 'hare in the moon' but of the 'man in the moon'.

A Kalmuck fairy-tale expresses this still more cogently. In the moon lives a hare; it came there because once upon a time the Buddha sacrificed himself and the Earth-Spirit drew the picture of the hare on the moon. This expresses the great truth of the Bodhisattva becoming Buddha and sacrificing the substance of his very being to mankind for nourishment, so that his forces now ray out into the world from the hearts of men.

Of a Being such as the Bodhisattva who became Buddha, we said — and this is the teaching of all who know: When a Being passes through this stage he has had his last incarnation on the Earth, for his whole nature is contained within a human body. Such a Being never again incarnates in this sense. Hence when the Buddha became aware of the significance of his present existence, he could say: 'This is my last incarnation; I shall not again incarnate on the Earth!' — It would however be erroneous to think that such a Being then withdraws altogether from Earth-existence. True, he does not enter directly into a physical body but he assumes another body — of an astral or etheric nature — and so continues to send his influences into the world. The way in which such a

Being who has passed through the last incarnation belonging to his own destiny continues to work in the world, may be understood by thinking of the following facts.

An ordinary human being, consisting of physical body, etheric body, astral body and Ego, can be permeated by such a Being. It is possible for a Being of this rank, who no longer descends into a physical body but still has an astral body, to be membered into the astral body of another human being. This man may well become a personality of importance, for the forces of a Being who has already passed through his last incarnation on the Earth are now working in him. Thus an astral Being unites with the astral nature of some individual on the Earth. Such a union may take place in a most complicated way. When the Buddha appeared to the shepherds in the picture of the 'heavenly host', he was not in a physical body but in an astral body. He had assumed a body in which he could still send his influences to the Earth. Thus in the case of a Being who has become a Buddha, we distinguish three bodies:

The body he has before he attains Buddhahood, when he is still working from above as a Bodhisattva; it is a body that does not contain in itself all the powers at his command; he still lives in spiritual heights and is linked with his earlier mission as was the Bodhisattva before his mission became the Buddha's mission. As long as such a Being is living in a body of this nature, his body is called a '*Dharmakaya*';

The body which such a Being builds as his own and through which he brings to expression, in the physical body, everything he has within him. This body is called the 'body of perfection', '*Sambhogakaya*'.

The body which such a Being assumes, after he has passed through the stage of perfection and can work from above in the way described. This body is called a *Nirmanakaya*'. [1]

We can therefore say that the 'Nirmanakaya' of Buddha appeared to the shepherds in the picture of the angelic host. Buddha appeared in the radiance of his Nirmanakaya and revealed himself in this way to the shepherds. But he was to find further ways of working into the events in Palestine at this crucial point of time.

To understand this we must briefly recall what is known to us from other lectures about the nature of man. Spiritual science speaks of several 'births'. At what is called 'physical birth' the human being strips off, as it were, the maternal physical sheath; at the seventh year he strips off the etheric sheath which envelops him until the change of teeth just as the maternal physical sheath enveloped him until physical birth. At puberty — about the fourteenth or fifteenth year in the modern epoch — the human being strips off the astral sheath that is around him until then. It is not until the seventh year that the human etheric body is born outwardly as a free body; the astral body is born at puberty, when the outer astral sheath is cast off.

Let us now consider what it is that is discarded at puberty. In Palestine and the neighbouring regions this point of time occurs normally at about the twelfth year — rather earlier than in lands farther to the West. In the ordinary way this protective astral sheath is cast off and given over to the outer astral world. In the case of the child who descended from the priestly line of the House of David, however, something different happened. At the age of twelve the astral sheath was cast off but did not dissolve in the universal astral world. Just as it was, as the protective astral sheath of the young boy, with all the vitalising forces that had streamed into it between the

change of teeth and puberty, it now united with the Nirmanakaya of Buddha. The spiritual body that had once appeared to the shepherds as the radiant angelic host united with the astral sheath released from the twelve-year-old Jesus, united with all the forces through which the freshness of youth is maintained during the period between the second dentition and puberty. The Nirmanakaya which shone upon the Nathan Jesus-child from birth onwards united with the astral sheath detached from this child at puberty; it became one with this sheath and was thereby *rejuvenated*. Through this rejuvenation, what Buddha had formerly given to the world could be manifest again in the Jesus-child. Hence the boy was able to speak with all the simplicity of childhood about the lofty teachings of compassion and love to which we have referred to-day. When Jesus was found in the temple he was speaking in a way that astonished those around him, because he was enveloped by the Nirmanakaya of Buddha, refreshed as from a fountain of youth by the boy's astral sheath.

These are facts which can become known to the spiritual investigator and which the writer of the Gospel of St. Luke has indicated in the remarkable scene when a sudden change came over the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple. We must grasp what it was that had happened and then we shall understand why the boy no longer spoke as he had formerly been wont to speak. It so happened that at this very time, King Kanisha of Tibet summoned a Synod in India and proclaimed ancient Buddhism to be the orthodox religion. But in the meantime Buddha himself had advanced! He had absorbed the forces of the protective astral sheath of the Jesus-child and was thereby able to speak in a new way to the hearts and souls of men.

The Gospel of St. Luke contains Buddhism in a new form, as though springing from a fountain of youth; hence it expresses the religion of compassion and love in a form comprehensible

to the simplest souls. We can read what the writer of the Gospel of St. Luke has woven into the text of his Gospel, but still more is contained in its depths. Only part of what appertains to the scene of Jesus in the temple could be described to-day and even greater depths of this mystery have still to be explained. Light will then be shed upon the earlier as well as upon the later years of the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

**Notes:**

**1.** Also referred to in Buddhist literature as 'the Body of Transformation'.

## LECTURE FOUR

*Sanctuaries of Leadership in ancient Atlantis. The Nirmanakaya of Buddha and the Nathan Jesus-child. The Adam-soul before the Fall. The Reincarnation of Zarathustra in the Solomon Jesus-child.*

The facts underlying the Gospels — particularly that of St. Luke — will become increasingly complicated as we proceed. I must therefore ask you to bear in mind, especially to-day, that as the lectures are given as a consecutive series, a single one, or even several, cannot be understood unless studied in connection with the rest. This applies particularly to the present lecture and the one to follow; so you must wait until to-morrow before asking how the various facts to be presented are connected with what has already been said on other occasions.

In the last lecture we heard that the Nirmanakaya of Buddha manifested itself to the world at the moment when, according to the writer of the Gospel of St. Luke, the proclamation was made to the shepherds. Buddhist conceptions that flowed into Christianity were thereby given to the world in a new form and were rejuvenated through the circumstance that the protective astral sheath of the Nathan Jesus-child — the sheath that is detached from the growing human being at puberty — was absorbed by the Nirmanakaya of Buddha and became one with it in the twelfth year of Jesus' life. From that moment onwards we have to do with a definite entity consisting of the Nirmanakaya (or spiritual body) of Buddha and the protective astral sheath that had been detached from

the twelve-year-old Jesus-child.

In ordinary life, when the protective astral sheath is cast off in the course of development and the astral body is actually born, the sheath dissolves into the universal astral world. In the case of an average person of our time, the astral sheath would not be suitable for incorporation in a higher Being such as Buddha in his Nirmanakaya. There was something very special about the astral sheath which was cast off at that time and through its union with the Nirmanakaya of Buddha rejuvenated the whole of Buddhism. In other words, a unique Being must have been incarnated in the body of this Jesus-child — a Being from whom proceeded the forces that were absorbed by the astral sheath and contained the rejuvenating power indicated in the lecture yesterday. It must have been no ordinary human being but a very special Being who grew up in the Jesus-child from birth to the twelfth year and was able to infuse the rejuvenating forces into the discarded astral sheath.

To form an idea of how a child could possibly work upon his sheaths in a way differing from the normal, the facts must be approached by means of a comparison.

If we follow the life of the human being evolving under normal conditions from birth to later stages, to the twentieth, thirtieth and fortieth years, we can perceive how the various forces that are present at birth in rudimentary form gradually make their appearance. The child grows both physically and spiritually; the forces of soul develop by degrees. (How this takes place can be read in my book *The Education of the Child in the light of Anthroposophy*.) [1] Try to picture to yourselves how the forces of the mind and intellect develop in the child; how at the seventh, fourteenth and twenty-first years certain powers not in operation before make their appearance or are forthcoming in greater strength. Try to imagine how this process takes place in the normal course of human life, and

now suppose that we wish to make an experiment with life; we wish to make it possible for a young human being to develop in a way that is less normal and less in conformity with the customs of our present age. We wish to give him a special opportunity of grasping with a certain freshness, and not in the ordinary way, the material usually assimilated between the twelfth and eighteenth years, so that he does not absorb it as others do, but retains a kind of inventive power, continuing to work creatively upon it. Suppose we wish to make such a child into a specially creative human being. In that case we shall not allow him to grow up as other children normally do.

I say expressly that this is a hypothetical experiment only and is *not* meant to be immediately put into practice. I speak of it by way of comparison only and do not recommend it as an ideal of education! Thus supposedly we wish to train a human being to develop an especially creative turn of mind, not only keeping his thinking very alert but continuing, even at a later age, to unfold inventive powers. To begin with, we should have to keep such a child from learning what other children learn directly after the ages of six or seven; the usual school-subjects taught to other children would have to be withheld from him. Until his tenth or eleventh year he would as far as possible be kept at play and be taught very little in the way of ordinary school-subjects, so that at the age of nine he would probably still be unable to add up figures and at the age of eight still hardly able to read. Then we should have to begin at the age of eight or nine with all that a child usually learns when he is six or seven years old. Under these conditions the faculties of the human being develop quite differently and the soul makes something altogether different of what is imparted to it. Such a child would retain the forces of childhood (which are usually suppressed by current methods of education) until his tenth or eleventh year; he would tackle his lessons with a far greater activity of soul and have a much stronger grasp of



the subjects. His faculties would thus become highly productive. It would be essential to keep such a child in a childlike state as long as possible, and then a clairvoyant would perceive that the astral sheath stripped off at puberty actually contains youthful, vigorous forces, very different from those usually in evidence. This astral sheath could then be used by a Being such as Buddha in his Nirmanakaya. Not only would a prolongation of the years of youth be achieved by such an experiment but certain childlike, youthful forces would be able to permeate the astral sheath, so that a Being who were to descend from spiritual heights could be nourished and rejuvenated by these forces.

Nobody, however, should attempt to make this experiment; it is *not* an ideal for education. Certain things must still be left to the Gods. Gods can do this kind of thing, but not man. And if you hear of some personality destined to do creative work in a particular field that he seemed for a long time to be untalented and was for years considered a simpleton, that intelligence developed in him only much later — then you will know that the Gods instituted this experiment; they guarded the childhood of such a human being and made him fit to learn only at a later period what is learnt much earlier in normal life. This is especially the case when wide-awake children easily grasp stories told to them, yet when they go to school learn nothing at all. The Gods are making with them the experiment of which I have spoken.

Something of the kind — only on a far, far grander scale — had to happen in the case of the Jesus-child who was then to deliver to the Nirmanakaya of Buddha such an infinitely fertile astral sheath. (Here we come to a mysterious fact which everyone is free to believe or not to believe, but which may now be communicated to duly prepared Anthroposophists. Examine all the facts at your disposal in the Gospels or in history and you will find everything substantiated by the facts

of the physical plane if you approach these facts in the right way and do not judge too precipitately. The occultist who presents facts of the higher worlds entrusts them to humanity; and if they come from the right source he can say: you may test them as severely as you like, but if you do so fairly, you will find them all substantiated by what can be learnt in the physical world from documents and the findings of science.)

It was essential that there should be born of the parents spoken of in the Gospel of St. Luke a child who brought with him youthful forces of a very special kind and that these forces should be preserved in their pristine healthiness and vigour.

Under ordinary circumstances no child could have been found in whom the forces of childhood and youth were present in the state of freshness required at that time. In the whole range of humanity, if normal conditions alone had prevailed, nowhere could such an Individuality, nowhere could parents have been found such as were necessary for an incarnation of that kind. Very special measures were essential. To understand this we must recall certain facts already known to us.

Present-day humanity can be traced back through various epochs to the primeval humanity of ancient Atlantis. Atlantean humanity in turn leads back to that of ancient Lemuria. Spiritual science is able to reveal facts concerning the evolution of humanity very different from those presented by external science which can have recourse only to data of the material world. Spiritual science tells us that humanity passed through a stage of Graeco-Latin civilization which was preceded by the Egypto-Chaldean, the ancient Persian and the ancient Indian civilizations. Then we come to the great catastrophe which entirely changed the face of the Earth. Before that catastrophe a great continent stretched across the area now covered by the Atlantic Ocean: this was ancient

Atlantis. The regions occupied to-day by the European, Asiatic and African peoples were mostly still under water. Through the great Atlantean catastrophe the whole countenance of the Earth was changed. Humanity had for the most part settled in Atlantis and underwent evolution there. The constitution of the men of Atlantis was, of course, very different from that of men to-day.

When the time of the catastrophe drew near, the great clairvoyant leaders and priests, foreseeing what was to happen, guided men to the East, and also to the West. Those who were led to the West were the ancestors of the later American Indians. Our own progenitors too were among the old Atlanteans. The inhabitants of Atlantis were in their turn the descendants of an earlier and again very different humanity living on the continent of ancient Lemuria between the present continents of Asia, Africa and Australia. (You will find a detailed account in my book *Occult Science* [ 2 ] and I will now select the relevant facts only.)

When we look back in the Akashic Chronicle to very ancient times the most wonderful corroboration is forthcoming of what is to be read in the Bible and other religious texts; indeed, it is only then that we learn to understand their contents in the right way. The reference in the Bible to a single pair of human beings, Adam and Eve, from whom all humanity has descended, was a problem with which men in the mid-nineteenth century were deeply preoccupied from the scientific standpoint. The Akashic Chronicle reveals that the Earth is of immense antiquity and that even the Lemurian epoch was preceded by another. We learn from the book *Occult Science* that the Earth is the re-embodiment of the earlier planetary embodiments of Old Moon, Old Sun and Old Saturn. We learn too that the Earth, in the course of its gradual evolution, was destined to add the Ego, the fourth principle of human nature, to the other three bodies which

had been developed during the previous embodiments: the physical body (in rudimentary form) on Old Saturn, the etheric body on Old Sun, the astral body on Old Moon. Everything that preceded the Lemurian epoch was merely preparation for the Earth's mission. During the Lemurian epoch man assumed a form that made it possible for him to develop his fourth principle, the Ego. At that time the first seed began to form for the development of an Ego in the other three principles. Hence we can say that the changes which took place on Earth enabled man to become the *bearer of an Ego*. Before the Lemurian epoch the Earth was also inhabited, but by human beings who as yet bore no Ego within them. They consisted of the principles that had been brought over from their former development during the planetary evolutions of Old Saturn, Old Sun and Old Moon. These human beings consisted of physical body, etheric body, astral body. We know of the processes in the universe which led to the next stage in man's evolution. At the beginning of its present embodiment the Earth was united with Sun and Moon; then the Sun separated off, leaving behind a planetary body comprising the present Earth and Moon. If the Earth had remained united with the Moon, man's whole make-up would have become hard and ligneous, would have shrivelled. In order to avert this it was necessary for all the Moon-substances and beings to be cast out. Thereby the human form was rescued from the danger of hardening and it became possible for man to assume his present structure. It was only after the separation of the Moon that the possibility arose for him to become the bearer of an Ego. This did not, of course, take place all at once. After the Sun had slowly separated and while the Moon was still contained within the Earth, certain conditions arose which prevented the further evolution of mankind; physical matter became increasingly dense and a process of hardening had, in fact, already begun. Human souls — they were then at a lower stage of development — were

passing through incarnations, through successive embodiments; in other words, man's in-most being left his outer form and passed through a spiritual world in order then to reappear in a new incarnation. But before the separation of the Moon a difficult period occurred in the evolution of the Earth. Certain human souls who, having left their bodies, were living in the spiritual world, wanted to descend again to the Earth; but the human substance now to be found there was too hard and ligneous to enable them to incarnate. A time came when souls wishing to descend found it impossible to incarnate again because the earthly bodies were unsuitable for them. Only the very strongest souls were able to master the hardened matter sufficiently to incarnate on the Earth; the others were obliged to withdraw again into the spiritual world. There were periods before the separation of the Moon when these conditions prevailed. The number of strong souls able to conquer matter and populate the Earth became steadily less, with the result that prior to the Lemurian epoch there was a period when wide areas of the Earth were barren and the population less and less numerous, because souls desiring to descend could find no suitable bodies.

What happened to these souls? They were transported to the other planets which had formed meanwhile out of the universal substance. Certain souls were transported to Saturn, others to Jupiter, Mars, Venus or Mercury. There was a period when only the very strongest souls were able to come to the Earth during its great winter. The weaker souls had to be taken into the guardianship of the other planets of our solar system.

During the Lemurian epoch there was actually a time when it may be said — with approximate accuracy at any rate — that there was a single couple in existence, *one main pair* (*Haupt-paar*) which had retained sufficient strength to master the stubborn substance and to incarnate on the Earth, to 'hold

out' as it were through the period when the Moon was separating from the Earth. This separation made it possible again for human substance to be refined and rendered suitable to receive the weaker souls; the descendants of this one main pair were therefore able to live in more pliable substance than had been available before the separation of the Moon. Then, by degrees, all the souls returned to the Earth from Mars, Jupiter, Venus, Mercury and Saturn; and through propagation the souls gradually returning to the Earth from the planets constituted the descendants of the first main pair.

Thus the Earth was re-peopled. And during the latter part of the Lemurian until far into the Atlantean epoch, an ever-increasing number of souls descended, having waited on the other planets until a time came when they were able to incarnate in earthly bodies. In this way the Earth was re-populated and the Atlantean peoples came into existence, guided by the Atlantean Initiates in the 'Oracles'. [3]

In ancient Atlantis there were great sanctuaries where Initiates worked. These sanctuaries were organized in such a way that one might be called the 'Mars Oracle', another the 'Jupiter Oracle', another the 'Saturn Oracle' and so on. The variety of these Oracle-sanctuaries was due to the differences among human beings. For those souls who had waited on Mars, instruction and guidance were provided in the Mars Oracles; for those who had waited on Jupiter, in the Jupiter Oracles, and so on. Only a few chosen pupils could be instructed in the great Sun Oracle. These were the most direct descendants of the main pair who had lived through the Earth's critical period — the strong, ancestral couple called in the Bible 'Adam and Eve'. There we find something that tallies exactly with the facts revealed by the Akashic Chronicle, so that the Bible is substantiated even where its content seems improbable.

At the head of the Sun Oracle to which the other Oracles were subordinate was the greatest of the Atlantean Initiates, the Sun-Initiate, who was also the 'Manu', the leader of the Atlantean peoples. When the time of the great catastrophe was approaching, the Manu assumed the task of leading to the East those whom he found suitable for his mission — which was to establish a starting-point for the civilizations of the post-Atlantean epoch. This Initiate gathered around him men who always included the most direct descendants of 'Adam and Eve', the first ancestral pair who had survived the Earth's winter. These men were brought up and trained in the immediate environment of the great Initiate. The whole of the teaching imparted to them was organized in such a way that at the appropriate point of time in evolution it was always possible for the right influences to be sent forth from the sanctuary led by the Manu, the Initiate of the Sun Oracle. Let us suppose that at a certain point in evolution a rejuvenation of civilization was necessary; traditions preserved in humanity had become antiquated and required a new impetus; a new culture needed to be inaugurated. Provision for this had to be made — and was actually made, in many different ways — in the sanctuary under the great Initiate of the Sun Oracle.

During the first period of the post-Atlantean epoch, men specially prepared were sent to one place or another in order to carry into the world, as the result of their careful training, what might be required by the people concerned. This Oracle-sanctuary which was situated in a hidden region of Asia, never failed to provide for the right influence to be exercised upon the particular civilizations.

Five to six centuries after the advent of the great Buddha, there dawned a very crucial time. Buddhism had become in need of rejuvenation. The mature and sublime conceptions

taught by Buddha needed to pass through a fountain of youth in order that they might be revealed to mankind in a new form, filled with fresh, rejuvenating forces. Very special forces had to be provided for humanity. These forces were not to be found in any single individual who had worked in the world outside. Whoever works for the world wears out his strength, and this wearing out of strength simply means 'growing old'. Civilization after civilization arose at various points of time: first, the ancient Indian, then the ancient Persian, then the Egypto-Chaldean, and so on; great and notable leaders of humanity were at all times present — leaders who devoted their highest and best forces to humanity and its progress. The Holy Rishis, Zarathustra who was the inaugurator of the Persian civilization, Hermes, Moses, the leaders of Chaldean culture — all devoted their forces to the same end. By virtue of their achievements they were the best leaders for their times. Think of some personality in ancient India: he incarnated again and again, reappeared in this or that incarnation, in the Persian, in the Egypto-Chaldean epoch — and his soul became more and more mature; he rose to stages of greater maturity but thereby lost the fresh force of youth. A man may be capable of momentous achievements when he has become a mature soul as the result of efforts made in the course of many incarnations — but his soul has aged. He may be able to give splendid teaching, he may achieve a great deal for humanity, but he would have had to sacrifice his youthful freshness and vigour while thus evolving to higher stages.

Let us take one of the greatest Individualities who have worked in the course of human evolution: *Zarathustra*. It was he who brought the sublime message of the Sun Spirit from the profoundest depths of the spiritual world to the humanity of his time; it was he who directed the souls of men to the great Spirit who later appeared as Christ; it was he who proclaimed: 'In the Sun lives Ahura Mazdao, and He will come



to the Earth!' Zarathustra spoke words of immense significance concerning Ahura Mazdao. Only his profound spiritual knowledge and highly developed clairvoyance could behold that Being of whom the Holy Rishis said that He, 'Vishva Karman', dwelt beyond their sphere. This was the same Being whom Zarathustra called 'Ahura Mazdao' and whose significance for humanity he proclaimed. A spirit of great maturity lived in the body of Zarathustra, even in the days when he founded the ancient Persian civilization.

We can well imagine that this Individuality rose to higher and higher stages during his subsequent incarnations, becoming more and more mature, more and more capable of the greatest sacrifices on behalf of humanity. Those of you who have heard other lectures of mine will know that Zarathustra gave up his astral body to Hermes, the leader of the Egyptian civilization, and his etheric body to Moses, the leader of the Hebrews. Such deeds can be accomplished only by a soul of very advanced development. Zarathustra was then reborn in Chaldea six hundred years before our era (at the time of Buddha in India) and worked there as the great teacher 'Nazarathos' or 'Zaratas', who was also the teacher of Pythagoras. All this was within the power of the former leader and inaugurator of the ancient Persian civilization. Since the days of ancient Persia he had become more and more mature, but when Buddhism needed rejuvenation this task was not within his powers, as you will understand from the foregoing. It was not possible for him to provide youthful forces, developed under childlike conditions until puberty, which could then be given over to the Nirmanakaya of Buddha. Precisely because he had reached such a high stage of development it would not have been possible for Zarathustra to develop as a child at the beginning of our era in such a way that the required results would have been forthcoming. Were we to review all the Individualities whose powers were

unfolded at that time, we should find no single one capable of furnishing, in his twelfth year, such forces as were needed for the rejuvenation of Buddhism. Zarathustra was a great and unique Individuality, an altogether exceptional case. Yet not even Zarathustra himself could have ensouled the body of Jesus up to the time of puberty in such a way as to enable the discarded astral sheath to unite with the Nirmanakaya of Buddha. Whence, then, came the great vivifying, vitalising power of the Nathan Jesus-child?

It came from the Mother-Lodge of humanity directed by the sublime Sun-Initiate, the Manu. A great individualised power (*eine grosse individuelle Kraft*) had there been nurtured and fostered. This individualised power, this 'Individuality', was then sent down into the child born of the parents called 'Joseph' and 'Mary' in the Gospel of St. Luke. Who was this Being?

To answer this question we must go back to the time *before* the Luciferic influence had penetrated into the astral body of man. This influence approached humanity at the time when the ancestral human couple were living on the Earth. This ancestral couple had been strong enough to master human substance and to incarnate, but had not been strong enough to resist the Luciferic influence. The effects of the influence extended into the astral bodies of this couple too, with the consequence that it was impossible to allow *all* the forces that were in 'Adam and Eve' to be transmitted to their descendants. The physical body had necessarily to be transmitted through the generations, but the leadership of humanity held back a portion of the *etheric body*. This was expressed by saying: 'Men have eaten of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil' — that is to say, they have partaken of the Luciferic influence; but it was also said: 'The possibility of eating also of the Tree of Life must now be taken from them.' This means that certain of the forces of the etheric

body were kept back and did not pass on to the descendants. Thus after the Fall, certain forces were no longer in 'Adam', and the still *guiltless* part of his being was nurtured and fostered in the great Mother-Lodge of humanity. This was, so to speak, the Adam-soul as yet untouched by human guilt, not yet entangled in what had actually caused the 'Fall' of man. These pristine forces of the Adam-Individuality were preserved; they were there and were then led as a *provisional 'Ego'* to the child born to Joseph and Mary. Thus in his early years this Jesus-child bore within him the power of the original progenitor of earthly humanity.

This soul had remained young in the truest sense. It had not been led through incarnations but had been kept at a very early stage — like the child in our hypothetical educational experiment. Who, then, was the Being in the child born to Joseph and Mary of the Nathan line? The progenitor of humanity, the 'old Adam' as a 'new Adam!' This secret was known to St. Paul and lies behind his words. And St. Luke, the writer of the Gospel — who was a pupil of St. Paul — knew it too. For this reason he speaks of it in a special way. He knew that a very definite process was necessary in order that this spiritual substance might be led down to humanity; he knew that a blood-relationship reaching back to 'Adam' was necessary. Hence for Joseph he shows a lineage reaching back to Adam who issued directly from the spiritual world and in the words of the Gospel was a 'son of God'. The sequence of generations is traced back to God himself.

A mystery of great significance is contained in the genealogical chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, namely that *homogeneous blood* had to flow through the generations and unbroken sequence be maintained until the last descendant, in order that the *spirit* too might be led down to the descendants when the time was fulfilled. And so this infinitely youthful Being was united with the body born of Joseph and

Mary of the Nathan line — a Being untouched by earthly destinies, a young soul whose powers, if we wanted to discover their origin, would have to be traced back to ancient Lemuria. This Being alone was strong enough to penetrate into the astral sheath and, when this sheath was detached, to pass over to it the forces it needed in order to establish a living union with the Nirmanakaya of Buddha.

We may therefore ask: What is actually described to us in the Gospel of St. Luke when it speaks of Jesus of Nazareth?

In the first place it describes a human being whose physical body, in respect of blood-kinship, is to be traced back to Adam — to the times when, in the period of devastation on the Earth, humanity was saved through an ancestral pair. It further describes the incarnation of a soul who had waited the longest before incarnating. *In the Nathan Jesus-child there was present the Adam-soul as it was before the Fall* — the soul which had waited longest. We may therefore say, fantastic as it will seem to modern humanity, that the Individuality who had been led into the Jesus-child by the great Mother-Lodge had not only descended from the physically oldest generations of mankind but was also, in a sense, the incarnation of the very first member of humanity.

We know now who was presented in the temple and shown to Simeon, and who, according to St. Luke, was the 'Son of God'. St. Luke was not speaking of the present human being but was testifying that this was the reincarnation of a Being who was the earliest blood-ancestor of all the generations.

And now to summarize what has been said. In the fifth–sixth century before our era there lived in India the great Bodhisattva whose mission it was to bring to humanity truths that were gradually to arise in humanity itself. He gave the impulse for this and thereby became Buddha. Hence he does

not again appear in an earthly body; he appears in the Nirmanakaya, the 'Body of Transformation', but only as far as the etheric-astral world. The shepherds, being for the moment clairvoyant, see him in the form of the angelic host, for they are meant to behold in vision what is being announced to them. In his Nirmanakaya the Buddha inclines over the child born to Joseph and Mary of the Nathan line — for a very special purpose.

What the Buddha had been able to bring to humanity needed to be present in a mature form; it was difficult to understand for it came from great spiritual heights. If what Buddha had achieved hitherto was to become universally fruitful, it was necessary for an entirely fresh and youthful force to flow into it. He had to draw this force from the Earth by inclining over a human child from whom he could receive all the youthful forces from the astral sheath when it was detached. Such a child had been born from the line of generations — a child whose lineage the one who best understood it could trace back to the ancestor of humanity, back to the young soul of humanity during the Lemurian age, a child to whom he (St. Luke) could point as the reincarnated 'new Adam'. This child, whose soul was the mother-soul of humanity — a soul kept young through the ages — lived in such a way that all his youthful forces rayed into the astral body, and when the astral sheath was detached it rose upwards and united with the Nirmanakaya of Buddha.

These facts do not, however, include everything that helps us to understand the wonderful Event of Palestine; they present one aspect only. We now know who was born in Bethlehem when Joseph and Mary travelled thither from Nazareth, and we know whose coming had been announced to the shepherds; but that is not all. Much that is strange and significant took place at the beginning of our era in order to bring about the greatest Event in the evolution of humanity.

For a better understanding of what gradually led up to that Event, we must still consider the following.

In the ancient Hebrew people there was a line of generations descending from David. We learn from the Bible that David had two sons, Solomon and Nathan. Thus two lines of descent, the 'Solomon line' and the 'Nathan line' stemmed from David. Leaving aside the intermediate members, we can say: At the beginning of our era, descendants both of the Solomon line and of the Nathan line of the House of David were living in Palestine. In Nazareth there lived a man named 'Joseph', a descendant of the Nathan line; he had a wife, 'Mary'. And in Bethlehem there lived a descendant of the Solomon line, also named 'Joseph'. It is not in the least surprising that there were two men of David's lineage named Joseph and that each was married to a Mary as the Bible says. Thus at the beginning of our era there were two couples in Palestine, both bearing the names of 'Joseph' and 'Mary'. The Bethlehem couple traced back its origin to the 'Solomon' or kingly line of the House of David, and the other (the Nazareth couple) to the 'Nathan' or priestly line. To this latter couple (of the Nathan line) was born the child described to you yesterday and to-day. This child provided an astral sheath that could eventually be absorbed into the Nirmanakaya of Buddha. At the time when the child was due to be born, this couple of the Nathan lineage journeyed from Nazareth to Bethlehem as St. Luke relates — 'to be taxed'. The genealogical table is given in his Gospel.

The other couple did not originally reside in Nazareth but in Bethlehem; this is related by the writer of the Gospel of St. Matthew. This couple of the Solomon line also had a child named 'Jesus'. In the body of this child too a great Individuality was living, but the child had a different task to fulfil. The wisdom of the world is indeed profound! It was not the function of this child to impart fresh forces of youth to the

astral sheath; his mission was to bring to humanity that which only a *mature* soul can bring. Under the guidance of all the Powers concerned, this child was able to be the reincarnation of the Individuality who had once taught the mysteries of Ahura Mazdao to men in ancient Persia; who had once given up his astral body to Hermes and his etheric body to Moses, and who had appeared again as Zarathas or Nazarathos, the great teacher of Pythagoras in ancient Chaldea. This Individuality was none other than *Zarathustra*. The Ego of Zarathustra was reincarnated in the child of whom the Gospel of St. Matthew relates that he was born of a couple named Joseph and Mary who descended from the kingly or Solomon line of the House of David and resided, originally, in Bethlehem.

Thus we find one part of the truth presented in the Gospel of St. Matthew and the other part in that of St. Luke. Both accounts must be taken literally, for truth is complex. We know now who was born from the priestly line of the House of David. But we know too that from the kingly line there was born the Individuality who had once worked in ancient Persia as Zarathustra and had inaugurated the 'kingly' or 'magic' science of the ancient Persian kingdom. Thus the two Individualities lived side by side: the young Adam-Individuality in the child of the priestly line of the House of David, and the Zarathustra-Individuality in the child of the kingly line. How and why all this took place, and how evolution was further guided — of this we shall say more tomorrow.

## Notes:

1 Many courses of lectures on Education were given by Dr. Steiner in later years and are available in English translation. Among them are the following: ***Study of Man*** (1919), *The Spiritual Ground of Education* (1922), *Education and Modern Spiritual Life* (1923), *The Kingdom of Childhood* (1924).

2 ***Occult Science — an Outline***. Translated by George and Mary Adams. See p. 192 *et seq.* (Rudolf Steiner Press, 1963).

3 *Op. Cit.*, p. 594. “Oraculum — meaning a place where the intentions of spiritual Beings are perceived.”



## LECTURE FIVE

*The great Streams inspired by Buddha and by Zarathustra converge in Jesus of Nazareth. The Nathan Jesus and the Solomon Jesus.*

Every great spiritual stream in the world has its particular mission. These streams are not isolated and are separated only during certain epochs; then they merge and mutually fructify each other. The Event of Palestine is an illustration of one most significant fusion of the spiritual streams in humanity.

We have set ourselves the task of understanding the Event of Palestine with increasing clarity. But conceptions of the world and of life do not, as some people seem to imagine, move through the air as pure abstractions and ultimately unite. They are borne by *Beings*, by *Individualities*. When a system of thought comes into existence for the first time it must be presented by an Individuality, and when these spiritual streams unite and fertilize each other, something quite definite must also happen in the Individualities who are the bearers of the world-conceptions in question. The concrete facts connected with the fusion of Buddhism and Zoroastrianism in the Event of Palestine as described in yesterday's lecture, may have seemed very complicated. But if we were content to speak of the happenings in an abstract way and not in concrete detail, it would only be necessary to show how these two streams united. As anthroposophists, however, it is our task to give accounts of the two Individualities who were the actual bearers of these world-conceptions as well as

to call attention to the contents of the teachings. Anthroposophists must always endeavour to get away from abstractions and arrive at concrete realities, so you should not be surprised to find such complicated facts connected with a happening as momentous as the fusion of Buddhism and Zoroastrianism.

This fusion necessarily entailed slow and gradual preparation. We have heard how Buddhism streamed into and worked in the personality born as the child of Joseph and Mary of the Nathan line of the House of David, as related in the Gospel of St. Luke. Joseph and Mary of the Solomon line of the House of David resided originally in Bethlehem with their child Jesus, as recorded in the Gospel of St. Matthew. This child of the Solomon line bore within him the Individuality who, as Zarathustra, or Zoroaster, had inaugurated the ancient Persian civilization. Thus at the beginning of our era, side by side and represented by actual Individualities, we have the stream of Buddhism on the one hand (as described in the Gospel of St. Luke), and on the other the stream of Zoroastrianism in the Jesus of the Solomon line (as described in the Gospel of St. Matthew). The births of the two boys did not occur at exactly the same time.

I shall have to say things to-day that are not found in the Gospels; but you will understand the Bible all the better if you learn from investigations of the Akashic Chronicle something about the consequences and effects of facts indicated in the Gospels. It must never be forgotten that the words at the end of the Gospel of St. John hold good for all the Gospels — that the world itself could not contain the books that would have to be written if all the facts were presented. The revelations vouchsafed to humanity through Christianity are not of a kind that could have been written down and presented to the world once and for ever as a complete record. Christ's words are true: 'I am with you always, until the end of the world!' He is

there not as a dead but as a *living* Being, and what He has to reveal can always be perceived by those whose spiritual eyes are opened. Christianity is a living stream and its revelations will endure as long as human beings are able to receive them. Thus certain facts will be presented to-day, *the consequences of which* are indicated in the Gospels, though not the facts themselves. Nevertheless you can put them to the test and you will find them substantiated.

The births of the two Jesus children were separated by a period of a few months. But Jesus of the Gospel of St. Luke and John the Baptist were both born too late to have been victims of the so-called 'massacre of the innocents'. Has the thought never struck you that those who read about the Bethlehem massacre must ask themselves: How could there have been a John? But the facts can be substantiated in all respects. The Jesus of St. Matthew's Gospel was taken to Egypt by his parents, and John, supposedly, was born shortly before or about the same time. According to the usual view, John remained in Palestine, but in that case he would certainly have been a victim of Herod's murderous deed. You see how necessary it is to devote serious thought to these things; for if all the children of two years old and younger were actually put to death at that time, John would have been one of them. But this riddle will become intelligible if, in the light of the facts disclosed by the Akashic Chronicle, you realize that the events related in the Gospels of St. Luke and St. Matthew did not take place at the same time. The Nathan Jesus was born *after* the Bethlehem massacre; so too was John. Although the interval was only a matter of months, it was long enough to make these facts possible.

You will also learn to understand the Jesus of the Gospel of St. Matthew in the light of the more intimate facts. In this boy was reincarnated the Zarathustra-Individuality, from whom the people of ancient Persia had once received the teaching

concerning Ahura Mazdao, the great Sun Being. We know that this Sun Being must be regarded as the soul and spirit of the external, physical sun. Hence Zarathustra was able to say: 'Behold not only the radiance of the physical sun; behold, too, the mighty Being who sends down His spiritual blessings as the physical sun sends down its beneficent light and warmth!' — *Ahura Mazdao*, later called the Christ — it was He whom Zarathustra proclaimed to the people of Persia, but not yet as a Being who had sojourned on the Earth. Pointing to the sun, Zarathustra could only say: 'There is His habitation; He is gradually drawing near and one day He will live in a body on the Earth!'

The great differences between Zoroastrianism and Buddhism are obvious as long as they were separate; but the differences were resolved through their union and rejuvenation in the events of Palestine.

Let us once again consider what Buddha gave to the world. Buddha's teaching was presented in the Eightfold Path — this being an enumeration of the qualities needed by the human soul if it is to escape the harsh effects of Karma. In course of time Buddha's teaching must be developed as compassion and love by men individually, through their own feelings and sense of morality. I also told you that when the Bodhisattva became Buddha, this was a crucial turning-point in evolution. Had the full revelation of the Bodhisattva in the body of Gautama Buddha not taken place at that time, it would not have been possible for the souls of all human beings to unfold what we call 'law-abidingness' — 'Dharma' — which a man can only develop from his own being by expelling the content of his astral nature in order to liberate himself from all harsh effects of Karma. The Buddhist legend indicates this in a wonderful way by saying that Buddha succeeded in 'turning the Wheel of the Law'. This means that the enlightenment of the Bodhisattva and his ascent to Buddhahood enabled a force to

stream through the whole of humanity as the result of which men could now evolve 'Dharma' from their own souls and gradually fathom the profundities of the Eightfold Path. This possibility began when Buddha first evolved the teaching upon which the moral sense of men on Earth was actually to be based. Such was the task of the Bodhisattva who became Buddha. We see how individual tasks are allotted to the great Individualities when we find in Buddhism all that man can experience in his own soul as his great ideal. The ideal of the human soul what man is and *can become* — that is the essence of Buddha's teaching and it sufficed as far as his particular mission was concerned.

Everything in Buddhism has to do with *inwardness*, with human nature and its inner development; genuine, original Buddhism contained no 'cosmology' — although it was introduced later on. The essential mission of the Bodhisattva was to bring to men the teaching of the deep inwardness of their own souls. Thus in certain sermons Buddha avoids any definite reference to the Cosmos. Everything is expressed in such a way that if the human soul allows itself to be influenced by Buddha's teaching, it can become more and more perfect. Man is regarded as *a self-contained* being apart from the great Universe whence he proceeded. It is because this was connected with the special mission of the Bodhisattva that Buddha's teaching, when truly understood, has such a warming, deepening effect upon the soul; for this reason too the teaching seems to those who concern themselves with it to be permeated with such intensity of feeling and such inner warmth when it appears again, rejuvenated, in the Gospel of St. Luke.

The task of the Individuality incarnated as Zarathustra in ancient Persia was altogether different — in point of fact exactly the opposite. Zarathustra taught of the God *without*; he taught men to apprehend the great Cosmos spiritually.

Buddha directed man's attention to his own inner nature, saying that as the result of development there gradually appear, out of the previous state of ignorance, the 'six organs' of which we have spoken, namely, the five sense-organs and Manas. But everything within man was originally born out of the Cosmos. We should have no eye sensitive to light if the light itself had not brought the eye to birth from out of the organism. Goethe said: 'The eye was created by the light for the light.' This is a profound truth. The light formed the eye out of neutral organs once present in the human body. In the same way, all the spiritual forces in the Universe work formatively upon man. Everything within him was organized, to begin with, out of divine-spiritual forces. Hence for every 'inner' there is an 'outer'. The forces that are found within man stream into him from outside. And it was the task of Zarathustra to point to the realities that are outside, in man's environment. Hence, for example, he spoke of the 'Amshaspands', the great Genii, of whom he enumerated six — in reality there are twelve, but the other six are hidden. These Amshaspands work from outside as the creators and moulders of the organs of the human being. Zarathustra showed that behind the human sense-organs stand the Creators of man; he pointed to the great Genii, to the powers and forces outside man. Buddha pointed to the forces working *within* man. Zarathustra also pointed to forces and beings below the Amshaspands, calling them the 'Izards' or 'Izeds'. They too penetrate into man from outside in order to work at the inner organization of his bodily nature. Here again Zarathustra was directing attention to spiritual realities in the Cosmos, to external conditions. And whereas Buddha pointed to the actual thought-substance out of which the thoughts arise from the human soul, Zarathustra pointed to the 'Ferruers' or 'Fravashars', to the 'world-creative thoughts' pervading the Universe and surrounding us everywhere. For the thoughts that arise in man are everywhere in existence in the world

outside.

Thus it was the mission of Zarathustra to inculcate into men an attitude of mind particularly concerned with analysing the phenomena of the external world, to present a view of the Universe to a people whose task was to labour in the outer world. This mission was in keeping with the special characteristics of the ancient Persians and the function of Zarathustra was to promote energy and efficiency in this work, although his methods may have taken a form that would be repellant to modern man. Zarathustra's mission was to engender vigour, efficiency and certainty of aim in outer activity through the knowledge that man has not only shelter and support in his own inner being but rests in the bosom of a divine-spiritual world and can therefore say to himself: 'Whatever your place in the world may be, you are not alone. You live in a Cosmos permeated by Spirit, among cosmic Gods and spiritual Beings; you are born of the Spirit and rest in the Spirit; with every indrawn breath you inhale divine Spirit; with every exhalation you may make an offering to the great Spirit!' Because of his special mission, Zarathustra's own Initiation was necessarily different from that of the other great missionaries of humanity.

Let us consider what the Individuality incarnated in Zarathustra was able to achieve. So lofty was his stage of development that he could make provision in advance for the next (Egyptian) stream of culture. Zarathustra had two pupils: the Individualities who appeared again later on as the Egyptian Hermes and as Moses respectively. When these two Individualities were again incarnated in order to carry forward their work for humanity, the astral body sacrificed by Zarathustra was integrated into the Egyptian Hermes. Hermes bore within him the astral body of Zarathustra which had been transmitted to him in order that all the knowledge of the Universe possessed by Zarathustra might again be made

manifest and take effect in the outer world. The etheric body of Zarathustra was transmitted to Moses. And because whatever evolves in *Time* is connected with the etheric body, when Moses became conscious of the secrets contained in his etheric body, he was able to create the mighty pictures of happenings in Time presented in *Genesis*. In this way Zarathustra worked on through the power of his Individuality, inaugurating and influencing Egyptian culture and the culture of the ancient Hebrews that issued from it.

Through his Ego too, such an Individuality is destined to fulfil a great mission. The Ego of Zarathustra incarnated again and again in other personalities, for an Individuality of such advanced development can always consecrate an astral body and strengthen an etheric body for his own use, even when he has relinquished his original bodies to others. Thus six hundred years before our era, Zarathustra was born again in ancient Chaldea as Zarathas or Nazarathos, who became the teacher of the Chaldean Mystery-schools; he was also the teacher of Pythagoras and again acquired profound insight into the phenomena of the outer world.

If we steep ourselves in the wisdom of the Chaldeans with the help, not of Anthropology but of Anthroposophy, an inkling will dawn in us of what Zarathustra, as Zarathas or Nazarathos, taught in the Mystery-schools of ancient Chaldea. The whole of his teaching, as we have heard, was given with the aim of bringing about concord and harmony in the outer world. His mission also included the art of organizing empires and institutions in keeping with the progress of humanity and with order in the social life. Hence those who were his pupils might rightly be called, not only great 'Magi', great 'Initiates', but also 'Kings', that is to say, men versed in the art of establishing social order in the external world.



Deep and fervent attachment to the Individuality (not the personality) of Zarathustra prevailed in the Mystery-schools of Chaldea. These Wise Men of the East felt that they were intimately connected with their great leader. They saw in him the 'Star of Humanity', for 'Zoroaster' (Zarathustra) means 'Golden Star', or 'Star of Splendour'. They saw in him a reflection of the Sun itself. And with their profound wisdom they could not fail to know when their Master was born again in Bethlehem. Led by their 'Star', they brought as offerings to him the outer symbols for the most precious gift he had been able to bestow upon men. This most precious gift was knowledge of the outer world, of the mysteries of the Cosmos received into the human astral body in thinking, feeling and willing; hence the pupils of Zarathustra strove to impregnate these soul-forces with the wisdom that can be drawn from the deep foundations of the divine-spiritual world. Symbols for this knowledge — which can be acquired by mastering the secrets of the outer world — were gold, frankincense and myrrh: gold the symbol of thinking, frankincense — the symbol of the piety which pervades man as feeling, and myrrh — the symbol of the power of will. Thus by appearing before their Master when he was born again in Bethlehem the Magi gave evidence of their union with him. The writer of the Gospel of St. Matthew relates what is literally true when he describes how the Wise Men among whom Zarathustra had once worked knew that he had reappeared among men, and how they expressed their connection with him through the three symbols of gold, frankincense and myrrh — the symbols for the precious gift he had bestowed upon them.

The need now was that Zarathustra, as Jesus of the Solomon line of the House of David, should be able to work with all possible power in order to give again to men, in a rejuvenated form, everything he had already given in earlier times. For this purpose he had to gather together and concentrate all the

power he had ever possessed. Hence he could not be born in a body from the priestly line of the House of David but only in one from the kingly line. In this way the Gospel of St. Matthew indicates the connection of the kingly name in ancient Persia with the ancestry of the child in whom Zarathustra was incarnated.

Indications of these happenings are also contained in ancient Books of Wisdom originating in the Near East. Whoever really understands these Books of Wisdom reads them differently from those who are ignorant of the facts and therefore confuse everything. In the Old Testament there are, for instance, two prophecies: one in the apocryphal Books of Enoch pointing more to the Nathan Messiah of the priestly line, and the other in the Psalms referring to the Messiah of the kingly line. Every detail in the scriptures harmonizes with the facts that can be ascertained from the Akashic Chronicle.

It was necessary for Zarathustra to gather together all the forces he had formerly possessed. He had surrendered his astral and etheric bodies to Hermes and Moses respectively, and through them to Egyptian and Hebraic culture. It was necessary for him to re-unite with these forces, as it were to fetch back from Egypt the forces of his etheric body. A profound mystery is here revealed to us: Jesus of the Solomon line of the House of David, the reincarnated Zarathustra, was led to Egypt, for in Egypt were the forces that had streamed from his astral body and his etheric body when the former had been bestowed upon Hermes and the latter upon Moses. Because he had influenced the culture and civilization of Egypt, he had to gather to himself the forces he had once relinquished. Hence the 'Flight into Egypt' and its spiritual consequences: the absorption of all the forces he now needed in order to give again to men in full strength and in a rejuvenated form, what he had bestowed upon them in past ages.

Thus the history of the Jesus whose parents resided originally in Bethlehem is correctly related by St. Matthew. St. Luke relates only that the parents of the Jesus of whom he is writing resided in Nazareth, that they went to Bethlehem to be 'taxed' and that Jesus was born during that short period. The parents then returned to Nazareth with the child. In the Gospel of St. Matthew we are told that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and that he had to be taken to Egypt. It was after their return from Egypt that the parents settled in Nazareth, for the child who was the reincarnation of Zarathustra was destined to grow up near the child who represented the other stream — the stream of Buddhism. Thus the two streams were brought together in actual reality.

The Gospels become especially profound when they are indicating essential facts. The quality in the human being that is connected more with will and power, with the 'kingly' nature (speaking in the technical sense), is known by those cognisant of the mysteries of existence to be transmitted by the *paternal* element in heredity. On the other hand, the inner nature that is connected with wisdom and inner mobility of spirit, is transmitted by the *maternal* element. With his profound insight into the mysteries of existence, Goethe hints at this in the words:

From my father I have my stature  
And life's serious conduct;  
From my mother a happy nature  
And delight in telling fables.

You can find this truth substantiated again and again in the world. Stature, the outer form, whatever expresses itself directly in the outer structure, and in 'life's serious conduct' — this is connected with the character of the Ego and is inherited from the paternal element. For this reason the Solomon Jesus had to inherit *power* from the father, because it was his

mission to transmit to the world the divine forces radiating through the world in Space. This is expressed by the writer of the Gospel of St. Matthew in the most wonderful way. The incarnation of an Individuality was announced from the spiritual world as an event of great significance and it was announced, not to Mary, but to Joseph, the *father*. Truths of immense profundity lie behind all this; such things must never be regarded as fortuitous. *Inner* traits and qualities such as are inherited from the mother, were transmitted to the Jesus of the Nathan line. Hence the birth of the Jesus of the Gospel of St. Luke was announced to the *mother*. Such is the profundity of the facts narrated in the scriptures! — But let us continue.

The other facts described are also full of significance. A forerunner of Jesus of Nazareth was to arise in John the Baptist. To say more about the Individuality of the Baptist will only be possible as time goes on. But to begin with we will consider the picture presented to us — John as the herald of the Being who was to come in Jesus. John proclaimed this by gathering together and summarizing with infinite power everything contained in the old Law. What the Baptist wished to bring home to men was that there must be observance of what was written in the old Law but had grown old in civilization and had been forgotten; it was mature, but was no longer heeded. Therefore what John required above all was the power possessed by a soul born as a mature — even overmature — soul into the world. He was born of *old* parents; from the very beginning his astral body was pure and cleansed of all the forces which degrade man, because the aged parents were unaffected by passion and desire. There again, profound wisdom is expressed in the Gospel of St. Luke. For such an Individuality, too, provision is made in the Mother-Lodge of humanity. Where the great Manu guides and directs the processes of evolution in the spiritual realm, from thence the

streams are sent whithersoever they are needed. An Ego such as that of John the Baptist was born into a body under the immediate guidance and direction of the great Mother-Lodge of humanity in the central sanctuary of earthly spiritual life. The John-Ego descended from the same holy region (*Stätte*) as that from which the soul-being of the Jesus-child of the Gospel of St. Luke descended, save that upon Jesus there were chiefly bestowed qualities not yet permeated by an Ego in which egoistic traits had developed: that is to say, a young soul was guided to the place where the reborn Adam was to incarnate.

It will seem strange to you that a soul without a really developed Ego could be guided from the great Mother-Lodge to a certain place. But the same Ego that was withheld from the Jesus of the Gospel of St. Luke was bestowed upon the body of John the Baptist; thus the soul-being in Jesus of the Gospel of St. Luke and the Ego-being in John the Baptist were inwardly related from the beginning. Now when the human embryo develops in the body of the mother, the Ego unites with the other members of the human organism in the third week, but does not come into operation until the last months before birth and then only gradually. Not until then does the Ego become active as an inner force; in a normal case, when an Ego quickens an embryo, we have to do with an Ego that has come from earlier incarnations. In the case of John, however, the Ego in question was inwardly related to the soul-being of the Nathan Jesus. Hence according to the Gospel of St. Luke, the mother of Jesus went to the mother of John the Baptist when the latter was in the sixth month of her pregnancy, and the embryo that in other cases is quickened by its own Ego was here quickened through the medium of the *other* embryo. The child in the body of Elisabeth begins to move when the mother bearing the Nathan Jesus-child approaches; and it is the Ego through which the child in the

other mother (Elisabeth) is quickened. [1] (Luke I, 39–44). Such was the deep connection between the Being who was to bring about the fusion of the two spiritual streams and the other who was to announce His coming!

Events of great sublimity take place at the beginning of our era. When, as so often happens, people say that truth should be simple, this is due to indolence and a dislike of having to wrestle with many concepts; but the greatest truths can be apprehended only when the spiritual faculties are exerted to their utmost capacity. If considerable efforts are needed to describe a machine, it is surely unreasonable to demand that the greatest truths should also be the simplest! Truth is inevitably complicated, and the most strenuous efforts must be made if it is desired to acquire some understanding of the truths relating to the Events of Palestine. Nobody should lend himself to the objection that the facts are unduly complicated; they are complicated because here we have to do with the greatest of all happenings in the evolution of the Earth.

Thus we see two Jesus-children growing up. The son of Joseph and Mary of the Nathan line was born of a *young* mother (in Hebrew the word 'Alma' would have been used), for a soul of such a nature must necessarily be born of a very young mother. After their return from Bethlehem this couple continued to live in Nazareth with their son. They had no other children; the mother was to be the mother of this Jesus only. When Joseph and Mary of the Solomon line returned with their son from Egypt, they settled in Nazareth and, as related in the Gospel of St. Mark, had several more children: Simon, Judas, Joseph, James and two sisters. (Mark VI, 3).

The Jesus-child who bore within him the Individuality of Zarathustra unfolded with extraordinary rapidity powers that will inevitably be present when such a mighty Ego is working in a body. The nature of the Individuality in the body of the

Nathan Jesus was altogether different, the most important factor there being the Nirmanakaya of Buddha overshadowing this child. Hence when the parents had returned from Bethlehem, the child is said to have been full of wisdom — that is, in his etheric body; he was “filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him.” (Luke II, 40 ). But he grew up in such a way that the ordinary human qualities connected with understanding and knowledge of the external world developed in him exceedingly slowly. A superficial observer would have called this child comparatively backward — if account had been taken only of his intellectual capacities. But instead there developed in him the power streaming from the overshadowing Nirmanakaya of Buddha. He unfolded a depth of inwardness comparable with nothing of the kind in the world, a power of feeling that had an extraordinary effect upon everyone around him. Thus in the Nathan Jesus we see a Being with infinite depths of feeling, and in the Solomon Jesus an Individuality of exceptional maturity, having profound understanding of the world.

Words of great significance had been spoken to the mother of the Nathan Jesus, the child of deep feeling. When Simeon stood before the newborn child and beheld above him the radiance of the Being he had been unable to see in India as the Buddha, he foretold the momentous events that were now to take place; but he spoke also of the ‘sword that would pierce the mother’s heart’. These words too refer to something we shall endeavour to understand.

The parents were in friendly relationship and the children grew up as near neighbours until they were about twelve years old. When the Nathan Jesus reached this age his parents went to Jerusalem ‘after the custom’, to take part in the Feast of the Passover, and the child went with them, as was usual. We now find in the Gospel of St. Luke the mysterious narrative of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple. As the parents were

returning from the Feast they suddenly missed the boy; failing to find him among the company of travellers they turned back again and found him in the temple conversing with the learned doctors, all of whom were astonished at his wisdom.

What had happened? We will enquire of the imperishable Akashic Chronicle.

The facts of existence are by no means simple. What had happened on this occasion may also happen in a different way elsewhere in the world. At a certain stage of development some individuality may need conditions differing from those that were present at the beginning of his life. Hence it repeatedly happens that someone lives to a certain age and then suddenly falls into a state of deathlike unconsciousness. A transformation takes place: his own Ego leaves him and another Ego passes into his bodily constitution. Such a change occurs in other cases too; it is a phenomenon known to every occultist. In the case of the twelve-year-old Jesus, the following happened. The Zarathustra-Ego which had lived hitherto in the body of the Jesus belonging to the kingly or Solomon line of the House of David in order to reach the highest level of his epoch, left that body and passed into the body of the Nathan Jesus who then appeared as one transformed. His parents did not recognize him; nor did they understand his words, for now the Zarathustra-Ego was speaking out of the Nathan Jesus. This was the time when the Nirmanakaya of Buddha united with the cast-off astral sheath and when the Zarathustra-Ego passed into him. This child, now so changed that his parents did not know what to make of him, was taken home with them.

Not long afterwards the mother of the Nathan Jesus died, so that the child into whom the Zarathustra-Ego had now passed was orphaned on the mother's side. As we shall see, the fact that the mother died and the child was left an orphan is



especially significant. Nor could the child of the Solomon line continue to live under ordinary conditions when the Zarathustra-Ego had gone out of him. Joseph of the Solomon line had already died, and the mother of the child who had once been the Solomon Jesus, together with her children James, Joseph, Simon, Judas and the two daughters, were taken into the house of the Nathan Joseph; so that Zarathustra (now in the body of the Nathan Jesus-child) was again living in the family (with the exception of the father) in which he had incarnated. In this way the two families were combined into one, and the mother of the brothers and sisters — as we may call them, for in respect of the Ego they were brothers and sisters — lived in the house of Joseph of the Nathan line with the Jesus whose native town — in the bodily sense — was Nazareth.

Here we see the actual fusion of Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. For the body now harbouring the mature Ego-soul of Zarathustra had been able to assimilate everything that resulted from the union of the Nirmanakaya of Buddha with the discarded astral sheath. Thus the Individuality now growing up as 'Jesus of Nazareth' bore within him the Ego of Zarathustra irradiated and pervaded by the spiritual power of the rejuvenated Nirmanakaya of Buddha. In this sense Buddhism and Zoroastrianism united in the soul of Jesus of Nazareth.

When Joseph of the Nathan line also died, comparatively soon, the Zarathustra-child was in very fact an orphan and felt himself as such; he was not the being he appeared to be according to his bodily descent; in respect of the spirit he was the reborn Zarathustra; in respect of bodily descent the father was Joseph of the Nathan line and the external world could have no other view. St. Luke relates it and we must take his words exactly:

'Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art my beloved. Son, this day have I begotten Thee. And Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years of age ...' and now it is not said simply that he was a 'son' of Joseph, but: 'being *as was supposed* the son of Joseph' (Luke III, 21–23) — for the Ego had originally incarnated in the Solomon Jesus and was therefore not connected fundamentally with the Nathan Joseph.

'Jesus of Nazareth' was now a Being, whose inmost nature comprised all the blessings of Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. A momentous destiny awaited him — a destiny altogether different from that of any others baptized by John in the Jordan. And we shall see that later on, when the Baptism took place, the Christ was received into the inmost nature of this Being. Then, too, the immortal part of the original mother of the Nathan Jesus descended from the spiritual world and transformed the mother who had been taken into the house of the Nathan Joseph, making her again virginal. [2] Thus the soul of the mother whom the Nathan Jesus had lost was restored to him at the time of the Baptism in the Jordan. The mother who had remained to him harboured within her the soul of his original mother, called in the Bible the 'Blessed Mary'.

## Notes:

**1.** There is a slight ambiguity in the German text and the reader will do well to turn to the passage in the next **lecture (p. 119)** where Dr. Steiner speaks again of the mysterious process connected with the birth of John the Baptist and of the influence of the Nirmanakaya of Buddha hovering above the Nathan Jesus.

**2.** The German words are: *und machte sie wieder jungfräulich.*

## LECTURE SIX

*The Mission of the Hebrews. Buddha's Teaching concerning the Ennoblement of Man's inner Nature and Zarathustra's Teaching concerning the Cosmos. Elijah and John the Baptist.*

It will be easier for us to understand details in the Gospel of St. Luke if during our preparatory study the beings and individualities concerned stand before our mind's eye as living figures. The need for a good deal of preliminary history must therefore not discourage us.

First and foremost we must learn to know the great central Figure of the Gospels in the whole complexity of His nature, and also certain other facts essential to any real understanding of the Gospel of St. Luke.

Let us first recall what has already been said about the Bodhisattva who in the fifth/sixth century before our era became Buddha. We have described what this most significant event meant for humanity and we will consider it in detail once again.

The content of Buddha's teaching had at some given time to be transmitted to men as their own possession. In none of the epochs before Buddha could there have existed on the Earth a human being capable of discovering *within himself* the teaching of compassion and love as expressed in the Eightfold Path. Evolution had not progressed sufficiently to enable any human being to discover these truths through his own

contemplation and deepened life of feeling. Everything in the world comes into being and develops; for everything in existence there must be a cause. How, for example, could men in earlier times have obeyed the principles subsequently expressed in the Eightfold Path? They could have done so only because these principles were handed down as tradition, were inculcated into them from the occult schools of the initiates and seers. It was the Bodhisattva who taught in the secret Mystery-schools, where it was possible to rise to the higher worlds and receive from those realms knowledge that could not yet be imparted directly to the human intellect. In ancient times this teaching had had to be instilled into humanity by those who were fortunate enough to come into direct contact with the teachers in the Mystery-schools. It was necessary for men to be influenced in such a way that their lives were governed by these principles, although they would not themselves have been capable of discovering them.

Thus men who lived outside the Mysteries unconsciously obeyed the principles received from those who had access to them. As yet there existed on the Earth no human body constituted in a way that would have enabled a man to discover the content of the Eightfold Path himself, however deeply the spirit may have penetrated into him. The principles had to be revealed from above and then communicated in a suitable form. Consequently a Being such as the Bodhisattva, before he became Buddha, was never able to use a human body on Earth in the fullest sense. He could find no body capable of incorporating all the faculties through which he was to influence men. No such body existed. What, then, was necessary? How did the Bodhisattva incarnate? We must now ask this question.

What the Bodhisattva was as a spiritual Being did not *fully* incarnate. Clairvoyant observation of a body ensouled by a Bodhisattva would have revealed that the body enclosed only

part of his nature and that his etheric body towered far above the human sheath; his connection with the spiritual world was never wholly relinquished; he lived in a spiritual and in a physical body simultaneously. The transition from Bodhisattva to Buddha meant that for the first time there existed a body into which the Bodhisattva could *fully* descend and through which his powers could take effect. Thus he exemplified the ideal human stature which men must strive to emulate in order that each individual may eventually discover from within himself the teaching of the Eightfold Path, as the Bodhisattva himself discovered it under the Bodhi tree. Were we to examine the previous incarnations of the Bodhisattva who became Buddha we should find that part of his being was obliged to remain in the spiritual world; he could send only part of himself into the physical body. It was not until the fifth/sixth century B.C. that for the first time there existed a human organism into which the Bodhisattva could descend in the fullest sense, thus exemplifying the possibility that the principles of the Eightfold Path can be discovered by humanity itself through the moral tenor of the soul.

The fact that some men lived with part of their being in the spiritual world was known to all religions and cognate modes of thought. It was known that there were Beings destined to work on the Earth, for whom human embodiment was too restricted to contain the whole Individuality. In the religious thought of Western Asia this kind of union of a higher Individuality with a physical body was called 'being filled with the Holy Spirit'. This is a quite definite, technical expression. In the language of those regions it would have been said of a Being such as a Bodhisattva while incarnated on Earth that he was 'filled with the Holy Spirit' — meaning that the forces and powers possessed by such a Being were not fully contained within his human organism and that something spiritual must work from outside. Thus it might with truth be said that the

Buddha, in his previous incarnations, was 'filled with the Holy Spirit'.

Having grasped this we shall be able to understand what is said at the beginning of the Gospel of St. Luke. We know that in the etheric body of the Jesus-child of the Nathan line of the House of David there was present the hitherto untouched part of the etheric body that had been withdrawn from humanity at the time of the 'Fall into sin'. The ethnic substance withheld from Adam had been preserved and was sent down into this child. This was necessary in order that a being so young and entirely untouched by any experiences of earthly ° evolution might be in existence and assimilate all that he was destined to assimilate. Would an ordinary human being who had passed through incarnations since the Lemurian age have been able to receive the overshadowing power of Buddha's Nirtnanakaya? No indeed! A human body of great perfection had to be made available, one that could only be produced through part of the etheric substance of Adam — untouched by all earthly influences — being united with the etheric body of this Jesus-child. This etheric substance was imbued with the forces that had worked upon Earth evolution before the Fall and now, in the Jesus-child, their power was immeasurably enhanced. This made it possible for the mysterious influence referred to in the lecture yesterday to be exercised by the mother of the Nathan Jesus upon the mother of the Baptist — that is to say upon John himself before he was born.

It is also essential to understand the nature of the one known as John the Baptist. We can understand him only when we perceive the difference between the teaching given by Buddha in India and the teaching given to the ancient Hebrew people through Moses and his successors, the Hebrew prophets.

Buddha imparted to mankind what the human soul can find as its own law and obey in order to purify itself and thus reach the highest level of morality attainable on Earth. The 'Law of the Soul' — Dharma — was proclaimed through Buddha in such a way that at the highest stage of development attainable by human nature, man can discover it himself, in his own soul. Buddha was the first to reveal it. But the evolution of humanity does not by any means proceed in a straight line. The several streams of culture and civilization must fertilize each other. The Christ Event was to come to pass in Asia Minor and this made it necessary that the development of the people there should remain behind that of the people of India, in order that men in Asia Minor might receive in greater freshness, at a later period, what had been imparted to the people of India in a different form.

Thus a people who developed in a quite different way and remained at a more backward stage than those living farther to the East, had to be established in Asia Minor. Whereas the people of the more distant East were destined by cosmic wisdom to advance to the stage of being able to behold the Bodhisattva as Buddha, it was necessary for the people of Asia Minor — especially the Hebrew people — to be left at a lower, more childlike stage. The same thing had to happen in the evolution of humanity on a large scale as might be seen on a small scale in the case of a human being who develops to a certain degree of maturity by his twentieth year and has acquired definite faculties. But acquired faculties are apt also to become shackles, hindrances. Such faculties tend to become fixed at the stage they have actually reached and to keep the person concerned at that stage. They have a firm hold upon him and later on, perhaps in his thirtieth year, it is not easy for him to transcend the stage reached when he was twenty. On the other hand, a second man who has kept himself longer in a childlike state and because he has acquired only very few



faculties by his twentieth year is obliged to learn from the other — such a man can more easily attain the required stage and indeed at the age of thirty may reach a higher level than the first man who acquired his faculties in his early years. Anyone who observes life closely will find this to be the case. Faculties that a man has made his own possession may become shackles later on; whereas faculties that are not so intrinsically linked with the soul but have been acquired in a more external way are less liable to have that effect.

In order that humanity may advance, provision has always to be made for two streams of civilization, one of which receives into itself the rudiments of certain faculties and elaborates them, while the development of the other, adjacent, stream is as it were held back. The one stream develops certain faculties to a suitable degree — faculties which are then essentially part of this stream and of the men belonging to it. Evolution proceeds, and something new appears; but the first stream would not be capable of rising to a higher stage through its own powers. Provision has therefore to be made for another stream to run side by side with it. This second stream remains in a certain respect undeveloped, having not nearly reached the level of the first; nevertheless it continues its course and is eventually able to benefit from the faculties acquired by the first. Having in the intervening period remained youthful, it is able, later on, to rise higher. Thus the one stream has fertilized the other. Spiritual streams must run their course side by side in this way in the evolution of humanity and provision must be made accordingly by the spiritual guidance of the world.

In what way could it be ensured that side by side with the stream represented by the great Buddha a second stream should run its course and at a later time receive what Buddha had brought to mankind?

This could only be achieved by withholding from the stream known as the ancient Hebraic, the possibility of producing human beings capable of developing Dharma out of their own moral nature, that is to say, capable of finding the teachings of the Eightfold Path for themselves. In this stream there could be no Buddha. What Buddha brought to his spiritual stream in the form of deep *inwardness*, the other stream had to receive from *outside*. As a particularly wise measure, therefore, and long before the appearance of Buddha, this people of the Near East was given the 'Law', not from within but from outside, in the Ten Commandments known as the Decalogue. The teaching imparted to another people as a possession of the inner life was given to the ancient Hebrew people in the Ten Commandments — a number of external Laws received from outside and not yet united with the soul. Hence by reason of their childlike stage of evolution the ancient Hebrews felt that the Commandments had been given to them from heaven. The Indian people had been taught to realize that men evolve Dharma, the Law of the Soul, from their inmost being; the Hebrew people were trained to obey the Law given them from *without*. In this way they formed a wonderful complement to what Zarathustra had accomplished for his own civilization and for all civilizations originating from it.

Emphasis has been laid on the fact that Zarathustra directed his gaze to the outer world. Whereas Buddha gave deeply penetrating teachings concerning the ennoblement of man's *inner* nature, from Zarathustra came sublime teachings relating to the Cosmos, in order that men should be enlightened about the world out of which they are born. Buddha's gaze was directed inwards, Zarathustra's to the outer world, with the aim of understanding it through spiritual insight.

Let us now concern ourselves with what Zarathustra bestowed upon humanity from the time when he appeared as the proclaimer of Ahura Mazdao until his life as Nazarathos. The depth and impressiveness of his teachings about the great spiritual laws and beings of the Cosmos steadily increased. What he had given to Persian civilization concerning the Spirit of the Sun amounted to no more than indications; but then these indications were amplified and elaborated into the wonderful Chaldean knowledge that is so little understood today — knowledge relating to the Cosmos and the spiritual causes governing birth and existence.

If we study these cosmological teachings we find that they reveal one particularly significant characteristic. While teaching the ancient Persian people about the external spiritual causes of the material world, Zarathustra spoke of two Powers: Ormuzd and Ahriman or 'Angra Manyu,' who oppose one another throughout the Universe. But what may be called the element of moral fervour, moral warmth, would not have been found in this teaching. According to the ancient Persian view, man is enmeshed in the whole process of cosmic life. The struggle between Ormuzd and Ahriman is waged in the human soul, and it is because of the battle between these two Beings that passions rage in man. There was as yet no knowledge of the *inner* nature of the soul; all the teaching related to the Cosmos. By 'good' and 'evil' were meant the beneficial or harmful workings which run counter to each other in the Cosmos and also come to expression in man. Moral conceptions were not yet included in teaching that was concerned essentially with the outer world. Man was made acquainted with the beings governing the material world, with everything that prevails in the world as a good, or as a sinister influence. He felt himself enmeshed in these forces but the moral element itself in which the soul participates was not yet inwardly experienced. When, for instance, a man was

confronted by another of apparently 'evil' nature, he felt that forces from the evil beings of the world were streaming through him, that the other man was 'possessed' by these evil beings and moreover could not be held to blame for it. Human beings were felt to be entangled in a system of cosmic existence not yet permeated by moral qualities. That was the characteristic feature of a teaching primarily concerned with the outer world — viewed, of course, with the eyes of spirit.

It was for this reason that the Hebrew teachings formed such a wonderful complement to the cosmological knowledge of the Persians, for they introduced the element of morality into revelations given from without, thus making it possible for the concept of 'guilt', of 'human guilt' to be imbued with meaning. *Before* the introduction of the Hebrew teaching, all that could be said of an evil man was that he was possessed by evil forces. The proclamation of the Ten Commandments made it necessary to distinguish between men who obeyed the Law and others who did not. Thus there arose the concept of *human guilt*. How it was introduced into the evolution of humanity can be grasped if we consider a record proving what a tragic uncertainty still prevailed as to the exact meaning of guilt. Study the Book of Job and you will discern the lack of clarity about the concept of guilt the uncertainty as to what attitude a man should adopt when misfortune befalls him; there you will glimpse the dawning of the new concept of guilt.

Thus the moral code was given to the ancient Hebrew people as a revelation from without — like the revelations concerning the kingdoms of Nature. This could only come about because Zarathustra had made provision for the continuation of his work, as I explained, by passing on his etheric body to Moses and his astral body to Hermes. Moses was thereby endowed with the faculty to perceive, as Zarathustra had perceived, the forces at work in the external world; but instead of experiencing neutral forces only, Moses became aware of the

moral power holding sway in the world, the power that can take the form of *commandment*. Hence the element of obedience, submission to the Law, was implicit in the life and culture of the Hebrew people, whereas the ideal contained in the stream represented by Buddha was to give direction to man's inner life in the teachings of the Eightfold Path. But it was necessary that this Hebrew people should be preserved until the right time arrived — the time of the advent of the Christ-principle of which we are about to speak. The Hebrew people had to be 'screened' from Buddha's revelation and kept at a less mature stage of culture — if we like to call it so. Hence among the ancient Hebrews there were personalities who could not themselves, as human beings, be bearers of the full powers of an Individuality whose mission it was to represent the 'Law'. A personality such as Buddha could not have appeared within the Hebrew people. The Law could be apprehended only through enlightenment from without — through the fact that Moses bore the etheric body of Zarathustra and was able to receive something that was not born of his own soul. To give birth to the Law from their own hearts was beyond the power of the Hebrew people. But it was essential, as in all other such cases, for the work of Moses to be carried onward and so bear fruit at the right time. Hence it was inevitable that there should arise among the ancient Hebrew people Individualities such as the Prophets and Seers, one of the most important of whom was Elijah. What is there to be said about a personality such as his?

Elijah was destined to be one of the ruling figures in the régime inaugurated by Moses. But the folk-substance of the Hebrews could produce no human being able to represent the whole content of the Law of Moses — which could be received only as a revelation from above. What we described as being necessary in the ancient Indian epoch, also as the special nature of the Bodhisattva, had to be repeated again and again

in the Hebrew people too: there had to be Individualities who were not wholly contained in the human personality; one part of their being was in the earthly personality and the other in the spiritual world. Elijah was an Individuality of this nature. Only part of his being was present in his personality on the physical plane; the Ego-hood of Elijah could not penetrate fully into his physical body. He must therefore be called a personality 'filled with the Spirit'. A figure such as Elijah could not possibly be brought into existence through the normal forces by which other men are placed in the world. In the normal way the human being develops in the mother's body in such a way that through physical processes the Individuality who has been incarnated previously simply unites with the physical embryo. In the case of an ordinary man everything takes place as it were straightforwardly, without any intervention by forces outside the normal. This could not be so in the case of an Individuality such as Elijah. Other forces had to intervene, concerned with the part of the Individuality that reached into the spiritual world. His development was necessarily attended by influences working upon him from outside. Hence when such Individualities are incarnated they appear as men who are 'inspired', 'impelled by the Spirit'. They appear as ecstatic personalities whose utterances far surpass anything that might issue from their normal intelligence. All the prophets in the Old Testament are figures of this kind. They are 'impelled by the Spirit'; the Ego cannot always account for its actions. The Spirit lives in the personality and is sustained from outside. From time to time such personalities withdraw into solitude; the part of the Ego needed by the personality withdraws and inspiration comes from the Spirit. In certain ecstatic, unconscious states such a being is responsive to the inspirations from above. The man who lived as 'Elijah' was an outstanding example of this. The words uttered by his mouth and the actions performed by his hands did not proceed only from the part of his being actually

present in his personality; they were manifestations of divine-spiritual Beings in the background.

When this Individuality was born again he was to unite with the body of the child born to Zacharias and Elisabeth. We know from the Gospel itself that John the Baptist is to be regarded as the reborn Elijah. But in him we have to do with an Individuality who in his earlier incarnations had not habitually developed or brought fully into operation all the forces present in the normal course of life. In the normal course of life the inner power or force of the Ego becomes active while the physical body of the human being is developing in the mother's womb. The Elijah-Individuality in earlier times had not descended deeply enough to be involved in the inner processes operating here. The Ego had not, as in normal circumstances, been stirred into activity by its own forces, but from outside. This was now to happen again. But the Ego was now farther from the spiritual world and nearer to the Earth, much more closely connected with the Earth than the Beings who had formerly guided Elijah. The transition leading to the amalgamation of the Buddha-stream with the Zarathustra-stream was now to be brought about.

Everything was to be rejuvenated. It was now the Buddha who had to work from outside — the Being who had linked himself with the Earth and its affairs and now, in his Nirmanakaya, was united with the Nathan Jesus. This Being who on the one side was united with the Earth but on the other withdrawn from it because he was working only in his Nirmanakaya which had soared to realms 'beyond' the Earth and hovered above the head of the Nathan Jesus — this Being had now to work from outside and stimulate the Ego-force of John the Baptist.

Thus it was the Nirmanakaya of Buddha which now stirred the Ego-force of John into activity, having the same effect as spiritual forces that had formerly worked upon Elijah. At certain times the being known as Elijah had been rapt in states of ecstasy; then the God spoke, filling his Ego with a force which could be communicated to the outer world. Now again a spiritual force was present — the Nirmanakaya of Buddha hovering above the head of the Nathan Jesus; this force worked upon Elisabeth when John was to be born, stimulated within her the embryo of John in the sixth month of pregnancy, and wakened the Ego. But being nearer to the Earth this force now worked as more than an inspiration; it had an actual formative effect upon the Ego of John. Under the influence of the visit of her who is there called 'Mary', the Ego of John the Baptist awoke into activity. The Nirmanakaya of Buddha was here working upon the Ego of the former Elijah — now the Ego of John the Baptist — wakening it and penetrating right into the physical substance. [1]

What may we now expect?

Even as the words of power once spoken by Elijah in the ninth century before our era were in truth 'God's words', and the actions performed by his hands 'God's actions', it was now to be the same in the case of John the Baptist, inasmuch as what had been present in Elijah had come to life again. The Nirmanakaya of Buddha worked as an inspiration into the Ego of John the Baptist. That which manifested itself to the shepherds and hovered above the head of the Nathan Jesus extended its power into John the Baptist, whose preaching was primarily the re-awakened preaching of Buddha. This fact is in the highest degree noteworthy and cannot fail to make a deep impression upon us when we recall the sermon at Benares wherein Buddha spoke of the suffering in life and the release from it through the Eightfold Path. He often expanded a sermon by saying in effect: 'Hitherto you have had the



teaching of the Brahmans; they ascribe their origin to Brahma himself and claim to be superior to other men because of this noble descent. These Brahmans claim that a man's worth is determined by his descent, but I say to you: Man's worth is determined by what he makes of himself, *not* by what is in him by virtue of his descent. Judged by the great wisdom of the world, man's worth lies in whatever he makes of himself as an individual!' — Buddha aroused the wrath of the Brahmans because he emphasized the individual quality in men, saying: 'Verily it is of no avail to call yourselves Brahmans; what matters is that each one of you, through his own personal qualities and efforts should make of himself a purified individual.' Although not word for word, such was the gist of many of Buddha's sermons. And he would often expand this teaching by showing how, when a man understands the world of suffering, he can feel compassion, can become a comforter and a helper, how he shares the lot of others because he knows that he is feeling the same suffering and the same pain.

The Buddha, now in his Nirmanakaya, shed his radiance upon the Nathan Jesus-child and continued his preaching inasmuch as he let the words resound from the mouth of John the Baptist. These words were spoken under the inspiration of the Buddha and it is like a continuation of his former preaching when, for example, John says: 'You who set so much store by your descent from those who in the service of the spiritual powers are called Children of the Serpent, and plead the Wisdom of the Serpent, who led you to this? You believe that you bring forth fruits of repentance when you merely say: We have Abraham to our father' ... (now, however, John continues the actual preaching of Buddha) ... 'Say not that you have Abraham to your father, but be good men, whatever your place in the world. A good man can be raised up from the stones upon which your feet tread. Verily, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham' ... And then again

he says: 'He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none!' Men came to him and asked: 'Master, what shall we do?' — exactly as the monks once came to Buddha. All these sayings seem to be like utterances of Buddha himself, or a continuation of them. (See Luke III, 7–12).

Knowing that these Beings appear on the physical plane at different turning-points of time, we learn to understand the unity of religions and the spiritual proclamations made to mankind. We shall not realize who and what Buddha was by clinging to tradition but by listening to how he actually speaks. Five to six hundred years before our era, Buddha preached the Sermon at Benares, but his voice has not been silenced. He speaks, although no longer incarnated, when he inspires through the Nirnanakaya. From the mouth of John the Baptist we hear what the Buddha had to say six hundred years after he had lived in a physical body.

There we have a real indication of the 'unity of religions!' We must look for each religion at the right point in the evolution of humanity and seek for what is truly alive in it, not what is dead — for everything continues to develop. This we must learn to realize. To refuse to hear Buddha's utterances from the mouth of John the Baptist is like someone who had seen the seed of a rose-tree and later on, when the tree has grown and bears flowers, refuses to believe that the tree grew from the seed, insisting that it is something different! The truth is that what was once alive in the seed now blossoms in the rose-tree. And the living essence of the Sermon at Benares blossomed in the preaching of John the Baptist by the Jordan.

We now know something of another Individuality of whom the Gospel of St. Luke speaks so impressively. Only by endeavouring to understand each word as it is really meant can knowledge of the Gospel be acquired. St. Luke tells us in his introduction that he will recount information given by

'seers'. Such persons were able to perceive the conditions revealing themselves gradually in the course of the ages; they did not see merely what was happening on the physical plane in the immediate present. One who saw only that might say: In India, five or six hundred years before our era, there lived one called the 'Buddha', the son of King Suddhodana, and then, later on, there lived a man known as John the Baptist. Such a person would not, however, find the thread passing from the one to the other, for that is perceptible only in the spiritual world. St. Luke says, however, that his account is based on the evidence of actual 'seers'. It is not enough merely to accept the words of these sacred records; we must learn to understand their true meaning. But for this purpose we must have clear pictures in our minds of the Individualities in question and be cognisant of all the elements that streamed into them.

It has already been said that whatever may be the nature and rank of an Individuality who descends to the Earth, his development must be in conformity with the faculties available in the body in which he incarnates, and he must take these faculties and their character into account. If a Being of very lofty rank wished to descend to the Earth at the present time, he could not count upon finding bodily conditions other than those pertaining to a human organism of to-day. Recognition of who this Individuality actually is, is possible only in the case of a seer who perceives how the delicate threads of destiny are woven into his inmost nature. Such a Being, having attained a higher stage of wisdom, must however bring the body to maturity through childhood and onwards in such a way that at a particular point of time what that Being was in earlier incarnations can become manifest. If a Being is to awaken certain feelings in mankind the conditions of his earthly incarnation must be such that his body too is able to endure whatever is the object of his

mission. In the spiritual world things do not present the same appearance as in the physical world. A Being whose mission it is to proclaim the possibility of the healing of pain and release from suffering must himself taste the very depths of suffering in order to find the right words applicable to it in the human sense.

The Being who subsequently passed into the body of the Nathan Jesus was the bearer of a message to the whole of mankind. It was a message intended to lead men out of the narrow ties of blood-relationship prevailing hitherto. It was not to set aside the tie between father and son, brother and sister, but to add to the love inherent in blood-relationship the 'universal' love that flows from soul to soul and transcends all ties of blood. This deepened love that has nothing to do with kinship of blood was to be brought by the Being who manifested Himself later on in the body of the Nathan Jesus. For this purpose it was necessary that the Individuality who had dwelt since his twelfth year in the body of the Nathan Jesus should himself experience on Earth what it means to feel no ties, no relationship with others through the blood. Then only could this Being experience in all its purity the link between man and man. He had first to feel himself free from all ties of blood — free even front the possibility of such ties. The Individuality in the Nathan Jesus was to stand before the world not only as a 'homeless' man (like the Buddha who left his home for unknown domains) but as one liberated from all family connections and from everything associated with the tie of blood. He had to experience all the pain that can be felt when a man must bid farewell to everything that is near him, and stand alone; he had to speak from the experience of utter loneliness and the abandonment of all family ties. Who was this Being?

We know that he was the Being who until about his twelfth year had lived in the body of the Solomon Jesus, his father and mother having descended from the Solomon line. His father had died early, so the boy was orphaned on the father's side. Besides himself there were brothers and sisters in this family, and he lived with them as long as he (Zarathustra) was in the body of the Solomon Jesus. In his twelfth year he left this family, gave up mother, brothers and sisters, and passed into the body of the Nathan Jesus. Then the mother of the Nathan Jesus died and, later on, the father too. Thus when the Zarathustra-Individuality went out to work in the world he had parted from everything connected with ties of blood. Not only was he completely orphaned, not only had he given up brothers and sisters, but as Zarathustra he had to forgo ever founding a family and having descendants. For he had abandoned not only his father and mother, his brothers and sisters, but even his own body, and had passed into another body — that of the Nathan Jesus. This Being could then prepare the way for One still more sublime, who later on, in the body of the Nathan Jesus, entered upon His great mission — the proclamation of Universal Love. And when the mother and brothers came and the people said to Him: 'Thy mother and thy brethren are without and seek for thee', then, from the depths of His soul and without danger of being misunderstood or of wronging filial love, He could utter the words: 'That they are not!' ... for Zarathustra had relinquished even the body that was connected with this family. Then, pointing to those who were with Him in free community of soul, He could say: "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." (See Mark, III, 35.)

The words of the scriptures are to be taken literally! In order that One Being might proclaim universal love He had actually to be incarnated in a form wherein He could experience the abandonment of everything that could be founded upon ties of

**blood.**

**Our feelings go out to this Being as if He were humanly near us — a Being who, having descended from sublime heights of spirit underwent human experiences and human suffering. The more spiritual our conception of Him, the truer it will be, and the more fervently will our hearts and souls acclaim Him!**

## **Notes:**

**1.** There is a slight ambiguity in the German text and the reader will do well to turn to the passage in the this lecture (**p. 119**) where Dr. Steiner speaks again of the mysterious process connected with the birth of John the Baptist and of the influence of the Nirmanakaya of Buddha hovering above the Nathan Jesus.

## LECTURE SEVEN

*The two Jesus-children. The Incarnation of the Christ in Jesus of Nazareth. Vishva Karman, Ahura Mazdao, Jahve. The Lodge of the Twelve Bodhisattvas and the 'Thirteenth'.*

In the foregoing lectures we have tried to gain some idea of the most important figures in the Gospel of St. Luke. Although far-reaching conceptions of the facts underlying this Gospel have been acquired, it still remains for us to follow the further development of the central Being of our Earth — Christ Jesus Himself.

To begin with it will be necessary to recall that Christ Jesus, as He is afterwards described in the Gospel of St. Luke, was born — or rather His physical body was born — as the Nathan Jesus of the House of David. At about his twelfth year there passed into the body of this child the Ego once incarnated in the Being who had been the inaugurator of the ancient Persian civilization. Thus from the twelfth year onwards, the Ego of Zarathustra was living in the body of the Nathan Jesus, and we must now follow the development of this Being more closely, bearing in mind something for which our previous studies have prepared us.

We know that in normal cases the first and second septenaries of human life are important periods of development; a third period follows, from puberty (the fourteenth year) to the twenty-first year; another from the twenty-first to the twenty-eighth and again another from the twenty-eighth to the thirty-fifth year. These divisions of time are not, of course, to be



taken so pedantically that they are thought to end exactly at the ages specified, but when the second dentition takes place an important transition in the development of the human being occurs, approximately at the close of the seventh year.

This transition does not come about suddenly, but gradually, during the period of the change of teeth. During the other periods too, the process is a gradual one. As is described in greater detail in my book *The Education of the Child in the light of Anthroposophy*, the close of the seventh year is marked by a spiritual occurrence which in some respects resembles physical birth: a kind of etheric birth then takes place. In the fourteenth year, at puberty, there is an astral birth: the astral body of the human being becomes free. If followed with close attention and with the eyes of spirit, the development of the human being shows itself to be a very complicated process. Ordinary observation fails to notice many important differences in human life — differences which also become evident in more advanced years. It is usually thought that from a certain point of time onwards, few if any changes take place in the human being, but this idea arises from very rough and ready observation. The truth is that closer scrutiny can perceive certain differences taking place even in the later years of human life.

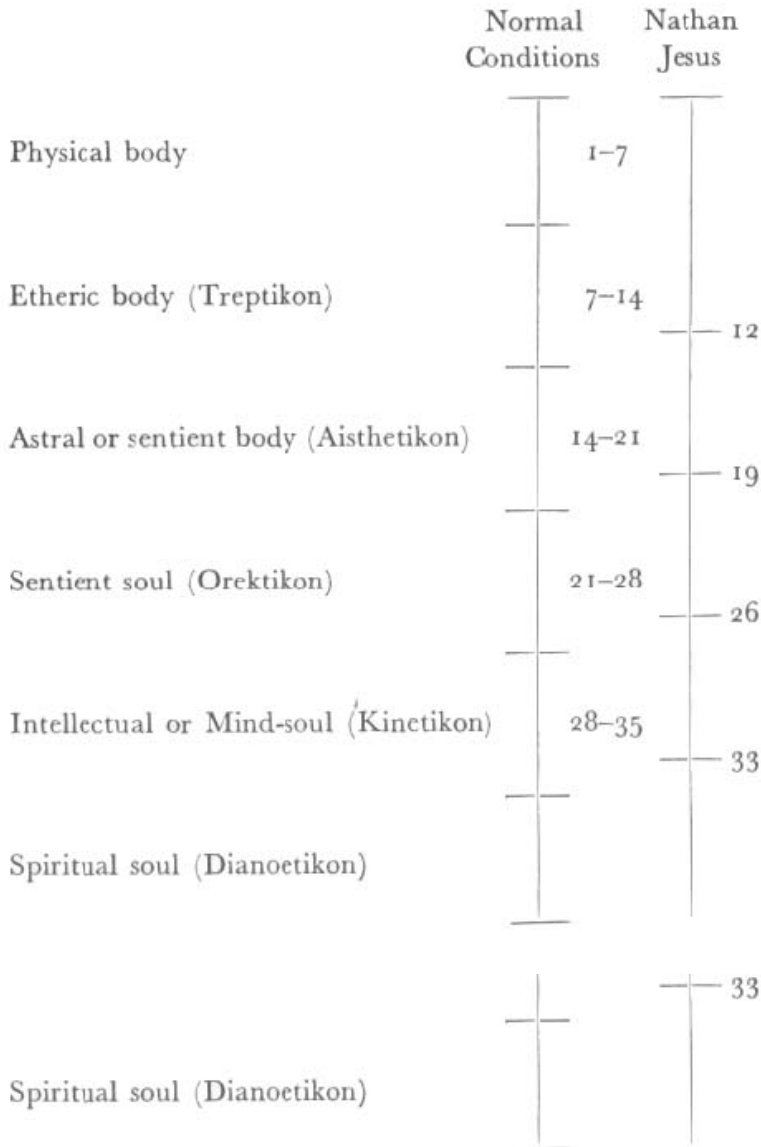
When the physical environment of the mother's body is abandoned at birth, the part of the human being then born is really his physical body only; what comes to the fore during the first seven years is the physical body. In various lectures on the education of children the great importance of this knowledge for the teacher has been emphasized. Then, when the etheric sheath has been discarded, the etheric body is set free. Again, in the fourteenth year, when the astral sheath is discarded, the astral body is set free. Strictly speaking, however, the constitution of the human being cannot be fully understood unless the organization indicated in my book

*Theosophy* is taken as a basis. There you will find that a further distinction is made in the soul-elements of human nature. Immediately connected with the life-body (etheric body) is what is called the sentient (astral) body which does not become completely free as regards the outer world until about the twenty-first year. Then what is called the sentient soul becomes gradually free. At the twenty-eighth year the intellectual or mind-soul (*Gemütseele*) becomes free, and later the spiritual soul (or consciousness-soul). This applies, to the human being of to-day. Observation of human life guided by spiritual science clearly reveals these stages of development. The great leaders and leading figures of humanity have also known why the thirty-fifth year is so important. Dante was aware why he made particular mention of his thirty-fifth year as the time when he had the visions set down in his great poem. At the very beginning of the *Divine Comedy* there is an indication to this effect. At the age of thirty-five man's being has progressed to the point where he can make full use of the faculties dependent upon the sentient (astral) body, the sentient soul and the intellectual or mind-soul.

Those who have spoken of man strictly in accordance with the process of evolution in the West have always recognized this classification. In Orientals the periods are not exactly the same. Hence in the case of Oriental civilization it was quite correct not to make the same classification as in the West where it has always been the right one. The Greeks, for instance, merely used different words to express what now concerns us. When speaking of the element of *soul* in man, they began with what we call the life-body (etheric body) and called it 'treptikon'; for what we call the sentient (astral) body they used the very expressive word 'aisthetikon'; our sentient soul they called 'orektikon'; the intellectual or mind-soul, 'kinetikon', and the most precious possession now being acquired by man, the spiritual soul, they called 'dianoetikon'.

Such is the development of the human being when considered in detail.

Owing to certain conditions that will become clearer to us to-day, the development of the Nathan Jesus was somewhat accelerated — a fact also rendered possible because in those regions puberty was reached at an earlier age.



## Diagram 1

In the case of the Nathan Jesus there were very special reasons why the change usually occurring in the fourteenth year should take place in the twelfth. So too the other changes connected with the twenty-first, twenty-eighth and thirty-fifth years came about in his nineteenth, twenty-sixth and thirty-third years respectively. This indicates in broad outline the development of the central Figure of our Earth. It must be borne in mind that up to the twelfth year the physical body was that of the Nathan Jesus, but that after the twelfth year the Ego of Zarathustra was living in that body. What does this mean? It means that from the twelfth year onwards, this mature Ego was working upon the sentient (astral) body, the sentient soul and the mind-soul of the Nathan Jesus, elaborating these members in a way possible only to an Ego of great maturity — an Ego that had undergone the destinies of the Zarathustra-Individuality through many incarnations. We therefore meet with the wonderful fact that the Ego of Zarathustra passed into the body of the Nathan Jesus in the twelfth year of life and elaborated the faculties of the soul to the highest degree of excellence. Thus there developed a sentient body able to gaze into the Cosmos and experience something of the spiritual nature of Ahura Mazdao; there developed a sentient soul able to harbour the knowledge and wisdom based on the teaching concerning Ahura Mazdao; and there developed a mind-soul able to apprehend, to formulate in intelligible concepts and words, that which men had hitherto been able to acquire only through spiritual currents flowing into them from outside.

The Nathan Jesus, having within him the Zarathustra-Ego, lived on until his thirtieth year was approaching. The event that had occurred when he was twelve, when his inmost nature was filled with a new Egohood, now took place again —

but this time on an infinitely more sublime, more universal scale. Towards the thirtieth year the Zarathustra-Ego had accomplished its work in the soul of the Nathan Jesus; the faculties of this soul had been developed to the highest possible degree and the mission of the Zarathustra-Ego was thus fulfilled. Having instilled into the soul all the faculties he had acquired through his own previous incarnations, Zarathustra could declare: 'My task is now accomplished!' — and a moment came when his Ego left the body of the Nathan Jesus.

The Zarathustra-Ego had lived in the body of the Solomon Jesus until the twelfth year. No further development in earthly existence would thereafter have been possible for this boy. Because the Zarathustra-Ego had gone out of him, his development came to a standstill at the point reached at that time, although exceptional maturity had been attained owing to the presence of such a highly advanced Ego. Anyone observing the Solomon Jesus-child would have found him prematurely advanced to a conspicuous degree; but from the moment the Zarathustra-Ego left him he came to a standstill and could make no further progress. And when — comparatively soon — the mother of the Nathan Jesus died and the spiritual part of her being was translated into the spiritual world, she took with her what was of eternal value and formative power in the Solomon-Jesus child. This child also died — at about the same time as the mother of the Nathan Jesus.

It was an etheric sheath of utmost value which then left the body of the Solomon Jesus. As we know, the development of the etheric body takes place mainly between the seventh year of life and puberty. This was an etheric body that had been worked upon and elaborated by the forces of the Zarathustra-Ego. In normal human existence, when the etheric body leaves the physical body at death, everything that is of no eternal use

is discarded and the human being takes with him a kind of extract of the etheric body. In the case of the child of the Solomon line the etheric body was of eternal use in the fullest possible sense and the whole life-body of this child was taken by the mother of the Nathan Jesus with her into the spiritual world.

Now the etheric body forms and shapes the physical body of man and it is not difficult to realize that there was a very deep connection between this etheric body of the Solomon Jesus which had been translated into the spiritual world, and the Zarathustra-Ego; for this Ego and etheric body had been united until the twelfth year of earthly life. And when the Zarathustra-Ego left the body of Jesus of Nazareth, the power of attraction between this Ego and the original etheric body in the Solomon Jesus asserted itself. The maturity of the Zarathustra-Ego was such that a further passage through Devachan was unnecessary and after a comparatively short time this Ego was able, in conjunction with his former etheric body, to build up a new physical body. This resulted in the birth of the Being who thereafter appeared again and again, always with relatively short intervals between physical death and rebirth; whenever this Being left the physical body at death, he soon appeared again on the Earth in a new incarnation. Having sought and found the etheric body he had once relinquished in the circumstances indicated, this Being went on his way through history as the 'Master Jesus', becoming, as you can well imagine, the great helper of those who have endeavoured to understand the Event of Palestine. Thus it was the Zarathustra-Ego, Zarathustra himself, who having found his etheric body again began to move through the evolution of mankind as the Master Jesus, incarnating again and again to give guidance and direction to the spiritual stream of Christianity. He is the Inspirer of those who strive to understand Christianity in its living growth and development;

within the esoteric schools he inspired those whose perpetual duty it was to cultivate the teachings of Christianity. He stands behind the great spiritual figures of Christianity, ever teaching what the great Event of Palestine signifies.

Having indwelt the body of the Nathan Jesus from the twelfth to the thirtieth year, the Zarathustra-Ego was hence-forth outside that body and another Being descended into it. This happened, as all the Gospels relate, at the Baptism by John in the Jordan, when an Ego of untold sublimity entered into the Nathan Jesus in place of the Zarathustra-Ego. In the lectures on the Gospel of St. John, [1] attention was drawn to the fact that 'baptism' in those olden days was something very different from the mere symbol which it became later on. It was also enacted differently by John the Baptist. The body of one who was baptized was completely submerged in the water. You know from preparatory lectures that a definite experience may be connected with such a happening. Even in everyday existence it may happen that when a man is in danger of drowning, or sustains a violent shock, a tableau of his life hitherto appears before him. This is because something that otherwise takes place only after death, occurs momentarily: the etheric body is lifted out of the physical body and is freed from its power. This happened to most of those who were baptized by John, and in a very special way to the Nathan Jesus. His etheric body was drawn out — and during that moment the sublime Being we call the Christ descended into his body.

Thus from the time of the Baptism, the Nathan Jesus was filled with the Christ Being as is indicated in the words contained in the earlier Gospel records: "This is my well-beloved Son; this day have I begotten Him!" — meaning: the Son of Heaven, the Christ, is now begotten — begotten of the all-pervading Godhead and received into the body and whole constitution of the Nathan Jesus who had been prepared to

receive the seed from heavenly heights. 'This is my well-beloved Son; this day have I begotten Him!' — These were the words contained in the earlier manuscripts and this is how they ought still to stand in the Gospels. (Luke III, 22. )

Who is this Being who united at that time with the etheric body of the Nathan Jesus?

The Christ Being cannot be understood if we think of Earth evolution alone. The Christ is the Leader of those spiritual Beings who left with the Sun when it separated from the Earth and established for themselves this higher sphere of action in order to work upon the Earth from outside. If we think back to the pre-Christian period of Earth evolution, from the time of the separation of the Sun until the appearance of Christ, we must say: When men looked up to the Sun with mature faculties they would have recognized the truth of what Zarathustra taught, namely that the light and warmth streaming from the Sun are but the physical vestment of the spiritual Beings behind the Sun's light; for behind the physical phenomena are hidden the spiritual rays of power which stream from the Sun to the Earth. The Leader of all the Beings who send their beneficent influences from the Sun to the Earth is He who was later called Christ. In pre-Christian times, therefore, this Being was not to be sought on Earth but on the Sun. And Zarathustra rightly called Him 'Ahura Mazdao', saying in effect: 'On the Earth we do not find the Light-Spirit; but when we look up to the Sun we behold the spiritual Being — Ahura Mazdao — who has his habitation there. The light that streams to us is the body of the Sun-Spirit, Ahura Mazdao, even as the human physical body is the body of the human spirit. But in the course of great happenings in the Cosmos this sublime Being drew ever nearer to the Earth-sphere; His approach could be perceived more and more distinctly by clairvoyance, and was unmistakable when in the flame of lightning on Mount Sinai



the revelations came to Moses, the great forerunner of Christ Jesus.

What did these revelations to Moses signify? They signified that the Christ Being, while approaching the Earth, was revealing Himself — in reflection to begin with — as if in a mirror-image. Let us consider, in its spiritual aspect, the process in evidence at every full Moon. When we look at the full Moon we see the rays of the Sun in reflection. It is sunlight that streams towards us, only we call it moonlight because we see it reflected by the Moon. What Being did Moses behold in the burning bush and in the fire on Sinai? He beheld the Christ! But just as the sunlight is not seen directly but reflected from the Moon, so did Moses see the Christ in reflection. And as we call the sunlight 'moonlight' when we see it reflected from the Moon, Christ was called at that time, Jahve, or Jehovah. Jahve or Jehovah is the reflection of the Christ before He Himself appeared on Earth. Christ announced Himself thus indirectly to a humanity as yet unable to behold Him in his immediate reality, just as the sunlight manifests itself through the rays of the Moon in the otherwise dark night of full Moon. Jahve or Jehovah is the Christ — but seen as *reflected light*, not directly.

The faculties of human cognition and perception were to come within nearer and nearer range of the Christ. Having previously manifested His presence to the Initiates from the Cosmos, He was, now Himself to tread the Earth for a season as a man among men. But this could not come to pass until the right time had arrived. That Christ is a reality has always been known wherever men have steeped themselves in the wisdom of the world, and because He has revealed Himself in so many different ways He has been called by diverse names. Zarathustra called Him 'Ahura Mazdao' because He revealed Himself in the raiment of the Sun's light. The great Teachers of humanity in ancient India during the first period after the

Atlantean catastrophe — the holy Rishis — had known full well of this Being, for they were Initiates. They knew too that in their epoch He was beyond the range of earthly wisdom and would be accessible to it only later on. Hence it was said that this Being was beyond the sphere of the seven Rishis. 'Vishva Karman' was the name given to Him. The Rishis taught of the Being whom they called 'Vishva Karman' and Zarathustra called 'Ahura Mazdao'. Vishva Karman and Ahura Mazdao were two of the names for this Being who was gradually approaching the Earth from heights of spirit, from cosmic realms.

But preparation had to be made in the evolution of humanity to ensure the existence of a body fit to receive this Being. It was necessary for a Being such as had lived in Zarathustra to mature from incarnation to incarnation in order that in a body as pure as that of Jesus of Nazareth he could bring the faculties of the sentient body, of the sentient soul and of the mind-soul to the degree of perfection that would render this human being fit to receive into himself so sublime a Being. Such preparation had to be made. Before a sentient soul and a mind-soul could be adequately developed it was necessary that an Ego should first have undergone the many experiences and destinies of Zarathustra and then transform the faculties present in the Nathan Jesus. This would not have been possible at any earlier time, for the Nathan Jesus-child had to be worked upon not only by the Zarathustra-Ego but also by the lofty spiritual power we have characterized as the Nirmanakaya of Buddha. From the child's birth until his twelfth year this power worked chiefly from outside. But the Bodhisattva himself had had first to become Buddha before he was able to develop in himself the spiritual body, the Nirmanakaya, wherewith to work upon the Nathan Jesus during this period of his life. At the time of the incarnation in the course of which he was destined to become Buddha he had

not yet acquired this power; the Buddha-life had first to be lived through.

Some day, when humanity understands what deep wisdom has been preserved in many ancient legends, it will be found that everything deciphered from the Akashic Chronicle is contained in a wonderful way in those legends. We are told, and rightly told, that in ancient India too, men were taught of Christ as a cosmic Being beyond the sphere of the seven holy Rishis. The Rishis knew that He dwelt in lofty spiritual regions and was only gradually approaching the Earth. Zarathustra too knew that he must turn his gaze from the Earth to the Sun; and the ancient Hebrews, because of the faculties and attributes indicated in the last lecture, were the first people to whom the proclamation of the Christ Being in His reflection could be made.

We are also told in a legend how the Bodhisattva, when about to become Buddha, came into spiritual contact with Vishva Karman — the Being who was later called Christ. The legend relates that when his twenty-ninth year was approaching the Bodhisattva made his famous exit from the palace where he had been strictly guarded and fostered. Then he saw, first, an old man, then a sick man, then a corpse, thus becoming gradually aware of the miseries of life. Then he saw a monk who had forsaken this life with its accompanying phenomena of old age, sickness and death. Thereupon — so it is related in this profoundly true legend — he resolved not to leave the palace immediately but to return once more. But during this first departure from the palace — so runs the legend — he was invested from spiritual heights with the power which the Divine Artificer, Vishva Karman, who appeared to him, sent down to the Earth. The Bodhisattva was invested with the power of Vishva Karman, of Christ. Thus for the Bodhisattva, Christ was a Being *outside* — not yet united with him. At that time the Bodhisattva too had nearly reached his thirtieth year

but he could not then have made it possible for Christ to be received in the fullest sense into a human body. He had first to become sufficiently mature, and this stage was attained through his Buddha-existence. And when, later on, he appeared in the Nirmanakaya, his task was to make the body of the Nathan Jesus — in which he was not himself embodied — fit to receive Vishva Karman, the Christ.

In this way the forces in earthly evolution had worked in concert to bring about the great Event. It is now on our lips to ask: What is the relationship of Christ, of Vishva Karman, to Beings such as the Bodhisattvas, of whom the Bodhisattva who afterwards became Buddha was one?

This question brings us to the threshold of one of the greatest mysteries of Earth evolution. Generally speaking, it will be difficult for the feelings and perceptive faculties of men at the present time to have even an inkling of what lies behind this mystery. The mission of the Bodhisattva who became Buddha was to incorporate into humanity the principle of compassion and love. Twelve such Beings are connected with the Cosmos to which the Earth belongs. The Bodhisattva who became Buddha in the fifth/sixth century B.C. is one of these Twelve, all of whom have specific missions: Just as the mission of this particular Bodhisattva was to bring to the Earth the teaching of compassion and love, the other Bodhisattvas too have their missions which must be fulfilled in the different epochs of Earth evolution. Gautama Buddha's connection with the mission of the Earth is especially close inasmuch as the development of the moral sense is precisely the task of our own epoch — from the time when the Bodhisattva appeared five to six centuries B.C. to the time when the Bodhisattva who succeeded him in that office will live on Earth as the Maitreya Buddha. That is how Earth evolution advances; the Bodhisattvas descend and have to incorporate into evolution from time to time what constitutes the object of their mission.

A survey of the whole of Earth evolution would reveal that there are twelve such Bodhisattvas. They belong to that great community of Spirits which from time to time sends one of the Bodhisattvas to the Earth as a special emissary, as one of the great Teachers. A Lodge of twelve Bodhisattvas is to be regarded as the Lodge directing all Earth evolution. The concept of 'Teacher' familiar to us at lower stages of existence can be applied, in essentials, to these twelve Bodhisattvas. They are Teachers, the great Inspirers of one portion or another of what mankind has to acquire.

Whence do these Bodhisattvas receive what they have to proclaim from epoch to epoch? — If you were able to look into the great Spirit-Lodge of the twelve Bodhisattvas you would find that in the midst of the Twelve there is a Thirteenth — one who cannot be called a 'Teacher' in the same sense as the Bodhisattvas, but of whom we must say: He is that Being from *whom wisdom itself streams as very substance*. It is therefore quite correct to speak of the twelve Bodhisattvas in the great Spirit-Lodge grouped around One who is their Centre; they are wrapt in contemplation of the sublime Being from whom there streams what they have then to inculcate into Earth evolution in fulfilment of their missions. Thus there streams from the Thirteenth what the others have to teach. They are the 'Teachers', the 'Inspirers'; the Thirteenth is himself the Being of whom the others teach, whom they proclaim from epoch to epoch. This Thirteenth is He whom the ancient Rishis called Vishva Karman, whom Zarathustra called Ahura Mazdao, whom we call the Christ. He is the Leader and Guide of the great Lodge of the Bodhisattvas. Hence the content of the proclamation made through the whole choir of the Bodhisattvas is the teaching concerning Christ, once called Vishva Karman. The Bodhisattva who became Buddha five to six centuries before our era was endowed with the powers of Vishva Karman. The Nathan Jesus who received the Christ

into himself was not merely 'endowed' but 'anointed' — that is to say, permeated through and through by Vishva Karman, by Christ.

This mystery was portrayed in a symbol or in a picture wherever men had an inkling of the great secrets of evolution or acquired knowledge of them through Initiation. In the little known, enigmatic Trottic Mysteries of Northern Europe before the coming of Christianity, an earthly symbol of the spiritual reality of the Lodge of the twelve Bodhisattvas was created. Those who were Teachers were always associated with a community of twelve. It was for the Twelve to proclaim the message and there was a Thirteenth who did not teach but who through his very presence radiated the wisdom which the others received. This was the picture on Earth of a heavenly, spiritual reality. Again, in Goethe's poem *Die Geheimnisse* [2] where the poet has given an indication of his Rosicrucian inspiration, we are reminded how Twelve sit around a Thirteenth who is not necessarily a great Teacher. Brother Mark, in his simplicity, is himself to be addressed by the Twelve as the Thirteenth — when the former Thirteenth shall have left them. He is to be the bringer, not of teaching, but of the *spiritual substance itself*. And it was the same wherever an inkling or actual knowledge of this lofty spiritual fact existed among men.

The Baptism by John in the Jordan marked the point of time in the evolution of humanity when this heavenly 'Thirteenth' — as spiritual substance itself — appeared on the Earth. This was the Being of whom all others — Bodhisattvas and Buddhas — had had to teach, and for whose descent into a human body such stupendous preparations had been necessary. That is the mystery of the Baptism in the Jordan. The Being is He who is described in the Gospels: Vishva Karman, Ahura Mazdao, or the Christ as He was called later on when in the body of the Nathan Jesus. As Christ, this Being

was to tread the Earth in human form for three years, a man among men, within that purified terrestrial Being who up to his thirtieth year had undergone all the experiences of which we have heard in these lectures. The Being formerly hidden in the light- and warmth-giving rays of the Sun streaming down from the Cosmos, the Being, that is, who had gone with the Sun when it separated from the Earth, now descended into the Nathan Jesus.

We may now ask another question: Why was the union of this Being with the evolution of humanity on the Earth so long postponed? Why had He not descended at an earlier time to the Earth. Why had He not penetrated before into a human etheric body, as He did at the Baptism by John in the Jordan?

This will be intelligible to us if we grasp the nature of the happening described in the Old Testament as the 'Fall into Sin'. During the epoch of ancient Lemuria, certain beings insinuated themselves into the human astral body — they were beings who had remained at the stage of Old Moon evolution. The human astral body was permeated at that time by the Luciferic beings and this is presented pictorially as the Fall into Sin in Paradise. Because these forces penetrated into his astral body, man became more deeply entangled in the things of the Earth than would otherwise have been the case. Had he not been subject to the Luciferic influence he would have been less deeply entangled in earthly matter. Consequently he descended to the Earth earlier than was originally intended. Now if nothing else had intervened, if nothing had taken place except what has just been indicated, the Luciferic forces anchored in the human astral body would have taken effect in the etheric body as well. But it was essential for the cosmic Powers to take special measures to prevent this. In the book *Occult Science — an Outline* [3] the subject is dealt with from a different aspect. Man might not remain as he was after the Luciferic forces had penetrated into

his astral body. He had to be protected against the effect of the forces upon his etheric body. This end was achieved at that time by making it impossible for him to use the whole of his etheric body, part of it being removed from his arbitrary control. If this beneficent deed of the Gods had not been accomplished, if man had retained power over the whole of his etheric body, he could never have found his right path through Earth evolution. Certain parts of the human etheric body had at that time to be withdrawn in order to be preserved for later times. Let us try to picture what this means.

Man's physical body — as everything else that is physical — is composed of the elements also to be found in the world outside: the 'earthy' or solid, the 'watery' or fluid, and the 'airy' or gaseous. The etheric realm begins with the first state of ether — the 'fire-ether' or simply 'fire'. Fire or warmth, regarded by modern physics merely as motion and non-substantial, is the first state of the ether. The second is the 'light-ether', or simply 'light'. And the third state — sound, tone, or number — is one that is not revealed to man in its original form at all; it is only a reflection, as it were a shadow of this ether that can be perceived in the physical world as tone or sound. Behind external 'sound', however, there lies something of a finer etheric nature, something spiritual. Physical tone or sound is a mere phantom of spiritual tone, of 'sound-ether' or also 'number-ether'. The fourth etheric realm is the 'life-ether' — that which underlies actual 'life'.

As physical man is constituted to-day, everything that is of the nature of soul expresses itself in his physical and etheric constitution, but is also connected with certain etheric substances. What we call 'will' expresses itself etherically in what we call 'fire'. Anyone who is at all sensitive to certain sentient experiences will be aware that there is justification for saying that the will, which expresses itself physically in the



blood, lives in the fire-element of the etheric; physically, the will expresses itself in the blood, that is to say in the movement of the blood. What we call 'feeling' expresses itself in the part of the etheric body that corresponds to the light-ether. Because this is so, a clairvoyant sees the will-impulses of a man flashing like flames through his etheric body and raying into his astral body; and he sees the feelings as forms of light. But the thinking that is experienced by man in his soul as his own, and expressed in words, is only a phantom of thinking — as you will readily believe, because physical sound too is only a phantom of something higher. Words have their organ in the sound-ether; our thoughts underlie our words; words are forms of expression for thoughts. These forms of expression fill etheric space inasmuch as they send their vibrations through the sound-ether; 'tone' or 'sound' is only the shadow of the actual thought-vibrations. The inner essence of all our thoughts, that which endows our thoughts with meaning (*Sinn*), actually belongs; in respect of its etheric nature, to the life-ether itself.

Meaning (*Sinn*)

Life-Ether

Thinking

Tone- or Sound-Ether

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Feeling

Light-Ether

Will

Fire-Ether

Air

Water

Earth

In the Lemurian epoch, after the onset of the Luciferic influence, of these four forms of ether only the two lower (light-ether and fire-ether) were left at the free, arbitrary disposal of man; the two higher kinds of ether were withdrawn from him. That is the inner meaning of the passage where it is said that when, as a result of the Luciferic influence, men had become able to distinguish between good and evil (pictorially expressed as eating of the 'Tree of Knowledge'), the 'Tree of Life' was kept out of their reach. That is to say, the power freely and arbitrarily to penetrate the thought-ether and the sense-ether ('meaning'-ether) was withdrawn from them.

The conditions of man's development were therefore necessarily as follows. His will was given into his power to assert as his 'personal' expression; the same applies to his feelings. Both feeling and will are at man's personal disposal. Hence the individual character of the world of feeling and the world of will. This individual character, however, ceases immediately we pass from feeling to thinking — yes, even to the expression of thoughts, to the words on the physical plane. Whereas each man's feeling and will are personal, we immediately come into something *universal* when we rise into the realm of words and the realm of thoughts. No one individual can form thoughts that are his alone. If thoughts were as individual as feelings we should never understand one another. Thus thought and 'meaning' (*Sinn*) were withheld from the power of arbitrary human will and preserved for the time being in the world of the Gods, in order not to be given to man until a later time. Everywhere on the Earth, therefore, we can find individual men with individual feelings and individual impulses of will; but thinking is uniform everywhere and language is uniform among the several peoples. Where there is a common language, there reigns a common Folk-Deity. This sphere is withheld from the

arbitrary power of man, remaining for the time being a field into which the Gods work.

When Zarathustra, with his pupils around him, spoke of the realm of spirit, he could say: 'Out of heaven there streams down warmth, or fire; out of heaven there streams down light. These are the vestments of Ahura Mazdao. But behind these vestments is hidden that which has not yet descended but has remained above in spiritual heights, casting only a shadow in the physical thoughts and words of men.' Behind the warmth and light of the Sun is hidden that which lives in tone or sound, in meaning, manifesting itself only to those who are able to see behind the light that which is related to the earthly word as the heavenly Word is related to the part of Life that was withheld for the time being from humanity. Hence Zarathustra said: 'Look upwards to Ahura Mazdao; see how He reveals Himself in the physical raiment of light and warmth. But behind all that is the Divine, Creative Word — and it is approaching the Earth!'

What is Vishva Karman? What is Ahura Mazdao? What is Christ in His true form? The *Divine, Creative Word!* Hence in Zarathustra's teaching the momentous communication is made that he was initiated in order not only to apprehend in the light the Being he called Ahura Mazdao, but also the Divine, Creative Word, *Honover* — which was to descend to the Earth and for the first time *did* descend into an individual etheric body at the Baptism by John. The Divine-Spiritual Word which had been preserved since the Lemurian epoch came forth from ethereal heights at the Baptism by John and entered into the etheric body of the Nathan Jesus. And when the Baptism was completed, what was it that had happened? *The Word had become Flesh!*

What had Zarathustra, or those who had knowledge of his Mysteries, proclaimed? As seers they had proclaimed the 'Word' that is hidden behind the warmth and the light. They were 'servants of the Word'. And the writer of the Gospel of St. Luke recorded what the 'seers' proclaimed — those who had become 'servants of the Word'.

This example again shows us that the Gospels must be taken literally. What had been withheld from men for so long because of the Luciferic influence, became flesh in a single personality, descended to the Earth and lived on the Earth. Hence this Being is the great prototype of all those who by degrees will understand His nature. Our wisdom on Earth must follow the lead of the Bodhisattvas, whose unceasing task it is to proclaim the Thirteenth among them. All spiritual science, all our wisdom, all our knowledge, must be devoted to understanding the nature of Vishva Karman, of Ahura Mazdao, of CHRIST.

## Notes:

1 Lecture-Course entitled: ***The Gospel of St. John in relation to the other Gospels, especially to the Gospel of St. Luke.***

2 See the lecture entitled *The Mysteries*. Given at Cologne, 25th December 1907.

**3. See pp. 185–6 in the 1963 edition.**

## LECTURE EIGHT

*The Evolution of Consciousness in Humanity during the post-Atlantean Epoch. The Mission of Spiritual Science: Mastery of the Physical by the Spiritual. Illness and Healing. The Influences proceeding from the Christ-Ego.*

We have been trying to gain some understanding of the opening chapters of the Gospel of St. Luke. Only through knowledge of happenings in the evolution of humanity to which such lengthy study has had to be devoted is it possible to unravel what the writer of this Gospel has narrated as a kind of historical prelude to the great Christ Event. But we now know something about the Being who in the thirtieth year of his life received the Christ-principle into himself.

To understand what the writer of St. Luke's Gospel tells us about the personality and the deeds of Christ Jesus — that is, of the Individuality who worked in the world for three years as 'Christ' in a human body — brief reference must be made to certain aspects of the evolution of humanity of which our age has only a very inadequate idea. Men to-day are in many respects extraordinarily short-sighted, believing that the law of evolution underlying what is happening in humanity at the present time or happened during the last few centuries, has remained unchanged, and that conditions not existing nowadays could never have existed in the past. That is why it is so difficult at the present time for people to understand and freely accept narratives of a past epoch such as that during which Christ was living on the Earth.

The Gospel of St. Luke tells us of the deeds of Christ Jesus on the Earth in such a way that to get at the real meaning of his accounts a clear picture of the stage then reached in evolution is essential.

Attention must again be drawn to what has often been said in the course of our studies, namely that our ancestors — that is, our own souls in other bodies — lived in ancient Atlantis, the continent once stretching between Europe and Africa on the one side and America on the other. When the face of the globe was changed by the Atlantean Deluge, the masses of the people migrated Eastwards and Westwards, and so colonised the Earth. Then, in the post-Atlantean epoch, the various civilizations arose: the ancient Indian, ancient Persian, Egypto-Chaldean, Graeco-Latin, and our own.

It is entirely erroneous to believe that during the post-Atlantean epoch man was always constituted as he is to-day. The fact is that human nature has undergone constant and very great changes. Historical documents cover a few thousand years only and the one and only source of information about the earliest periods of civilization after the Atlantean catastrophe is the imperishable 'Akashic Chronicle' — a record inaccessible to external research — the character of which has again been briefly indicated in the present lecture-course.

After the Atlantean catastrophe there developed, first, the ancient Indian civilization. This was an epoch when men still lived more in the etheric body, not as deeply in the physical body as was the case later on. Without having developed the Ego-consciousness of to-day, by far the greater majority of the people of ancient India were endowed with dim, shadowy clairvoyance. Their consciousness was dreamlike but they were able to gaze into the depths of existence, into the spiritual world. When studying these things it is very

necessary to be aware of the facts connected with the various forms of knowledge and of cognition through the different epochs. Thus we constantly lay stress upon the view of the world held by our ancestors in ancient India and upon the fact that they were clairvoyant in a far higher degree than the men of later times. But if we are to understand the Gospel of St. Luke, attention must be paid to yet another of their characteristics.

In that early epoch, when man's etheric body still projected on all sides beyond the physical body and was less firmly knit with it than is the case to-day, the forces and qualities of the soul had considerably greater power over the physical body. The more deeply the etheric body penetrated into the physical body, the weaker it became and the less power it had over the physical body. In the ancient Atlanteans the etheric head extended very considerably beyond the physical body, but to a certain extent this was still the case in the people of ancient India too, enabling them on the one hand to have clairvoyant consciousness and on the other to wield great power over processes in the physical body.

We can, if we like, make a somewhat remote comparison between a body belonging to the ancient Indian epoch and one belonging to our own. In our time the etheric body has penetrated to the deepest possible extent into the physical body and is therefore closely bound up with it. But we are now at the very verge of the turning-point when the etheric body will emerge again, emancipate itself from the physical body and become more independent. As humanity advances towards the future this will take place to an ever-increasing extent and as a matter of fact the point of closest union has now already been passed. Comparing the body of an ancient Indian with that of a modern man, it can be said that in the Indian body the etheric body was still comparatively free and the soul was able to exert forces that worked right into the



physical body. Not being so closely bound to the physical body, the etheric body could immediately take into itself the forces of the soul; this gave it greater power over the physical body, with the result that influences brought to bear upon the soul in that age also had a tremendously strong effect upon the physical body. In the ancient Indian epoch, if one man hated another and spoke words charged with hatred, such words 'pierced' the other, penetrated right into the physical organism. The soul still had an actual effect upon the etheric body and the etheric body in turn upon the physical body. The etheric body today lacks this power. In those olden times, loving words produced in the other man a sense of release, of warmth, of expansion, affecting his physical body too. Therefore much depended upon whether words were filled with love or hatred, for this had an effect upon all the bodily processes. The strength of such an effect steadily decreased in humanity the more deeply the etheric body penetrated into the physical body.

Things are different nowadays. Words spoken to-day have an effect only upon the soul and people who feel that malicious words actually make something contract within them or that loving words bring a sense of release and happiness have become extremely rare. The peculiar effects we may possibly still feel in our physical heart to-day when loving or malicious words are spoken were experienced with tremendous intensity at the beginning of post-Atlantean evolution. Quite different effects from those now possible could therefore be produced in that age when such influences were brought to bear upon the soul. Words full of the warmth of love may be spoken to-day, but when they come up against the present human organism they are constantly repelled and do not penetrate; for it does not depend only upon how words are spoken, but also, upon how they can be received.

It is therefore not possible to-day to work so directly upon the soul of a man that the effect penetrates into his physical organism. This is not immediately possible, but in a certain way it will again become so, for a future is approaching when the spiritual will reacquire its significance. We can, in fact, already indicate what this will mean in time to come. In our present evolutionary cycle we can do very little to enable whatever love, good will and wisdom may be in our soul to stream directly into the soul of another human being and there be strong enough to work right down into the physical body. Such an effect can only very gradually become possible; nevertheless this spiritual way of working is beginning again on the soil where the spiritual-scientific conception of the world takes root, for this actually strengthens the activity of the soul. Only very rarely to-day is it possible for a word to produce physical effects; but it is possible for human beings to come together in order to receive spiritual truths into their souls. These spiritual truths will gradually gain greater strength in the souls of men and therewith the power to work right into the physical organism. Thus in future time the soul-and-spirit will again acquire great power over the physical and form it into its own image.

In the days of the very ancient Indian civilization, for example, what is called 'healing' was a very different matter from what it came to be later on, for all the things are connected with the facts just referred to. Because by working upon the soul a tremendously strong effect could at one time be produced upon the body, it was possible so to impress the soul of another by means of a *word* charged with the right impulse of will that this soul transmitted the effect to the etheric body, and the latter in turn to the physical body. If there were any realization of what effect it was desirable to bring about, it was possible, in a case of illness, to produce this effect upon the soul and thereby upon the body, resulting in restoration of

health. And now imagine this effect intensified to the maximum, the Indian physician controlling the influences and impressions in question, and you will realize that all healing in the ancient Indian epoch was a far more spiritual process than it can be to-day — I say expressly, than it can possibly be to-day. But the time is approaching when such ways of working will again be effective. What is brought down from spiritual heights as a world-conception, as a number of truths corresponding to the great spiritual realities of the Universe this will flow into the souls of men, and as humanity lives on into the future will itself be a source of healing, springing from the inmost being of man himself. Spiritual science is the great remedy for souls in the life awaiting them in future time. Only it must be understood that humanity has been on a descending path of evolution, that the spiritual influences have steadily lost strength, that the lowest point of the process has now been reached, and that the ascent to the level at which we once stood can only be very gradual.

As time went on, effects that were eminently possible in ancient India ceased to be so. A somewhat similar human constitution — one enabling soul to work upon soul was still in existence in Egyptian civilization. The farther back we go in that civilization-epoch, the more evidence is there that one soul was able to produce a direct effect upon another — an effect which could then pass over to the physical organism. This possibility was much rarer among the ancient Persians, for theirs was a different function; they were to give the primary impetus for penetration into the physical world. In respect of the characteristic just mentioned, Egyptian culture was related to that of ancient India much more closely than was the Persian. In ancient Persia the soul began to be enclosed within itself to an increasing extent and to have less and less power over the external organism, because it was to develop self-consciousness. Therefore with the stream of

culture in which the spiritual had maintained mastery over the physical, another had to converge — one especially concerned with *inner* deepening and the development of self-consciousness. In Graeco-Latin culture these two streams came, in a sense, into equilibrium. In that fourth post-Atlantean culture-epoch humanity had already descended just so far into the physical world as to enable a kind of equilibrium to be established between the physical and the soul-and-spirit — in other words, the mastery of soul-and-spirit over the body was about equal in strength to that of the body over the soul. A state of equilibrium had been brought about.

Humanity must however again undergo a kind of ‘cosmic trial’ in order to be able to ascend once more to spiritual heights. Since the Graeco-Latin epoch, everything in man of a corporeal, physical nature has descended still more deeply into materiality. In the age in which we are living, the fifth post-Atlantean epoch, man has actually been driven *below* the line of equilibrium; to begin with it was only in his inner nature that he could rise to a more theoretical kind of consciousness of the spiritual world. He had to acquire *inner* strength.

Relatively speaking, then, there was a condition of equilibrium in Graeco-Latin civilization, whereas now, in our epoch, the physical has gained the mastery and dominates the soul-and-spirit which has become powerless in a certain respect and is accepted merely in theory. Man has had to be restricted through the centuries to the acquisition of inner strength — a process not revealed to the consciousness. But little by little it must be possible for a new consciousness to be developed. And when — it will not be until the sixth post-Atlantean epoch — such consciousness has acquired a certain strength through having absorbed more and more spiritual nourishment, man will no longer derive theoretical wisdom from such

nourishment but *living* wisdom, *living* truth. The spiritual will then be so strong that once again it will have mastery over the physical — now from the other side.

How then can the mission of spiritual science in humanity be explained?

If in our age spiritual science becomes more and more alive in the soul, able not only to stimulate the intellect but to imbue the soul with greater and greater warmth, then the soul will become strong enough to dominate the physical. Certain transitional states are of course inevitable — states which may at first actually appear to denote deterioration or even harm. But these states are only transitional and will give way to the future condition when men will receive spiritual life into their ideas — the condition that will signify in the whole of humanity the mastery of the soul and spirit over the physical and material. Those who are interested in the truths of spiritual science to-day not merely because they stimulate the intellect, but who can be enraptured by and derive living satisfaction from these truths — such men will be the forerunners of those in whom the mastery of the soul and spirit over the physical and material has been achieved.

It has been possible in our own time to present great truths relating to happenings such as we have been studying during the last few days: the momentous fusion of the Buddha-stream with the Zarathustra-stream and all that took place in Palestine at the beginning of our era. We have been able, to show how wisdom in the world's evolution created the two figures of the Nathan Jesus-child and the Solomon Jesus-child and through these stupendous happenings brought about the union of streams previously flowing in separation over the Earth.

Different views may be taken of what has been presented in these lectures. Someone may say: 'To begin with, all this may seem fantastic to the modern mind; yet when I lay on the scales the outer effects of the happenings described, everything seems plausible; in fact the Gospels become intelligible to me only when I apply to them what has been discovered from the Akashic Chronicle.' Another person may, for instance, be interested in what is related about the two Jesus-children, and say: 'I can now understand a great deal that hitherto seemed inexplicable.' Again, someone else may say: 'When I review all these happenings and the findings of occult investigation concerning the manifestation of the Nirmanakaya of Buddha in the proclamation to the shepherds, and so on — again, when I think of the other stream and of how the Star guided the followers of Zarathustra when their Teacher appeared again on Earth — when I see there how one great stream flowed into another and how forms of spiritual life that were previously separate, united ... when I picture all this I have one outstanding impression — that everything is indescribably beautiful in the process of world-evolution!' We ourselves can have the same impression of the grandeur and sublimity of it all, and this can kindle the fire of wonder in our souls at what has come to pass in the world.

The great truths can bestow upon us no greater boon than this. The 'lesser' truths will satisfy our longing for knowledge; the 'great' truths will warm our very souls and we shall say that there is supreme beauty in what is thus made manifest through the happenings of world-existence. If we feel this beauty and splendour, any purely theoretical understanding will be transcended.

What are the words of Christ Jesus as related in the Gospel of St. Luke?

“A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. ...” (Luke, VIII, 5–8.)

This parable of the Sower given by Christ Jesus to His disciples is applicable to the anthroposophical conception of the world. The seed is the Kingdom of the Gods, the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of the Spirit. This Kingdom of the Spirit is to pour as seed into the souls of men and take effect on Earth.

There are people who have in their souls only such forces as repel the spiritual view of the world and any consciousness of the realm of the divine-spiritual Beings; such consciousness is made impossible by hindrances existing in the soul and it is repelled immediately. This applies to many people in regard to the words of Christ Jesus; it also frequently applies to what Anthroposophy has to bring into the world to-day; it is repelled; the birds devour it, preventing it from ever penetrating into the soil. Then again, the words of Christ Jesus or the words of spiritual wisdom may be spoken to a soul lacking sufficient depth. Such a soul may be able to understand that these are very plausible truths, but they do not become part of its very substance and being. It may even be capable of giving out the wisdom again, but it has not really become one with the wisdom. This is comparable to the seed that has fallen on rocky ground and cannot germinate. The third kind of seed falls among thornbushes; there it does indeed germinate, but it cannot thrive. The meaning, as Christ Jesus indicates, is that there are people whose souls are so filled with the interests and cares of day-to-day life that although they are capable of understanding the words of

spiritual truth, everything else in the soul acts as a thornbush, as a continual obstruction. There are also souls to-day — and they are very numerous — who would willingly assimilate the truths of spiritual science were it not for the suppression exercised by external life. Only very few are able to allow the spiritual truths to unfold in freedom, in the manner of the fourth kind of seed. These are people who begin to experience Anthroposophy as living truth, who receive it into their souls as very life and steep their whole being in it; they are also the pioneers of the strength with which spiritual truths will work in future time. No one, however, in whom the right trust and depth of conviction are not born from his own soul can be persuaded to-day by any external means to believe in the truth and the power of spiritual wisdom.

It is no argument against the effectiveness of spiritual wisdom that in the case of many people to-day the physical organism is not influenced. On the contrary, it might be taken as proof of the soundness of spiritual wisdom that it sometimes has a negative effect upon physical bodies. Someone with poor physical health — a slum child, for instance — who is ailing as the result of having breathed nothing but city air from his earliest years, is not necessarily made healthy by bracing mountain air; it may even make him really ill. Just as this is no argument against the health-giving quality of mountain air, so too the fact that when spiritual wisdom penetrates into certain physical organisms it may temporarily upset them, is no argument against its effectiveness. For it encounters what human bodies have inherited through the course of hundreds and thousands of years, encounters elements that cannot possibly harmonize with it.

Proofs of this cannot yet be found in the outer world; we must penetrate deeply into this wisdom and become firmly convinced of its truth. However much external evidence may eventually be forthcoming, we must be able to penetrate to the



inner core of the wisdom and develop conviction in our own being. We are then able to say: If here or there this anthroposophical wisdom is found to be too overwhelming, it is because of unhealthy conditions encountered in human beings themselves. Spiritual wisdom is intrinsically healthy — human beings by no means always! Quite obviously, therefore, it is not possible for all the spiritual wisdom that can become accessible to mankind as time goes on, to be revealed today. Care is taken that possible harm shall be avoided just as slum children are not sent into high mountain air that would be harmful for them. Hence it is only from time to time that information appropriate for average human beings can be communicated. If certain deeper truths were revealed to the fullest extent, this would be too overwhelming for men with a particular constitution, having the same effect as high mountain air upon impaired physical health. The great spiritual truths can be unveiled only very gradually, but this will be done in due course and prove to be a universal, health-bringing factor in humanity.

Men must gradually reacquire that ascendancy of the soul-and-spirit over the material which they were obliged to lose. It was being slowly lost from the time of ancient Indian culture until well into the Graeco-Latin epoch. But during the latter epoch there were always human beings in whom as a heritage from olden times the etheric body was still loosened to a certain extent and whose whole organism was amenable to psychic and spiritual influences. It was in that age, therefore, that Christ Jesus appeared. Had He come in our epoch He would not have been able to work as He did at that time or become the great Example for mankind. In our epoch He would have encountered human organisms far more deeply sunk in physical matter. He Himself would have had to descend into a physical organism in which the powerful effects produced by the soul-and-spirit upon the physical would not

have been possible as they were at the time of His coming.

This applies not only to Christ Jesus but to others as well, and the evolution of humanity can be understood only in the light of what has been said. It applies, for example, to Buddha and his mission on the Earth. He was the first to proclaim and establish the great teaching of compassion and love and everything connected with that teaching as expressed in the precepts of the Eightfold Path. Do you imagine that if Buddha were to appear to-day he would be able to achieve what he achieved in India? Indeed he would not, for a physical organism in which he was able to reach that stage of development could not exist to-day. Man's physical organism has undergone continual changes in the course of the ages. Buddha was obliged to descend at exactly the point of time when it was possible for him to use an organism enabling him to accomplish the mighty deed of inaugurating the Eightfold Path. Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true that all the philosophical and moral teachings since produced by humanity are no more than a feeble beginning of what was established by Buddha. However greatly people may admire different philosophies, however fervent their enthusiasm may be for Kantian thought and other such systems — everything is elementary compared with the all-embracing principles of the Eightfold Path. Humanity can only slowly reach the stage of understanding what lies behind the words of this teaching. At the right moment something of the kind is established in the world for the first time; from this point evolution advances and humanity acquires, but only after long ages, what was first exemplified in a mighty deed. Thus in his day Buddha brought to the world the teaching of love and compassion as a token for coming generations of human beings who must gradually acquire the capacity to recognize and understand from *within themselves* the principles of the Eightfold Path. In the sixth post-Atlantean epoch of civilization a considerable number of

human beings will be capable of this. But a long path has to be trodden before men say to themselves: We can now acquire out of our own souls what Buddha established five or six centuries before our era; we have now become like Buddha in our own souls.

Step by step, humanity must climb to the summit. The first disciples are those who, in the wake of the Individuality concerned, rise to the heights of a great epoch; the capacity to understand what has been achieved then remains with them as a heritage. The rest of humanity ascends slowly and arrives at the goal very much later. But when a considerable number of human beings have reached the stage where the principles of the Eightfold Path can arise as knowledge *born of their own souls*, not derived from or taught to them by Buddhism — these human beings will have made great progress in another respect as well.

In the book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment* you can read how the development of the sixteen-petalled 'lotus-flower' is connected with the Eightfold Path. [1]

Those who have insight into the evolution of humanity can recognize a sign of the extent to which humanity has succeeded in making progress — the sign being the stage of development reached by the sixteen-petalled lotus-flower, which will be one of the chief organs used by men in future time. But when this organ has been developed a certain mastery over the physical will have been established by the soul-and-spirit. Only one who sets out to-day to achieve spiritual development in the esoteric sense can say that he is beginning to make the principles of the Eightfold Path part of his very being. Others 'study' them. But of course that too is very useful as a stimulus.

Fundamentally speaking, therefore, it may be said that the soul-and-spirit can work effectively only in those human beings who are beginning to make the spiritual wisdom presented to them an integral part of their souls. To the extent to which the Eightfold Path becomes an actual experience in the soul, to that extent an effect will also be produced upon the physical.

Of course people who are considered very clever nowadays and who swear by materialism, may say: 'We know someone who followed your advice and tried to develop by making spiritual wisdom come alive within him; but he died at the age of fifty, so the wisdom did little towards prolonging his life!' This kind of sapient remark is frequently made. The only pity is that contrary instances are not also brought forward. It should be asked how long the person concerned would have lived if he had made no attempt to promote spiritual development and whether in that case he might possibly not have lived beyond the age of forty. That point would have to be decided first! But people will look only at what is actually under their noses!

The mastery wielded by the soul-and-spirit over the physical gradually fell away from humanity until well into the fourth civilization-epoch when there were still enough human beings living in whom the effect of the spiritual upon the physical could be perceived. It was then that Christ came to the Earth. Had He come later, none of the things that were then revealed could have been revealed. Such a stupendous manifestation had necessarily to appear in the world at exactly the right time.

What does the coming of Christ into the world signify?

It signifies that when a man rightly understands Christ he learns to exercise his self-consciousness to the fullest extent and his Ego eventually gains complete mastery over everything that is within him. That is what the coming of Christ signifies. The self-conscious Ego will reconquer everything that mankind has lost in the course of the ages. But just as the teaching of the Eightfold Path had to be established for the first time by Buddha, so too the supremacy of the Ego-principle over all the bodily processes had to be visibly established before the expiration of the old era. If the entry of the Christ-principle into the world had taken place in our present epoch, it would not have been possible for the mighty influences of healing to be exercised upon the environment as they were at that earlier time. Conditions were necessary when there were still in existence human beings whose etheric bodies were sufficiently detached to enable drastic effects to be wrought upon them merely by words or by touch effects of which to-day there can be only faint echoes. Men began to develop the Ego in order to be able to understand the Christ, and through this understanding to re-acquire what they had lost. Through the last surviving examples of humanity belonging to the old era, it was to be shown with what power the Ego worked upon those who were living at that time, for the Ego was present here in its fulness in one human being, in Christ Jesus, as will be the case in the rest of mankind at the end of the Earth period. The Gospel of St. Luke records this in order to show that with Christ there came into the world an Ego which penetrated the human physical, etheric and astral bodies so completely that health-bringing influences could be brought to bear upon the whole physical organism. This had to be demonstrated as a proof that when mankind in the future, after thousands of years, has acquired in full measure the power that can proceed from the Christ-Ego, it will be possible for influences such as streamed into humanity from Christ while He was on Earth, to stream from the Egos of

men. This truth had to be revealed but it was only through the humanity of that time that it could have been revealed.

It has been said that there are illnesses which originate in the human astral body. The form these illnesses take is connected with the whole nature of man. If someone to-day has bad moral traits, these may, to begin with, be confined to the life of soul. Because in the modern age the soul does not dominate the body to the extent that it did at the time of Christ Jesus, not every sin will come to expression in an external illness. We are, however, approaching conditions when the etheric body will again emerge and when the greatest care will have to be taken lest the bad traits of the soul, both in a moral and intellectual respect, should manifest physically as illnesses. Many of those semi-psychic, semi-bodily diseases — the so-called 'nervous' diseases characteristic of our time — are evidence that this epoch is already beginning. Because in their desires and their thoughts men have absorbed the disharmonies reigning in the outer world to-day, such factors can naturally only express themselves in phenomena such as hysteria and similar disorders. But this is all connected with the particular character of the phase of spiritual development upon which we are now entering, with the loosening and emergence of etheric body.

At the time of Christ's appearance on the Earth there were many human beings in His environment in whom sins and transgressions — but especially defects of character deriving from former bad traits — were expressing themselves in disease. The sin that is actually seated in the astral body and manifests as illness, is called 'possession' in the Gospel of St. Luke. It is the condition that sets in when a man attracts alien spirits into his astral body and when his better qualities fail to give him mastery over his whole nature. In human beings in whom the old state of separation between the etheric and physical bodies still persisted, the effects of evil qualities and

attributes expressed themselves conspicuously at that time in forms of illness manifesting as 'possession'. The Gospel of St. Luke tells how such people were healed through the mere proximity and the words of the Individuality now in Christ Jesus and how the evil power working in them was expelled. This is a prefigurement of conditions at the end of Earth evolution, when man's good qualities will exercise a healing influence upon all his other traits.

People do not generally notice the subtler implications concealed behind many narratives in the Gospels, nor realize that reference is often being made to illnesses of a quite different character when, for example, these are described in the passage in St. Luke's Gospel telling of the healing of one sick of the palsy. (Luke V, 17–26). 'The healing of one paralysed' would be the correct rendering, for the Greek text here has the word 'paralelymenos', denoting one whose limbs are paralysed. It was still known in those times that these forms of illness are due to qualities of the *etheric body*. When it is said that Christ Jesus healed those who were paralysed, this shows that by the power of his Individuality, effects were produced not only in astral bodies but in etheric bodies too, so that it was possible for men with defects in the etheric body also to be healed. Precisely when Christ speaks of 'deeper sin' — sin which reaches into the etheric body — He uses a particular expression, clearly indicating that the spiritual factor causing the illness must first be removed. He does not immediately say to the paralysed man: "Stand up and walk!" but concerns Himself with the cause that is penetrating as illness into the etheric body, and says: "Thy sins are forgiven thee!" — meaning that the sin which had eaten its way right into the etheric body must first be expelled. Ordinary biblical research does not enter into these fine distinctions; it does not perceive that what is here being shown is that this Individuality had an influence upon the secrets of the astral

body and the etheric body — even upon those of the physical body.

Why in this connection do we speak of the secrets of the physical body as though they were the highest? In outer life itself the effect made by one astral body upon another is quite obvious. You can, for example, wound a man by a word charged with hatred. Something then takes place in his astral body; he hears the word and suffers pain in his astral body. That is an example of mutual action between one astral body and another. Mutual action between one etheric body and another is far more deeply hidden; this involves delicate influences which play from man to man but are never perceived to-day. The most deeply hidden of all are the influences which reach the physical body, because owing to its dense materiality it conceals the working of the spiritual most completely. In the Gospel of St. Luke, however, we are also to be shown that Christ Jesus has power over the physical body. Here we come to a passage that would be quite incomprehensible to materialistic thinkers. It is as well that these lectures are being attended only by people who have some knowledge of spiritual science, for if by chance someone were to come in from the street, what is being said to-day would seem to him pure lunacy, even if he considered the rest only half or quarter mad!

Christ Jesus shows that He is able to see into the very depths of the physical corporeality and to work into it. This is revealed by the fact that His power is also able to have a healing effect upon illnesses rooted in the physical body. But for this to be possible there must be knowledge of the mysterious effects working from the physical body of one human being upon the physical body of another. When it is a matter of working spiritually, man cannot be regarded as a being enclosed in his skin. It has often been said that our finger is wiser than we are ourselves. Our finger knows that



the blood can flow through it only if the blood is circulating normally through the whole body; our finger knows that it would wither away if it were severed from the rest of the organism. So too, if he would understand the conditions relating to the physical body, man must know that in respect of his physical organism he belongs to humanity as a whole, that influences are continually passing from one human being to another, and that he can in no way separate his physical health as an individual from the health of the whole of humanity. This principle will be admitted to-day in respect of the coarser influences but not in respect of the finer, because people cannot know the facts. In the following passage from the eighth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel it is the finer, more delicate influences that are indicated.

“And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him. And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a-dying. But as he went the people thronged him. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.” (Luke VIII, 40–44.)

How can the twelve-year-old daughter of Jairus possibly be healed, for she is at the very point of death? This can only be understood if we know that the girl's physical illness was connected with another phenomenon in another person, and that she cannot be healed independently of that other phenomenon. When this, child, now twelve years old, was born, a certain connection existed with another personality — a connection deeply grounded in Karma. Hence we are told that a woman who had suffered from a certain illness for

twelve years, passed behind Christ and touched the border of His garment. Why is this woman mentioned here? It is because she was connected karmically with Jairus' child! This twelve-year-old girl and the woman who had suffered for twelve years were deeply connected! And it is not without reason that a secret of number is indicated here: the woman with an illness suffered for twelve years approaches Jesus and is healed — and only now could He enter the house of Jairus and heal the twelve-year-old girl who was believed to be already dead.

Depths as great as these must be explored in order to understand the Karma that weaves between one human being and another! Then we can perceive the third way in which Christ worked — namely, upon the *whole* human organism. This must be especially borne in mind when we are considering the higher effects produced by Christ as presented in the Gospel of St. Luke.

Thus we are shown quite clearly how the Christ-Ego worked upon all the other members of man's being. That is the essential point. The writer of the Gospel of St. Luke, who gives special prominence in these parts of the Gospel to descriptions of the healings, wished to show how the healing influences proceeding from the Ego indicate the attainment of a lofty level in the evolutionary process; and he shows how Christ worked upon the astral body, the etheric body and the physical body of man. St. Luke has set before us this great Ideal of evolution: 'Look towards your future! Your Ego, in the present stage of its development, is still weak; as yet it has little mastery. But it will gradually become master of the astral body, the etheric body and the physical body, and will transform them. Before you is set the great Ideal of Christ who reveals to mankind what this mastery can mean!'

It is upon truths such as these that the Gospels are founded — truths which could be recorded only by those who did not rely upon outer documents but upon the testimony of men who were ‘seers’ and ‘servants of the word’. Conviction of what lies behind the Gospels can be acquired only by degrees. But men will gradually grasp with such intensity and strength the nature of the truths upon which the scriptures are founded that this understanding will have an effect upon all the members of the human organism.

**Notes:**

1. See pp. 75–81 in the revised edition of 1963.

## LECTURE NINE

*The Law given on Mount Sinai: the last prophetic Announcement of the Ego. Buddha's Teaching of Compassion and Love. The Wheel of the Law. Christ the Bringer of the living Power of Love.*

You will have gathered from the lecture yesterday that a record such as the Gospel of St. Luke cannot be understood unless the evolution of humanity is pictured from the higher vantage-point of spiritual science — in other words unless the transformations that have taken place in the whole nature and constitution of man during the process of evolution are kept in mind. In order to understand the radical change that came about in humanity at the time of Christ Jesus — and this it necessary for elucidation of the Gospel of St. Luke it will be well to make a comparison with what is happening in our own age — admittedly less rapidly and more gradually but for all that clearly perceptible to those possessed of insight.

To begin with we must entirely discard a frequently expressed idea to which mental laziness gives ready assent, namely, that Nature, or Evolution, makes no 'jumps'. In its ordinarily accepted sense, no statement could be more erroneous than this. Nature is perpetually making jumps! This very fact is essential and fundamental. Think, for example, of how the plant develops from the seed. The appearance of the first leaflet is evidence of an important jump. Another is made when the plant advances from leaf to flower; another when its life passes from the outer to the inner part of the blossom; and yet another, very important jump has been made when the

fruit appears. Anyone who ignores the fact that such jumps occur very frequently will entirely fail to understand Nature. When such a man turns his attention to humanity and observes that development in some particular century proceeded at a snail's pace, he will believe that the same will be the case during other periods. It may very well be that in a particular period development is slow, as it is in the plant from the first green leaf to the last. But just as in the plant a jump occurs when the last leaf has developed and the blossom appears, so do jumps continually occur in the evolution of humanity. The jump made when Christ Jesus appeared on Earth was so decisive that within a comparatively short time the old clairvoyance and the mastery of the spiritual over the bodily nature were transformed to such an extent that only remnants of clairvoyance and of the former power of the soul-and-spirit over the physical continued to exist. Hence before that drastic change took place it was essential that whatever of the ancient heritage survived should once again be gathered together. It was in this milieu that Christ Jesus was to work. The new impulse could then be received into mankind and develop by slow degrees.

In another domain a jump is also taking place in our own epoch, but not so rapidly. Although a longer period of time is involved, the parallel will be quite comprehensible to those who understand the character of the present age. We can most easily form an idea of this jump by listening to people who approach spiritual science from one sphere or another of cultural life. It may happen that the representative of some religious body comes to a lecture on spiritual science ... what I am saying is quite understandable and is not meant as censure. He listens to a lecture let us say on the nature of Christianity, and says afterwards: 'It all sounds very beautiful and fundamentally speaking is not at variance with what we ourselves preach. But we put it in a way that is intelligible to

everyone, whereas only a few individuals can understand what is being said here.' This statement is frequently made. But whoever says or believes that his is the only right way of presenting Christianity overlooks one essential, namely that he must judge according to facts, not according to his personal inclinations. I once had occasion to reply: 'No doubt you believe that you are presenting the truths of Christianity in a form suitable for everyone. But beliefs prove nothing; only facts decide. Does everybody go to your Church? Thus facts prove the contrary. Spiritual Science is not there for people whose spiritual needs you are able to satisfy; it is there for people who demand something else.'

We are living in an age when it is becoming impossible for human hearts to accept the Bible as it has been accepted during the last four or five centuries of European civilization. Either mankind will receive spiritual science and through it learn to understand the Bible in a new way, or, as is now happening to many who are unacquainted with Anthroposophy, men will cease to listen to the Bible. In that case they would lose the Bible altogether and with it untold spiritual treasures — actually the greatest and most significant spiritual treasures of our Earth evolution! This must be realized. We are now at the point where a jump is to take place in evolution; *the human heart is demanding the spiritual-scientific elucidation of the Bible*. Given such elucidation, the Bible will be preserved, to the infinite blessing of mankind; without it the Bible will be lost. This should be taken earnestly by those who believe that they must at all costs adhere to their personal inclinations and the traditional attitude towards the Bible. Such, therefore, is the jump now being taken in evolution. Nothing will divert a man who is aware of this from cultivating Anthroposophy, because he recognizes it as a necessity for the evolution of humanity.

Considered from a higher point of view, what is happening at the present time is relatively unimportant compared with what took place when Christ Jesus came to the Earth. In those days the stage reached in the evolution of humanity was such that the last examples were still in existence of its development since primeval times, actually since the previous embodiment of the Earth. Man was developing primarily in his physical, etheric and astral bodies; the Ego had long since been membered into him but at that time was still playing a subordinate rôle. Until the coming of Christ Jesus the fully self-conscious Ego was still obscured by the three sheaths: physical body, etheric body and astral body.

Let us suppose that Christ Jesus had not come to the Earth. What would have happened? As evolution progressed the Ego would have fully emerged; but to the same extent as it emerged, all earlier outstanding faculties of the astral, etheric and physical bodies, all the old clairvoyance, all the old mastery of the soul and spirit over the body would have vanished. That would have been the inevitable course of evolution. Man would have become a self-conscious Ego, but an Ego that would have led him more and more to egoism and to the disappearance and extinction of love on the Earth. Men would have become 'Egos', but utterly egotistical beings. That is the point of importance.

When Christ Jesus came to the Earth man was ready for the development of the Self, the Ego; for this very reason, however, he was beyond the stage where it would have been permissible to work upon him in the old way. In the ancient Hebrew period, for example, the 'Law', the proclamation from Sinai, was able to take effect because the Ego had not fully emerged and what the astral body — the highest part of man's constitution at that time — should do and feel in order to act rightly in the outer world was instilled, impressed into it. The Law of Sinai came to men as a *last* prophetic announcement

in the epoch preceding the full emergence of the Ego. Had the Ego emerged and nothing else intervened, man would have heeded nothing except his own Ego. Humanity was ready for the development of the Ego but it would have been an empty Ego, concerned with itself alone and having no wish to do anything for others or for the world.

To give this Ego a real content, so to stimulate its development that the power of love should stream from it — that was the Deed of Christ Jesus on the Earth. Without Him the Ego would have become an empty vessel; through His coming it can become a vessel filled more and more completely with love. To those around Him Christ could speak to the following effect: ‘When you see clouds gathering, you say: there will be this or that weather; you judge what the weather will be by the outer signs, but the signs of the times you do not understand! If you were able to understand and assess what is going on around you, you would know that the Godhead must penetrate into the Ego. Then you would not say: We can be satisfied with traditions handed down from earlier times. It is what comes from earlier times that is presented to you by the Scribes and Pharisees who wish to preserve the old and will allow nothing to be added to what was once given to man. But that is a leaven which will have no further effect in evolution. Whoever says that he will believe only in Moses and the Prophets does not understand the signs of the times, nor does he know what a transition is taking place in humanity!’ (Cp. Luke XII, 54–57). In memorable words Christ Jesus said to those around Him that whether or not an individual will become Christian does not depend upon his personal inclination but upon the inevitable progress of evolution. By the words recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke concerning the ‘signs of the time’, Christ Jesus wished to make it understood that the old leaven represented by the Scribes and Pharisees who preserve only what is antiquated, was no



longer sufficient and that belief to the contrary could be entertained only by those who felt no obligation to put aside personal inclinations and judge according to the necessity of the times. Hence Christ Jesus called what the Scribes and Pharisees desired, 'Untruth' — something that does not tally with reality in the outer world. That would have been the real meaning of the expression.

We can best realize the forcefulness of these words by thinking of analogous happenings in our own day. How should we have to speak if we wished to apply to the present age what Christ Jesus said of the Scribes and Pharisees? Are there, in our own times, any who resemble the Scribes? Yes indeed! They are the people who will not accept the deeper explanation of the Gospels and refuse to listen to anything that is beyond the range of their own faculties of comprehension — faculties that have been unaffected by spiritual science; these people refuse to keep pace with the strides in knowledge of the foundations of the Gospels made through spiritual science. This is really everywhere the case when efforts — no matter whether of a more progressive or more reactionary character — are made to interpret the Gospels, for the fact is that the capacity for such interpretation can develop only on the soil of spiritual science — there and there alone. Spiritual science is the only source from which truth about the Gospels can be derived. That is why all other contemporary research seems so barren, so unsatisfactory, wherever there is a genuine desire to seek the truth.

To-day, as well as the 'Scribes and Pharisees' there are the natural scientists — a third type. We may therefore speak of three categories of men who want to exclude everything that leads to the spiritual, everything in the way of faculties attainable by man in order to penetrate to the spiritual foundations of the phenomena of Nature. And those who, among others, must be impugned at the present time, if one

speaks in the sense of true Christianity, are very often the holders of professorships! They have every opportunity for comparing and collating the phenomena of Nature, but they entirely reject the spiritual explanations. It is they who hinder progress; for humanity's progress is hindered wherever there is refusal to recognize the signs of the times in the sense indicated.

In our days the only kind of action consistent with discipleship of Christ Jesus would be to find the courage to turn — as *He* turned against those who wished to confine truth to Moses and the Prophets — against people who retard progress by rejecting the anthroposophical interpretation of the scriptures on the one side and the phenomena of Nature on the other. Now and then there are really well-meaning people who occasionally would like to bring about a kind of vague reconciliation. But it would be well if in the hearts of all such people there were some understanding of the words spoken by Christ Jesus as related in the Gospel of St. Luke.

Among the most beautiful and impressive parables in that Gospel is the one usually known as the parable of the unjust steward. (Luke XVI, 1–13.) A rich man had a steward who was accused of wasting his goods. He therefore decided to dismiss the steward. The latter asked himself in dismay: ‘What shall I do? I cannot support myself as a husbandman for I do not understand such work, nor can I beg, for I should be ashamed.’ Then the thought occurred to him: In all my dealings with the people with whom my stewardship brought me into contact, I had in mind only the interests of my lord; therefore they will have no particular liking for me. I have paid no attention to their interests. I must do something in order to be received into their houses and so not be utterly ruined; I will do something to show that I wish them well. Thereupon he went to one of his lord's debtors and asked him: ‘How much owest thou?’ — and allowed him to cancel half the

debt. He did the same with the others. In this way he tried to ingratiate himself with the debtors, so that when his lord dismissed him he might be received by these people and not die of starvation. That was his object. The Gospel continues — possibly to the astonishment of some readers: ‘And the lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely.’ Those who set out to elucidate the Gospels to-day have actually speculated about which ‘lord’ is meant, although it is absolutely clear that Jesus was praising the steward for his cleverness. Then the verse continues: ‘For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.’ This is how the sentence has stood for centuries. But has anyone ever reflected upon what is meant by ‘the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light?’ ‘In their generation’ stands in all the different translations of the Bible, But if someone with only scanty knowledge were to translate the Greek text correctly, it would read: ‘for the children of this world *in their way* are wiser than the children of light,’ that is to say, in their way the children of this world are wiser than the children of light, wiser according to their own understanding — that is what Christ meant. Translators of this passage have for centuries confused the expression ‘in their way’ with a word that actually has a very similar sound in the Greek language; they have confused it — and do so to this very day — with ‘generations’, because the word was sometimes also used for the other concept. It hardly seems possible that this kind of thing should have dragged on for centuries and that modern, reputedly good translators, who, have endeavoured to convey the exact meaning of the text, should make no change. Weizsacker, for example, gives this actual rendering! Strangely enough, people seem to forget the most elementary school-knowledge when they set about investigating biblical records. Spiritual science will have to restore the biblical records *in their true form* to the world, for the world to-day

does not, properly speaking, possess the Bible and can have no real grasp of its contents. It might even be asked: Are these the genuine texts of the Bible? No, in very important parts they are not, as I will show you in still greater detail.

What is the meaning of this parable of the unjust steward? The steward reflected: If I must leave my post I must gain the affection of the people. He realized that one cannot serve 'two masters'. Christ said to those around Him: 'You too must realize that you cannot serve two masters; the one who is now to enter the hearts of men as God, and the one hitherto proclaimed by the Scribes and the interpreters of the books of the Prophets. You cannot serve the God who is to draw into your souls as the Christ-principle and give a mighty impetus to the evolution of humanity, and the other God who would hinder this evolution.' Everything that was right and proper in a bygone age becomes a hindrance if carried over into a later stage of evolution. In a certain sense the process of evolution itself is based upon this principle. The Powers which direct the 'hindrances' were called at that time by a technical expression: *Mammon*. 'You cannot serve the God who will progress, and Mammon, the God of Hindrances. Think of the steward who, as a child of the world, realized that one cannot serve two masters, not even with the help of Mammon. So too should you perceive, in striving to become children of light, that you cannot serve two masters!' (Cp. Luke XVI, 11–13.)

Those living in the present age must also realize that no reconciliation is possible between the God Mammon in our time — between the modern 'scribes' and scientific pundits — and the direction of thought that must provide human beings to-day with the nourishment they need. This is spoken in a truly Christian sense. Clothed in current language, what Christ Jesus wished to bring home to those around Him in the parable of the unjust steward was that no man can serve two masters.

The Gospels must be understood in a really living way. Spiritual science itself must become a living reality! Under its influence everything it touches should be imbued with life. The Gospel itself should be something that streams into our own spiritual faculties. We should not only chatter about the Scribes and Pharisees having been repudiated in the days of Christ Jesus, for then once again we should be thinking only of an age that is past. We must know where the successor of the Power described by Christ Jesus for His epoch as the 'God Mammon' is to be found to-day. That is a living kind of understanding — which is also such a very important factor in what is related in the Gospel of St. Luke. For with the parable that is found only in this Gospel there is connected one of the most significant concepts in all the Gospels: it is a concept we can engrave into our hearts and souls only if we are able once again, and from a somewhat different angle, to make it clear how Buddha, and the impulse he gave, were related to Christ Jesus.

We have heard that Buddha brought to mankind the great teaching of compassion and love. Here is one of the instances where what is said in occultism must be taken exactly as it stands, for otherwise it might be objected that at one time Christ is said to have brought love to the Earth, and at another that Buddha brought the teaching of love. But is that the same? On one occasion I said that Buddha brought the *teaching* of love to the Earth and on another occasion that Christ brought love itself as a *living power* to the Earth. That is the great difference. Close attention is necessary when the deepest concerns of humanity are being considered; for otherwise what happens is that information given in one place is presented somewhere else in a quite different form and then it is said that in order to be fair to everybody I have proclaimed two messengers of love! The very closest attention is essential in occultism. When this enables us really to

understand the words in which the momentous truths are clothed, they are seen in the right light.

Knowing that the great teaching of compassion and love brought by Buddha is given expression in the Eightfold Path, we may ask ourselves: What is the aim of this Eightfold Path? What does a man attain when from the depths of his soul he adopts it as his life's ideal, never losing sight of the goal and asking continually: How can I reach the greatest perfection? How can I purify my Ego most completely? What must I do to enable my Ego to fulfil its function in the world as perfectly as possible? — Such a man will say to himself: If I obey every precept of the Eightfold Path my Ego will reach the greatest perfection that it is possible to conceive. Everything is a matter of the purification and ennoblement of the Ego; everything that can stream from this wonderful Eightfold Path must penetrate into us. The point of importance is that it is work carried out by the Ego, for its own perfecting. If, therefore, men were to develop to further stages in themselves that which Buddha set in motion as the 'Wheel of the Law' (that is the technical term), their Egos would gradually become possessed of wisdom at a high level — wisdom in the form of *thought* — and they would recognize the signs of perfection. Buddha brought to humanity the wisdom of love and compassion, and when we succeed in making the whole astral body a product of the Eightfold Path, we shall possess the requisite knowledge of the laws expressed in its teachings.

But there is a difference between wisdom in the form of *thought* and wisdom as *living power*; there is a difference between knowing what the Ego must become and allowing the living power to flow into our very being so that it may stream forth again from the Ego into all the world as it streamed from Christ, working upon the astral, etheric and physical bodies of those around Him. The impulse given by the great Buddha enabled humanity to have knowledge of the teaching of

compassion and love. What Christ brought is first and foremost a *living power*, not a teaching. He sacrificed His very Self, He descended in order to flow not merely into the astral bodies of men but into the Ego, so that the Ego itself should have the power to ray out love as *substantiality*. Christ brought to the Earth the substantiality, the living essence of love, not merely the wisdom-filled content of love. That is the all-important point.

Nineteen centuries and roughly five more have now elapsed since the great Buddha lived on the Earth; in about three thousand years from now — this we learn from occultism — a considerable number of human beings will have reached the stage of being able to evolve the wisdom of the Buddha, the Eightfold Path, out of their own moral nature, out of their own heart and soul. Buddha had once to be on Earth, and the power that mankind will develop little by little as the wisdom of the Eightfold Path proceeded from him; after about three thousand years from now men will be able to unfold its teaching from within themselves; it will then be their own possession and they will no longer be obliged to receive it from outside. Then they will be able to say: This Eightfold Path springs from our very selves as the wisdom of compassion and love.

Even if nothing else had happened than the setting in motion of the Wheel of the Law by the great Buddha, in three thousand years from now humanity would have become capable of knowing the doctrine of compassion and love. But it is a different matter also to have acquired the faculty to embody it in very life. Not only to know about compassion and love, but under the influence of an Individuality to unfold it as *living power* — there lies the difference. This faculty proceeded from Christ. He poured love itself into men and it will grow from strength to strength. When men have reached the end of their evolution, wisdom will have revealed to them

the content of the doctrine of compassion and love; this they will owe to Buddha. But at the same time they will possess the faculty of letting the love stream out from the Ego over mankind; this they will owe to Christ.

Thus Buddha and Christ worked in co-operation, and the exposition given has been necessary in order that the Gospel of St. Luke may be properly understood. We realize this at once when we know how to interpret correctly the words used in the Gospel. (Luke II, 13–14.) The great proclamation is to be made to the shepherds. Above them is the ‘heavenly host’ — this is the spiritual, imaginative expression for the Nirmanakaya of the Buddha. What is it that is proclaimed to the shepherds from on high? The ‘manifestation (or revelation) of the wisdom-filled God from the Heights!’ This, is the proclamation made to the shepherds by the Nirmanakaya of Buddha, pictured as the ‘heavenly host’ hovering over the Nathan Jesus-child. But something else is added: ‘And peace be to men on the Earth below who are filled with a good will’ — that is, men in whom the living power of love is germinating. It is this that must gradually become reality on Earth through the new impulse given by Christ. To the ‘revelation from the Heights’ He added the living *power*, bringing into every human heart and into every human soul something that can fill the soul to overflowing. He gave the soul not merely a teaching that could be received in the form of thought and idea, but a power that can stream forth from, it. The Christ-bestowed power that can fill the human soul to overflowing is called in the Gospel of St. Luke, and in the other Gospels too, the power of *Faith*. This is what the Gospels mean by Faith. A man who receives Christ into himself so that Christ lives in him, a man whose Ego is not an empty vessel but is filled to overflowing with love — such a man has Faith.



Why could Christ be the supreme illustration of the power of 'healing through the *word*?' Because He was the first to set in motion the 'Wheel of Love' (not the 'Wheel of the Law') as a freely working faculty and power of the human soul; because love in the very highest measure was within him — love brimming over in such abundance that it could pour into those around Him who needed to be healed; because the words He spoke 'no matter whether 'Stand up and walk!' or 'Thy sins are forgiven thee', or other words — issued from over-flowing love. His words were uttered from overflowing love — love transcending the limits of the Ego. And those who were able to some extent to experience this were called by Christ 'the faithful'. This is the only true interpretation of the concept of Faith — one of the most fundamental concepts in the New Testament. Faith is the capacity to transcend the self, to transcend what the Ego can — for the time being — achieve. Therefore when he had passed into the body of the Nathan Jesus and had there united with the power of the Buddha, Christ's teaching was not concerned with the question: 'How shall the Ego achieve the greatest possible perfection?' but rather with the question 'How shall the Ego overflow? How can the Ego transcend its own limits?' He often used simple words, and indeed the Gospel of St. Luke as a whole speaks to the hearts of the simplest men. Christ said, in effect: It is not enough to give something only to those of whom you know for certain that they will give it back to you again, for sinners also do that. If you know that it will come back to you, your action has not been prompted by overflowing love. But if you give something knowing that it will not come back to you, then you have acted out of pure love; for that is pure love which the Ego does not keep enclosed but releases as a power that flows forth from a man. (Luke VI, 33–34.) In many and various ways Christ speaks of how the Ego must overflow and how the power overflowing from the Ego, and from feeling emancipated from self-interest, must work in the world.

The words of greatest warmth in the Gospel of St. Luke are those which tell of this overflowing love. The Gospel itself will be found to contain this overflowing love if we let its words work upon us in such a way that the love pervades all our own words, enabling them to make their effect in the outer world. Another Evangelist, who because of his different antecedents lays less emphasis upon this particular secret of Christianity, has for all that summarized it in a short sentence. In the Latin translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew we still have the genuine, original words which epitomise the many beautiful passages about love contained in the Gospel of St. Luke: *Ex abundantia cordis os loquitur*. 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' (Matt. XII, 34.) This expresses one of the very highest Christian ideals! The mouth speaks from the overflowing heart, from that which the heart does not confine within itself. The heart is set in motion by the blood and the blood is the expression of the Ego. The meaning is therefore this: 'Speak from an Ego which overflows and rays forth power (the power of faith). Then do thy words contain the Christ-power!' — 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh!' this is a cardinal principle of Christianity.

In the modern German Bible this passage is rendered: 'His mouth overflows whose heart is full!' [1] These words have for centuries succeeded in obscuring a cardinal principle of Christianity. The absurdity of saying that the heart overflows when it is 'full' has not dawned upon people, although things do not generally overflow unless they are *more* than full! Humanity — this is not meant as criticism — has inevitably become entangled in an idea which obscures an essential principle of Christianity and has never noticed that the sentence as it stands here is meaningless. If it is contended that the German language does not allow of a literal translation of *Ex abundantia cordis os loquitur* into 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh' on the ground

that one cannot say 'The abundance of the stove makes the room warm' — that too is senseless. For if the stove is heated only to the extent that the warmth just reaches its sides, the room will not be heated, it will be heated only when a superabundance of warmth comes out of the stove. Here we light upon a point of great significance: a cardinal principle of Christianity, one upon which part of the Gospel of St. Luke is based, has been entirely obscured, with the result that the meaning of one of the most important passages in the Gospel has remained hidden from humanity.

The power that can overflow from the human heart is the Christ-power. 'Heart' and 'Ego' are here synonymous. What the Ego is able to create when transcending its own limits flows forth through the word. Not until the end of Earth evolution will the Ego be fit to enshrine the nature of Christ in its fullness. In the present age Christ is a power that brims over from the heart. A man who is content that his heart shall merely be 'full' does not possess the Christ. Hence an essential principle of Christianity is obscured if the weight and significance of this sentence are not realized. Things of infinite importance, belonging to the very essence of Christianity, will come to light through what spiritual science is able to say in elucidation of the sacred records of Christianity. By reading the Akashic Chronicle, spiritual science is able to discover the original meanings and thus to read the records in their true form.

We shall now understand how humanity advances into the future. The Bodhisattva who became Buddha five or six centuries before our era, ascended into the spiritual world and now works in his Nirmanakaya. He has risen to a higher stage and need not again descend into a physical body. The powers that were his as Bodhisattva are again present — but in a different form. When he became Buddha at that time, he passed over the office of Bodhisattva to another who became

his successor; another became Bodhisattava. A Buddhist legend speaks of this in words which give expression to a deep truth of Christianity. It is narrated that the Bodhisattva, before descending to the incarnation when he became Buddha, removed his heavenly tiara and placed it upon the Bodhisattva who was to be his successor. The latter, with his somewhat different mission, works on. He too is to become a Buddha. When — in about three thousand years — a number of human beings have evolved from within themselves the teachings of the Eightfold Path, the present Bodhisattva will become Buddha, as did his predecessor. Entrusted with his mission five or six centuries before our era, he will become Buddha in about three thousand years, reckoning from our present time. Oriental wisdom knows him as the Maitreya Buddha. [2]

Before the present Bodhisattva can become the Maitreya Buddha a considerable number of human beings must have developed the precepts of the Eightfold Path out of their own hearts and by that time many will have become capable of this. Then he who is now the Bodhisattva will bring a new power into the world.

If nothing further were to have happened by then, the future Buddha would, it is true, find human beings capable of thinking out the teachings of the Eightfold Path through deep meditation, but not such as have within their inmost soul the living, overflowing power of love. This living power of love must stream into mankind in the intervening time in order that the Maitreya Buddha may find not only human beings who understand what love is, but those who have within them the *power* of love. It was for this purpose that Christ descended to the Earth. He descended for three years only, never having been embodied on the Earth before, as you will have gathered from everything that has been said. The presence of Christ on the Earth for three years — from the

Baptism by John until the Mystery of Golgotha — meant that love will flow in ever-increasing measure into the human heart, into the human soul in other words, into the human Ego; so that at the end of Earth evolution the Ego will be filled with the power of Christ. Just as the teaching of compassion and love had first to be kindled to life through the Bodhisattva, the *substance* of love had to be brought down from heavenly heights to the Earth by the Being who allows it gradually to become the possession of the human Ego itself. We may not say that love was not previously in existence. What was not present before the coming of Christ was the love that could be the direct possession of the human Ego; it was love that was inspired that Christ enabled to stream down from cosmic Heights; it streamed into men unconsciously, just as previously the Bodhisattva had enabled the teaching of the Eightfold Path to stream into them unconsciously. Buddha's relation to the Eightfold Path was analogous to the status of the Christ-Being before it was possible for Him to descend in order to take human form. The taking of human form signified progress for Christ. That is the all-important point.

Buddha's successor — now a Bodhisattva — is well known to those versed in spiritual science and the time will come when these facts — including the name of the Bodhisattva who will then become the Maitreya Buddha — will be spoken of explicitly. For the present, however, when so many factors unknown to the external world have been presented, indications must suffice. When this Bodhisattva appears on Earth and becomes Maitreya. Buddha, he will find on Earth the seed of Christ, embodied in those human beings who say: 'Not only is my head filled with the wisdom of the Eightfold Path; I have not only the teaching, the wisdom of love, but my heart is filled with the living substance of love which overflows and streams into the world.' And then, together with such

human beings, the Maitreya Buddha will be able to carry out his further mission in the world's evolution.

All these truths are interrelated and only by realizing this are we able to understand the profundities of the Gospel of St. Luke. This Gospel does not speak to us of a 'teaching', but of Him who flowed as very substance into the beings of the Earth and into the constitution of man. This is a truth expressed in occultism by saying: The Bodhisattvas who become Buddhas can, through wisdom, redeem earthly man in respect of his spirit, but they can never redeem the *whole* man. For the whole man can be redeemed only when the warm power of love — not wisdom alone — flows through his whole being. The redemption of souls through the outpouring of love which He brought to the Earth — that was the mission of Christ. To bring the wisdom of love was the mission of the Bodhisattvas and of the Buddha; to bring to mankind the power of love was the mission of Christ. This distinction must be made.

### **Notes:**

1 In the English versions of the New Testament the correct meaning has been preserved. (See **Matt. XII, 34**, also **Luke VI, 43**.)

2 Among countless references to Maitreya Buddha in the vast literature of Buddhism, special attention may be called to the chapter entitled 'Maitreya, the future Buddha', in *Buddhist Scriptures*, translated by Edward Conze (Penguin Classics).

3 Dr. Steiner spoke of Maitreya Buddha in many lecture-courses and in considerable detail in the following lectures: *Buddha and Christ. The Sphere of the Bodhisattvas*, given in Milan, 21st September 1911; *Jeschu ben Pandira, Lecture 1*, 4th November 1911, and *Jeschu ben Pandira, Lecture 2*, 5th November 1911, both lectures given in Leipzig.

## LECTURE TEN

*Christianity and the Teaching of Reincarnation and Karma. Jonah and Solomon: Examples of two modes of Initiation in olden Times. The Christ-principle and the new mode of Initiation. The Event of Golgotha: Initiation presented on the outer plane of World-History.*

Our task to-day will be to bring the knowledge gained in these lectures on the Gospel of St. Luke to the culminating point indicated by spiritual investigation — the culminating point we know as the Mystery of Golgotha.

Yesterday's lecture endeavoured to convey an idea of what actually took place at the time when for three years Christ was on Earth, and the preceding lectures indicated how the convergence of streams of spiritual life made this event possible. The writer of the Gospel of St. Luke gives a wonderful account of the mission of Christ Jesus on the Earth, as we shall realize if the light of knowledge derived from the Akashic Chronicle can be brought to bear upon what he describes.

The following question might be asked: As the stream of Buddhism is organically woven into Christian teachings, how is it that in the latter there is no indication of the great Law of Karma, of the adjustment effected in the course of the incarnations of an individual human being? It would, however, be sheer misapprehension to imagine that what the Law of Karma enables us to understand is not also implicit in the words of the Gospel of St. Luke. It is indeed there, only we

must realize that the needs of the human soul differ in different epochs and that it is not always the task of the great emissaries in world-evolution to impart the absolute truth in abstract form, because men at different stages of maturity simply would not understand it; the great pioneers and missionaries must speak in such a way that men receive what is right and suitable in a particular epoch. The teaching received by humanity through the great Buddha contains, in the form of wisdom, everything that in conjunction with the teaching of compassion and love and the synthesis of this in the Eightfold Path, can enable the doctrine of Karma to be understood. Failure to achieve this understanding only means that no effort has been made to use faculties in the soul leading to knowledge of the teaching of Karma and Reincarnation.

In the lecture yesterday it was said that in about three thousand years from now, large numbers of human beings will have progressed sufficiently to unfold from their own souls the teaching of the Eightfold Path and — we may now add — that of Karma and Reincarnation. But this must inevitably be a gradual process. Just as a plant cannot unfold its blossom immediately the seed has been sown but leaf after leaf must develop according to definite laws, so too the spiritual development of humanity must progress stage by stage and the right knowledge be brought to light at the right time.

Anyone possessed of faculties that can be kindled by spiritual science will realize from the voice of his own soul that the teaching of Karma and Reincarnation is indispensable. It must be remembered however that evolution is not fortuitous and in point of fact it is only now, in our own time, that human souls have become sufficiently mature to discover these truths through their own insight. It would not have been a good thing to give out the teaching of Karma and Reincarnations exoterically a few centuries ago; and it would



have been detrimental to evolution if the present content of spiritual science — for which human souls are longing and with which research into the foundations of the Gospels is connected — had been imparted openly to mankind a few hundred years earlier. It was necessary that human souls should be yearning for it and should have developed faculties able to accept such teaching; it was essential that these souls should have passed through earlier incarnations, even in the Christian era, and have undergone the available experiences before reaching a degree of maturity capable of assimilating the teaching of Karma and Reincarnation. Had this teaching been proclaimed in the early centuries of Christendom in the form in which it is proclaimed to-day, this would have meant demanding of human evolution the equivalent of demanding a plant to produce the blossom before the green leaves.

Humanity has only now become sufficiently mature to assimilate the spiritual content of the teaching of Karma and Reincarnation. It is therefore not surprising that in what has been imparted to humanity for centuries from the Gospels, there is much that gives a quite erroneous picture of Christianity. In a certain respect the Gospel message was entrusted prematurely to men and it is only to-day that they are becoming mature enough to develop all the faculties that could lead to an understanding of the actual content of the Gospel records. It was absolutely necessary that what was proclaimed by Christ Jesus should take account of the conditions and the attitude of soul prevailing in those days. Therefore Karma and Reincarnation were not taught as abstract doctrines, but *feelings* were cultivated through which human souls would gradually become ready to receive this teaching. What was needed at that time was to speak in a way that could lead by degrees to an understanding of Karma and Reincarnation rather than any enunciation of the teaching itself.

Did Christ Jesus and those who were around Him speak in this way? In order to understand this we must study the Gospel of St. Luke and interpret it rightly. If we do so we shall realize in what form the Law of Karma could be made known to men at that time.

“Blessed be ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now; for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy; for behold your reward is great in heaven” — i.e. in the spiritual worlds. (Luke VI, 20–23.)

Here we have the teaching of ‘compensation’. Without going into the subject of Karma and Reincarnation in an abstract way, the aim is to let the feeling of assurance flow into the souls of men that one who for a time is still hungering will eventually experience the due compensation. It was necessary that these feelings should flow into the souls of men. The souls then living, to whom the teaching was given in this form, were not, until they were again incarnated, ready to receive, as wisdom, the teaching of Karma and Reincarnation.

What was to ripen in human souls had to flow into these at that time. For a completely *new* epoch had begun, an epoch when men were preparing to develop their Ego, their self-consciousness, to maturity. Whereas revelations had hitherto been received and the effects made manifest in the astral, etheric and physical bodies of men, the Ego was now to become fully conscious but be filled only gradually with the forces it was eventually to acquire. Only the one Ego [ 1 ] which came to the Earth as the Nathan Jesus and into whose bodily constitution, when this had been duly prepared, the Individuality of Zarathustra passed this Ego-Being alone

could bring to fulfilment within itself the all-embracing Christ-principle.

The rest of humanity must now, in imitation of Christ, gradually develop what was present for three years on the Earth in the one single Personality. It was only the impulse, as it were the seed, that Christ Jesus was able to implant into humanity at that time and the seed must now unfold and grow. To this end provision was made that at the right times there shall always appear on Earth individuals able to bring the truth that humanity will not be ready to assimilate until a later period. The Being who appeared on Earth as Christ had to take care that His message would be accessible to men immediately after His appearance, in a form that they could understand. He had also to make provision for Individualities to appear later on and care for the spiritual needs of human souls at the stage of maturity reached in the course of time.

In what manner Christ made such provision for the ages following the Event of Golgotha is related by the writer of the Gospel of St. John. He shows us how, in Lazarus, Christ Himself 'raised', 'awakened', that Individuality who continued to work as 'John', from whom the teaching proceeded in the form described in the lectures on the Gospel of St. John. [ 2 ] But Christ had also to provide for the appearance, in later times, of an Individuality who would bring to humanity in a form compatible with subsequent evolution, that for which men would by then be ready. How an Individuality was 'awakened' by Christ for this purpose is faithfully described by the writer of the Gospel of St. Luke. Having declared that he would describe what 'seers' endowed with the vision of Imagination and Inspiration could say about the Event of Palestine, he also points to what would one day be taught by another — but only in the future. In order to describe this mysterious process the writer of St. Luke's Gospel has also included an 'awakening', a 'raising', in his account (Luke VII,

11–17.) In what we read concerning the ‘awakening’ of the *young man of Nain* lies the mystery of the progress of Christianity. Whereas in the case of the healing of the daughter of Jairus, to which brief reference was made in a previous lecture, the mysteries connected with it were so profound that Christ admitted only a few to witness the act and charged them not to speak of it, this other ‘raising’ was accomplished in such a way that it might immediately be related. The former healing was an act presupposing in the healer a profound insight into the processes of physical life; the latter healing was an ‘awakening’, an Initiation. The Individuality in the body of the young man of Nain was to undergo an Initiation of a very special kind.

There are various kinds of Initiation. In one kind, immediately after the process has been completed, knowledge of the higher worlds flashes up in the aspirant and the laws and happenings of the spiritual world are revealed to him. In another kind of Initiation it is only a seed that is implanted into the soul, and the individual has to wait until the next incarnation for the seed to bear fruit; only then does he become an Initiate in the real sense.

The Initiation of the young man of Nain was of this kind. His soul was transformed by the event in Palestine but he was not yet conscious of having risen into the higher worlds. It was not until his next incarnation that the forces laid in his soul at that earlier time came to fruition. In an exoteric lecture names cannot now be given; all that is possible is an indication to the effect that the Individuality awakened by Christ in the young man of Nain subsequently appeared as a great teacher of religion; in later time a new teacher of Christianity arose, equipped with the powers implanted into his soul in a previous incarnation.

Thus Christ provided for the subsequent appearance of an Individuality able to bring Christianity to a further stage of development. Moreover the mission of the Individuality who had been awakened in the young man of Nain is destined to permeate Christianity later on, and to an ever-increasing extent, with the teachings of Karma and Reincarnation — teachings which when Christ was on Earth could not be proclaimed explicitly as wisdom, because the human soul had first to receive them into the life of *feeling*.

Christ indicates clearly enough (according to the Gospel of St. Luke too) that an entirely *new* factor had now entered into the evolution of humanity, namely, *Ego-consciousness*. He shows — it is only a matter of being able to read the meaning — that in earlier times the spiritual world did not flow into the self-conscious Ego, for men received this spiritual stream through the physical, etheric and astral bodies; a certain degree of unconsciousness was always present when, as in previous epochs, divine-spiritual forces flowed into men. In the stream in which Christ Jesus was actually working, men had had formerly to receive the Law of Sinai, which could be addressed only to the astral body. The Law was imparted to man in such a way that it did indeed work in him, but not directly through the forces of his Ego. These forces could not operate until the time of Christ Jesus because it was not until then that man became conscious of the Ego in the real sense. This is indicated by Christ in the Gospel of St. Luke when He says that men must first be made ready to receive an entirely new principle into their souls. He indicates this when speaking of His forerunner, John the Baptist. (Luke VII, 18–35.)

How did Christ Himself regard this Individuality? He said that before His own coming the mission of John was to present in its purest and noblest form the old teaching of the Prophets that had been handed down, unadulterated, from bygone times. He regarded John as being the last to transmit, in its

pure form, the teaching belonging to *past* ages. The 'Law and the Prophets' held good until the coming of John. His mission was to set before men once again what the old teaching and the old constitution of soul had been able to impart. How did this old constitution of soul function in the times preceding the advent of the Christ-principle?

Here we come to a subject — incomprehensible as it may seem at the present time — that will some day become a teaching of natural science as well, when it allows itself to be inspired to some extent by spiritual science. I must now refer to a matter of which I can touch only the very fringe but which will show you what depths spiritual science is destined to illumine in the domain of natural science. If you survey the branches of natural science to-day and perceive the efforts that are made to penetrate the mysteries of man's existence with the limited faculties of human thought, you will find it stated that the *whole* human being comes into existence through the intermingling of the male and female seeds. One of the basic endeavours of modern natural science is to establish this theory. Searching microscopical examination of substances is made in order to ascertain which particular attributes proceed from the male or from the female seed, and the researchers are satisfied when they believe, it can be proved that the whole human being is thus produced. But natural science itself will eventually be compelled to recognize that only *one* part of the human being is determined by the intermingling of the male and female seeds and that however precisely the product of the one or the other may be known, the whole nature of man in the present cycle of evolution cannot be explained by this intermingling.

There is in every human being something that does not arise from the seed but is, so to speak, a 'virgin birth', something that flows into the process of germination from a quite different source. Something unites with the seed of the human

being that is not derived from father and mother, yet belongs to and is destined for him — something that is poured into his Ego and can be ennobled through the Christ-principle. That in the human being which unites with the Christ-principle in the course of evolution is 'virgin-born' and — as natural science will one day come to recognize through its own methods — this is connected with the momentous transition accomplished at the time of Christ Jesus. Before the Christ Event there could be nothing that did not enter into man's inner being by way of the seed. Something has actually happened in the course of the ages to bring about a change in the development of the Ego. Humanity has not been the same since the Christ Event; but the element that has been added since then to what is produced by the seeds must be gradually developed and ennobled by assimilating the Christ-principle.

We are here approaching a very subtle truth. To anyone conversant with modern natural science it is extremely interesting that already to-day there are domains where investigators are faced with the fact that there is something in man *not* derived from the seed. The preliminary conditions for realizing this are already there, only the investigators are not yet intellectually capable of recognizing what is present in their own experiments and observations. More is at work in the experiments than is known to modern natural science and little progress would be made if it were entirely dependent upon the ability of the investigators. While one or another is working in a laboratory, in a clinic, or perhaps in his own study, there stand behind him the Powers which direct and guide the world, and these Powers allow that to come to light which the researcher himself does not understand and for which he is merely the instrument. It is therefore also true that even objective investigation is guided by the 'Masters', that is, by higher Individualities. The facts now indicated are not usually observed; but they certainly will be when the

conscious faculties of researchers are permeated by the spiritual teachings of Anthroposophy.

As a result of the fact of which I have just spoken, a great change has taken place in connection with the faculties of the human being since Christ came to the Earth. Previously, the only faculties available to man were those derived from the paternal and maternal seeds, for these faculties alone were able to develop in him. Between birth and death we develop through our physical, etheric and astral bodies such faculties as we possess. Before the time of Christ Jesus the instruments employed by man for his own life could be developed only from the seed. After the appearance of Christ Jesus that element was added which is of 'virgin birth' and does not in any sense arise from the seed. This element can of course be gravely impaired if a man is entirely given over to materialistic thought; but it can be sublimated if he lets his being be suffused by the warmth issuing from the Christ-principle and he then brings it into his following incarnations in an ever higher and higher form.

What has now been said necessarily implies that in all the proclamations made to humanity prior to that of Christ, there was an element bound up with faculties originating from the line of descent and from the seed; and it also imparts the conviction that Christ Jesus addressed himself to faculties that have nothing to do with the seed arising from the Earth but from out of the divine worlds unite with the seed. Teachers before Christ Jesus could speak to men only by using the faculties transmitted to their earthly nature through the seed. All the prophets and forerunners, however exalted, even when they descended as Bodhisattvas, were obliged to use faculties transmitted by way of the seed. Christ Jesus, however, spoke to that in man which does *not* pass through the seed but comes from the realm of the Divine. He indicates this when He speaks to His disciples of John the Baptist (Luke



VII, 28): "For I say unto you, among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist" — that is to say, among those who, as they stand before us, can be explained as having come into existence through physical birth from male and female seeds. But then Christ adds words to the effect that the smallest part of that which is not born of women and which unites with the man from the kingdom of God is *greater* than John. Such are the depths hidden beneath these words! Some day, when study of the Bible is illumined by spiritual science, it will be found to contain physiological truths of far greater significance than any finding of the blundering thinking applied in modern physiology. Words such as those just quoted can lead to recognition of one of the very deepest physiological truths. Profound indeed is the Bible when it is truly understood!

Christ Jesus exemplifies in manifold ways, and also in a different form, what I have now told you. His purpose is to indicate that the element which is to come into the world through Him is something altogether new, a truth differing from any hitherto proclaimed, because it is connected with faculties derived from the kingdoms of Heaven — faculties that have *not* been inherited. He points out how difficult it is for men to learn to understand such a teaching, and that they will demand to be convinced in the same way as formerly. He tells them that they cannot be convinced in the old way of the new truth that has now come; for what could be proof of truth in the old form could not bring conviction of the new. The old truth was presented in comprehensible form when symbolized by the 'Sign of Jonah'. This symbolized the old way in which man gradually attained knowledge and penetrated into the spiritual world, or how — to use biblical terms — he became a 'Prophet'.

The old way of attaining Initiation was this: first the soul was brought to maturity and every necessary preparation made; then a condition lasting for three-and-a-half days was induced in the candidate, a condition in which he was completely withdrawn from the outer world and from the organs through which that world is perceived. Those who were to be led into the spiritual world were carefully prepared and their souls trained in knowledge of the spiritual life; then they were withdrawn from the world for three-and-a-half days, being taken to a place where they could perceive nothing through their external senses and where their bodies lay in a deathlike condition; after three-and-a-half days their souls were summoned back again into the body and they were awakened. Such men were then able to remember their vision of the spiritual worlds and to testify of those worlds. The great secret of Initiation was that the soul, prepared by long training, was led out of the body for three-and-a-half days into an entirely different world, was shut off from the environment and penetrated into the spiritual world. Men who could bear witness to the realities of the spiritual world were always to be found among the peoples; they were men who had undergone the experience referred to in the Bible in the story of Jonah's sojourn in the whale. Such a man was made ready to undergo this experience and then, when he appeared before the people as an Initiate of the old order, he bore upon him the 'sign of Jonah' the sign of those who were able themselves to testify of the spiritual world.

This was the one form of Initiation. Christ said, in effect: 'In the old sense there is no other sign save the sign of Jonah.' (Luke XI, 29.) And He expressed Himself even more clearly according to the meaning of words in the Gospel of St. Matthew. 'As a heritage from olden times there remains the possibility that without effort of his own, without Initiation, a man can develop a dim, shadowy kind of clairvoyance and

through revelation from above be led into the spiritual world.' The indication here is that there were also Initiates of a second kind — men who went about among their fellows and who, as a result of their particular lineage, were able to receive revelations from above in a kind of sublimated trance condition, without having undergone any special Initiation. Christ indicated that this twofold manner of being transported into the spiritual world had come down from ancient times. He bade the people to remember King Solomon — thereby pointing to an Individuality to whom, without effort on his own part, the spiritual world was revealed from above. The 'Queen of Sheba' who came to King Solomon was also the bearer of wisdom from above; she was the representative of those predestined to possess, by inheritance, the dim, shadowy clairvoyance with which all men were endowed in the Atlantean epoch. (See Luke XI, 31.)

Thus there were two kinds of Initiates: the one kind typified by King Solomon and the symbolic visit paid to him by the Queen of Sheba, the Queen from the South; the other kind typified by those who bore upon them the 'sign of Jonah', meaning the old Initiation in which the candidate, entirely cut off from the outer world, passed through the spiritual world for a period lasting three-and-a-half days. Christ now added: 'A greater than Solomon, a greater than Jonah is here' — indicating thereby that something new had come into the world. The message was not to be conveyed to the etheric bodies of men from outside, through revelations, as in the case of Solomon, nor was it to be conveyed to etheric bodies from within through revelations imparted by the duly prepared astral body to the etheric body, as in the case of those symbolized by the sign of Jonah. 'Here is something which enables a man who has made himself ready for it in his Ego, to unite his being with what belongs to the kingdoms of Heaven.' The forces and powers from those kingdoms unite

with the virginal part in the human soul, the part that belongs to the kingdoms of Heaven and that men can destroy if they turn away from the Christ-principle, but can cultivate and nurture if they receive into themselves what streams from the Christ-principle.

As indicated in the Gospel of St. Luke, Christ's teaching is imbued with the new element which came to the Earth at that time, and we see how all the old ways of proclaiming the kingdom of God were changed through the Event of Palestine. Christ says to those from whom, because of their preparation, He could expect some measure of understanding: 'Of a truth there are some among you who are able to see the kingdom of God, not only in the manner of Solomon, through revelation, or through the Initiation symbolized by the sign of Jonah; if any among you had attained nothing further than that they would never see the kingdom of God in this incarnation before their death.' The meaning is that before their death they would not have seen the kingdom of God unless they had attained Initiation in some form; but then they would also have had to pass through a condition similar to death. Christ wished to show that because of the new element now present in the world there can also be men who, even before they die are able to behold the kingdom of Heaven. The disciples did not at first understand what this meant. Christ wanted to convey to them *that they* were to be the ones who would come to know the mysteries of the kingdoms of Heaven before natural death or the death experienced in the old form of Initiation. The wonderful passage in the Gospel of St. Luke where Christ is speaking of a higher revelation, is as follows: "But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God." (Luke IX, 27.) The disciples did not understand that it was they themselves who, being closely around Him, were chosen to experience the tremendous power of the Christ principle

which would enable them to penetrate directly into the spiritual world. The spiritual world was to become visible to them without the sign of Solomon, and without the sign of Jonah. Did this actually happen?

Immediately after these words in the Gospel comes the scene of the Transfiguration, when three disciples — Peter, James and John — are led up into the spiritual world. The figures of Moses and Elijah appear before them in that world and, simultaneously, Christ Jesus in Glory. (Luke IX, 28–36.) The disciples gaze for a brief moment into the spiritual world — a testimony that insight into that world is possible without the faculties designated by the sign of Solomon and the sign of Jonah. But it is evident that they are still novices, for they fall asleep immediately after being torn out of their physical and etheric bodies by the stupendous power of what was happening. Christ finds them asleep. This account was meant to indicate the third way of entering the spiritual world, apart from the ways denoted by the signs of Solomon and of Jonah. Anyone capable in those days of interpreting the signs of the times would have known that the Ego itself must develop, that it must now be directly inspired, that the Divine Powers must work directly into the Ego.

It was also to be made evident that the men of that time, even the very best among them, were not capable of taking the Christ-principle into themselves. The event of the Transfiguration was to be a beginning but it was also to be shown that the disciples were not able, at the time, to receive the Christ-principle in the fullest sense. Hence their powers fail them immediately afterwards, when they want to apply the Christ-power to heal one who is possessed by an evil spirit but are unable to do so. Christ indicates that they are still only at the beginning, by saying: I shall have to stay a long time with you before your forces are able also to stream into other men. (See Luke IX, 41.) Thereupon He heals the one whom

the disciples could not heal. But then He says, again hinting at the mystery behind these happenings, that the time has come when “the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men”. This means: the time has come when the Ego, which is to be developed by men themselves in the course of their Earth-mission, is gradually to stream into them, to be given over to them. This Ego is to be recognized in its highest form in Christ. “Let these sayings sink down into your ears; for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying; it was hid from them, that they perceived it not.” (Luke IX, 44–45.)

How many have understood this saying? Greater and greater numbers will, however, eventually understand that the Ego, the ‘Son of Man’, was to be given over to men at that time. And the explanation that was possible in those days, was added by Christ Jesus. He spoke to the following effect: As he stands before us, man is a product of the old forces that were active before the Luciferic beings had laid hold of human nature; but the Luciferic forces drew man down to a lower level. The results of all these processes have passed into the faculties possessed by him to-day. Everything that comes from the seed, as well as all human consciousness, is permeated by the influence that dragged man to a lower sphere.

Man is a twofold being. Whatever consciousness he has developed hitherto is permeated by the Luciferic forces. It is only the unconscious part of man's being, the last remnant of his evolution through the Saturn, Sun and Moon periods when no Luciferic forces were at work — it is only this that streams into him to-day as a virginal element of his nature; but it cannot unite with him without the qualities and forces he is able to develop in himself through the Christ-principle. As he stands before us, man is primarily a product of heredity, a confluence of what derives from the male and female seeds. From the beginning he develops as a duality — a duality

already permeated by Luciferic forces. As long as a man is not illumined by self-consciousness, as long as out of his own Ego he cannot fully distinguish between good and evil, he reveals to us his earlier, original nature through the veil of his later nature. Only the part of man that is 'childlike' still retains a last remnant of the nature that was his before he succumbed to the influence of the Luciferic beings.

Hence there is a 'childlike' part and also a 'grown' part in man. It is the latter part of his being that is permeated by the Luciferic forces but its influence asserts itself from the very earliest embryonic stage onwards. The Luciferic forces also permeate the child, so that in ordinary life what was already implanted in the human being before the Luciferic influence, cannot make itself manifest. The Christ-power must re-awaken this, must unite with the best forces of the child-nature in man. The Christ-power may not link itself with the faculties that man has corrupted, with what derives merely from the intellect; the link must be with that which has remained from the child-nature of primeval times. That is what must be reinvigorated and must thereafter fructify the other part (of man's nature).

"But there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be the greatest," that is, which of them was most fitted to receive the Christ-principle into his own being. "But Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child and set it by them and said unto them. Whosoever shall receive this child in my name" — that is, whosoever is united in Christ's name with what has remained from the times *before* the onset of the Luciferic influence "receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me" (Luke IX, 46–48) — that is, He who sent this (childlike) part of the human being to the Earth. Emphasis is there laid upon the great significance of what has remained 'childlike' in man and should be fostered and nurtured in human nature.

We may say of a human being standing before us that he has the rudiments of very good qualities. We may try our hardest to develop those qualities of his so that he makes real progress, but the methods usually adopted to-day take no account of what is present in the foundations of man's being. It is essential to pay heed to what has remained 'childlike' in man, for it is by way of this childlike nature that warmth can be imparted to the other faculties through the Christ-principle. The childlike nature must be developed in order that the other faculties may follow suit. Everyone has the childlike nature within him and this, when wakened to life, will also be responsive to union with the Christ-principle. But forces — of however lofty a kind — that are dominated by the Luciferic influence will, if they alone work in a man to-day, repudiate and scoff at what can live on Earth as the Christ power — as Christ Himself foretold.

The Gospel of St. Luke, brings home very clearly the purport and meaning of the new proclamation. When a man who bore on his forehead the sign of Jonah went about the world as an Initiate of the old order, he was recognized — but only by those who were knowers — as one who had come to testify of the spiritual worlds. Special preparation was needed before the sign of Jonah could be understood. But a new kind of preparation was now necessary in order to understand what was greater than anything indicated by the signs of Solomon and of Jonah — a new preparation which was to pave the way for a new understanding, a new way of maturing the soul. The contemporaries of Christ Jesus could at first understand only the old way, and the way preached by John the Baptist was the one known to most of them. That Christ was now bringing an entirely new impulse, that he was seeking for souls among those who did not in the least resemble men who would formerly have been considered suitable, was utterly incomprehensible to them. They had assumed that He would



associate with those who practised the old kind of disciplinary exercises and would impart His teaching to such men. Hence they could not understand why He sat among those whom they regarded as 'sinners'. But He said to them: If I were to impart in the old way the entirely new impulse I have come to give to mankind, if a new form of teaching were not to replace the old, it would be as if I were to sew a piece of new cloth on an old garment or pour new wine into old wine-skins. What is now to be given to humanity and is greater than anything indicated by the sign of Solomon or the sign of Jonah, this must be poured into new wine-skins, into new forms. And you must rouse yourselves sufficiently to understand the new teaching in a new form! (See Luke V, 36–37. )

Those who were to understand must now do so through the powerful influence of the Ego — not through what they had learnt but through what had poured into them from the spiritual Christ-Being Himself. Hence the chosen ones were not men who according to the old doctrines were properly prepared but men who in spite of having passed through many incarnations, proved to be simple human beings, able to understand through the power of Faith what had streamed into them. A 'sign' was to be placed before them as well, a sign now to be enacted before the eyes of all mankind. The 'mystical death' that had been a ceremonial act in the Mystery Temples for hundreds and thousands of years was now to be presented on the great arena of world-history. Everything that had taken place in the secrecy of the Temples of Initiation was brought into the open as a single event on Golgotha. A process hitherto witnessed only by the Initiates during the three-and-a-half days of an old Initiation was now enacted before mankind in concrete reality. Hence those to whom the facts were known could only describe the Event of Golgotha as being what in very truth it was: the old Initiation transformed into historical fact and enacted on the arena of world-history.

That is what took place on Golgotha! In former times the three-and-a-half days spent in deathlike sleep had brought to the few Initiates who witnessed it, the conviction that the spiritual will at all times be victorious over the bodily nature and that man's soul and spirit belong to a spiritual world. This was now to be a reality enacted before the eyes of the world. An Initiation transferred to the outer plane of world-history such was the Event of Golgotha. Hence this Initiation was not consummated only for those who witnessed the actual Event, but for all mankind. What issued from the death on the Cross streamed into the whole of humanity. A stream of spiritual life flowed into mankind from the drops of blood which fell from the wounds of Christ Jesus on Golgotha. For what had been imparted by other Teachers as 'wisdom' was now to pass into humanity as inner strength, inner power. That is the essential difference between the Event of Golgotha and the teachings given by the other Founders of religion.

Deeper understanding than exists to-day is necessary before there can be any true conception of what came to pass on Golgotha. When Earth evolution began, the human Ego was connected physically with the blood. The blood is the outer expression of the human Ego. Men would have made the Ego stronger and stronger, and if Christ had not appeared they would have been entirely engrossed in the development of egoism. They were protected from this by the Event of Golgotha. What was it that had to flow? The blood that is the surplus substantiality of the Ego! The process that began on the Mount of Olives when the drops of sweat fell from the Redeemer like drops of blood, was carried further when the blood flowed from the wounds of Christ Jesus on Golgotha. The blood flowing from the Cross was the sign of the surplus egoism in man's nature which had to be sacrificed. The spiritual significance of the sacrifice on Golgotha requires deep and penetrating study. The result of what happened

there would not be apparent to a chemist — that is to say to one with the power of intellectual perception only. If the blood that flowed on Golgotha had been chemically analysed it would have been found to contain the same substances as the blood of other human beings; but occult investigation would discover it to have been quite different blood. Through the surplus blood in humanity men would have been engulfed in egoism if infinite Love had not enabled this blood to flow. As occult investigation finds, infinite Love is intermingled with the blood that flowed on Golgotha. The writer of the Gospel of St. Luke adhered to his purpose, which was to describe how, through Christ, there came into the world the infinite Love that would gradually drive out egoism. Each of the Evangelists describes what it was his particular function to describe.

If these things could be explained in still greater depth we should find that all contradictions alleged by materialistic research would be invalidated, as they are in the case of the antecedents of Jesus of Nazareth when the true facts of his early childhood are known. Each Evangelist describes what concerned him most closely from his own standpoint. St. Luke describes what his informants, who were ‘seers’ and ‘servants of the Word’ were able to perceive as the result of their special preparation. The other Evangelists are concerned with different aspects — the writer of the Gospel of St. Luke perceives the out-streaming Love which forgives the most terrible of all wrongs the physical world can inflict. Words expressing this ideal of Love, words of forgiveness even when the most terrible of wrongs has been committed, resound from the Cross on Golgotha: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!” (Luke XXIII, 34.) Out of His infinite Love, He who on the Cross on Golgotha accomplishes the Deed of untold significance, implores forgiveness for those who have crucified Him.

And now we turn once again to the doctrine of the power of Faith. Emphasis was to be laid upon the fact that there is something in human nature that can stream from it and liberate man from the material world, no matter how firmly he may be bound to that world. Let us think of a man embroiled in the material world through every imaginable crime, so that the forum of that world itself inflicts the punishment; let us conceive, however, that he has saved for himself something that the power of Faith can cause to germinate within him. Such a man will differ from another who has no Faith, just as the one malefactor differed from the other. The one has no Faith, and the judgment is fulfilled. In the other, however, Faith is like a faint light shining into the spiritual world; hence he cannot lose the link with the spiritual. Therefore to him it is said: 'To-day' — since you know that you are connected with the spiritual world — 'you shall be with me in Paradise!' (See Luke XXIII, 43.)

Thus do the truths of Faith and Hope, as well as the truth of Love, resound from the Cross in the account given in the Gospel of St. Luke.

There is still something else, belonging to the same realm of the soul's life, upon which the writer of this Gospel wishes to lay emphasis.

When a man's whole being is pervaded with the Love that streamed from the Cross on Golgotha he can turn his eyes to the future and say: Evolution on the Earth must make it possible for the spirit living within me gradually to transform the whole of physical existence. We shall in time give back again to the Father-principle which existed before the onset of the Luciferic influence, the spirit we have received; we shall let our whole being be permeated by the Christ-principle and our hands will bring to expression what is living in our souls as a faithful picture of that principle. Our hands were not created

by ourselves but by the Father-principle, and the Christ-principle will stream through them. As men pass through incarnation after incarnation, the spiritual power flowing from the Mystery of Golgotha will stream into what they achieve in their bodies — which are the creations of the Father-principle — so that the outer world will eventually be imbued with the Christ-principle. Men will be filled with the confidence that resounded from the Cross on Golgotha and leads to the highest Hope for the future, leads to the ideal that can be expressed by saying: I let Faith germinate within me, I let Love germinate within me and I know that when they grow strong enough they will pervade all external life. I know too that they will pervade everything within me that is the creation of the Father-principle. Thus Hope for humanity's future will be added to Faith and Love, and men will understand that in regard to the future they must acquire firm confidence, saying: If only I have Faith, if only I have Love I may entertain the Hope that what has come into me from Christ Jesus will gradually find its way into the outer world. And then the words resounding from the Cross as a sublime ideal will be understood: “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit!” (Luke XXIII, 46 .)

Words of Love, of Faith and of Hope ring out from the Cross according to the Gospel which indicates how spiritual streams that had previously been separate united in the soul of Jesus of Nazareth. What had formerly been received in the form of wisdom, streamed into men as an actual power of the soul, exemplified by the sublime ideal of Christ. It is incumbent upon human beings to acquire deeper and deeper understanding of what is communicated in a record such as the Gospel of St. Luke, in order that the three words resounding from the Cross may become active forces in the soul. When with the faculties that the truths of spiritual science can develop in them men come to feel that what

streams down to them from the Cross is not lifeless exhortation but vital, active force, they will begin to realize that a truly living message is contained in the Gospel of St. Luke. It is the mission of spiritual science gradually to unveil what is enshrined in such records.

In this course of lectures we have tried to penetrate as deeply as possible into the content of St. Luke's Gospel. In the case of this Gospel too, one course of lectures cannot possibly unveil everything and you will realise at once that a very great deal has inevitably remained unexplained. But if you pursue the path indicated by lectures such as have been given here you will be able to penetrate more and more deeply into these truths and your souls will be better and better fitted to receive and assimilate the living Word hidden beneath the outer words.

Spiritual science is not a body of new teaching. It is an instrument for comprehending what has been given to humanity. Thus for us it is an instrument for understanding the Christian revelation if you have this conception of spiritual science you will no longer say: 'It is Christian theosophy just another form of theosophy!' There is only one spiritual science and we apply it as an instrument for proclaiming the truth, for bringing to light the treasures of the spiritual life of mankind. It is the same spiritual science that we apply in order to explain the Bhagavad Gita on one occasion and on another the Gospel of St. Luke. The greatness of spiritual science lies in the fact that it is able to penetrate into every treasure given to humanity in the realm of spiritual life; but we should have a false conception of it if we were to close our ears to any of the proclamations made to humanity.

It is with this attitude of mind that you should listen to the proclamation made in the Gospel of St. Luke, realizing that it is pervaded through and through by the inspiration of Love.

And then the increasing knowledge that can be acquired from this Gospel with the help of spiritual science will contribute not only to insight into the mysteries of the surrounding Universe and of the spiritual ground of existence but to an understanding of the momentous words in the Gospel of St. Luke: 'And peace be in the souls of men in whom there is good will.' When thoroughly understood, the Gospel of St. Luke is able, more than any other religious text, to pour into the human soul that warmth-giving Love through which peace reigns on Earth — and that is the most beautiful mirror-image of divine mysteries revealed on Earth. What can be revealed must be mirrored on Earth and, as mirror-image, rise up again to the spiritual Heights. If we learn to understand spiritual science in this sense it will be able to reveal to us the mysteries of the divine-spiritual Beings and of spiritual existence, and the mirror-image of these revelations will live in our souls. Love and Peace — here is the most beautiful mirror-image on Earth of what streams down from the Heights.

In this way we can receive and assimilate the words of the Gospel of St. Luke which resounded when the forces of the Nirmanakaya of Buddha streamed down upon the Nathan Jesus-child. The revelations pour down from the spiritual worlds upon the Earth and are reflected from human hearts as Love and Peace to the extent to which men unfold the power, the 'good will', which the Christ-principle enables to flow from the centre of man's being, from his Ego. The proclamation rings out clearly and with the glow of warmth when we truly understand the meaning of these words in the Gospel of St. Luke:

The revelation of the spiritual worlds from the Heights and its answering reflection from the hearts of men brings peace to all whose purpose upon the evolving Earth is to unfold good will.

## Notes:

1 See references to the nature of this Ego in Lectures **Four, Five and Seven.**

2 See the lecture-courses given at Hamburg, in May 1908, and at **Cassel, in July 1909**; also the book ***Christianity as Mystical Fact, Ch. VIII.***



**List of works by Rudolf Steiner recommended for study, among others, in connection with the foregoing lectures:**

*The Gospel of St. John* (12 lectures, Hamburg, 1908).

*The Gospel of St. John in relation to the other Gospels* (14 lectures, Cassel, 1909).

*The Gospel of St. Matthew* (12 lectures, Berne, 1910).

*Deeper Secrets of Human History in the light of the Gospel of St. Matthew* (3 lectures, Berlin, 1909).

*The Gospel of St. Mark* (12 lectures, Basle, 1912).

*From Jesus to Christ* (10 lectures, Karlsruhe, 1911).

*Genesis* (11 lectures, Munich, 1910).

*The Apocalypse* (12 lectures, Nuremberg, 1908).

*A Turning-Point of Spiritual History* (6 lectures, Berlin, 1911–12).

*Festivals and their Meaning:*

Vol. I *Christmas* (8 lectures).

Vol. II *Easter* (8 lectures).

Vol. III *Ascension and Pentecost* (6 lectures).

*The Spiritual Guidance of the Man and Mankind* (3 lectures, Copenhagen, 1911).

*Christianity as Mystical Fact* (1902).

*Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment* (1904).

*Occult Science — an Outline.* (1910).