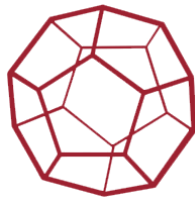


Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Times

GA 180



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by

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1 Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Times

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One thought will probably lie near at hand for all of you; it may be clothed in this question: "How did it happen, in consequence of the events which we have been considering, that the materialistic mode of thought assumed precisely the form in which we observe it to-day, permeating all human impulses of our time?" With open mind we must observe the ingredients that have entered into the spiritual life of modern time. We must not be influenced, in so doing, by what the orthodox historian describes as 'historic necessity.' We must turn our attention to those events that can explain and illumine what is actually experienced.

Among all the important transformations that have taken place in the new epoch of humanity, we must also include one that was, in a sense, an echo or aftermath of earlier transformations. I refer to the last third of the 18th century, when European humanity finally lost the last vestiges of an understanding for the Mysteries. In recent lectures I have cursorily referred to the fact that in the 18th century there still existed such a mode of thought as that of Louis Claude de Saint Martin, whose ideas gained influence in wide circles — not only owing to himself but owing to the prevailing impulse of the time during that century.

In the 19th century, on the other hand, Saint Martin's ideas and ways of thought receded altogether. We need only remember one feature of his mode of thought, and we shall observe at once how radically it differs from all that our own time, for example, is able to think and feel. In his important work, *Des Erreurs et de la Vérité*, he speaks among other things of a certain event in earthly evolution — an event that took place, however, before Man became physically Man. Looking backward as it were, he speaks of a deeply significant cosmic transgression — if we may call it so on the part of mankind as a whole, before man ever entered into physical heredity. This is significant, for we here see that those who shared Saint Martin's way of thinking still had a wider horizon. They were still able to look beyond the physical world of humanity, into the purely spiritual. Thus it was possible for them to speak of such things, the connection of which with the evolution of humanity differs from anything that could be

contained in the mere physical domain. A follower to some extent of Jacob Boehme, Louis Claude de Saint Martin had a few disciples, it is true, scattered throughout the civilised world, even as late as the 19th century — nay, even on into the most recent period. But the prevailing consciousness of the time, during the 19th century, cannot be said to have been influenced by any such impulses as occur in his writings. The open outlook, above all, into the Spiritual World, which we find here and there in his work, was utterly lost to the 19th century.

Such teachings as Saint Martin's were, in reality, the very last relics of an ancient Mystery-wisdom. To understand, however, even in an outer historic sense, how such a mode of thought as we find in Saint Martin was supplanted, we must not put the question thus: "Who was it who disseminated doctrines calculated to supplant his ways of thinking?" No, we should rather frame it thus: "In what personality does the sum-total of those impulses, whereby the humanity of the 19th century became so utterly materialistic, find the most characteristic expression?"

To understand what was really happening, we must realise that by this last transformation, at the end of the 18th century, the understanding of the Mysteries was completely lost to humanity. Thus, in the 19th century, only a very few people — only a very few human souls — knew anything of the deep importance and influence of the Mysteries.

The personality to whom I refer — though he is only the typical expression of the prevailing *Zeitgeist* of the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries — is Dupuis; and his important work, whereby the death-blow, so to speak, was dealt to the understanding of the Mysteries, is entitled *Origine de tour les Cultes*. This book came out in the year 1794.

When we conceive the outlook of men in the 19th century, we generally think of natural-scientific materialism. This natural-scientific materialism however, if I may say so, assumed the character and stamp which the 19th century impressed on nearly all human activities. I mean, what we found most characteristically expressed in the '*bon Dieu citoyen*' — the words with which Heinrich Heine greeted Jesus. I mean the character of bourgeois Philistinism. Materialism too was steeped, by the 19th century, in the channels of Philistinism. Philistine limitation was the essential characteristic of 18th century materialism. To understand the root-nerve of the 19th century, we must look for this impulse of Philistinism everywhere, Dupuis' materialism, on the other hand, was in a sense not yet Philistine; there was a certain grandeur and freedom about it, reaching far beyond

Philistine, middle-class limitations. His was in a sense a heavenly — a celestial materialism; he still had the courage to conceive a more thoroughgoing materialistic theory than all the learned and brilliant men of the 19th century.

Dupuis got behind certain things — at least, he *thought* he got behind them. And the way he did so is extremely interesting. We must not forget that he was a man of genius. Already in the 1780's he had set up a kind of private telegraphic apparatus, with which he used to telegraph, from his own house, to a friend, Fortine, who lived at a considerable distance. When the Revolution broke out, he was afraid his telegraphic communications might appear suspicious; therefore he destroyed his machines, and the whole thing was forgotten. Of course, I do not say he had an electric telegraph; nevertheless, the principle of the telegraph was thoroughly carried out by him.

Dupuis was also a Commissary of Public Education in France at the end of the 1780's. Leaving Paris when the Revolution broke out, he was elected very soon after as a member of the National Assembly; and on his return, he played no little part in the Convention, and subsequently in the Council of Five Hundred. He belonged, as a rule, to the moderate parties. We must imagine what was living in Dupuis, as an impulse that passed from him to many other souls; but it is still more important for us to realise that the Time itself was possessed with this impulse, which only found its most characteristic expression in him.

What Dupuis perceived was the following. He made a study of ancient myths and legends — say, the Hercules legend, or the legend of Isis and Osiris, or of Dionysos. He studied these ancient myths, which, as we know, are only veiled statements of the truths of the Mysteries. Take, for example, the Hercules myth. Dupuis observed the Twelve Labours of Hercules. Following up the Labours in detail, he perceived that certain things which occur in the narrative justify one in assuming a connection between the passage of Hercules through his twelve Labours and the Sun's revolution through the twelve Signs of the Zodiacs. Dupuis studied these things quite consciously and carefully, and as a result he evolved the following theory: — In antiquity there were certain persons, so-called priests of the Mysteries, whose aim it was to keep the broad masses of the people as quiet and docile as possible, in order to rule and guide them easily. Therefore they told, to certain of the people, the myth, for example, of a Hercules who lived once upon a time; whom man should emulate, with whom he should associate his labours. In like manner, other myths

were told — the Isis and Osiris myth, for instance. Within the Mysteries, however, in their own circle, the priests — according to Dupuis — knew that it was so much 'eye-wash.' They knew that such a person as Hercules or Osiris or Isis had, of course, never existed; they knew that all that goes on the Earth is brought about by the material heavenly bodies and their constellations. The myths are only veiled descriptions of the events in the sky. According to the ancient Mystery-priests — so said Dupuis — that which takes place on the Earth depends on the Sun's passage through the twelve Signs of the Zodiac, or on the passage of the Moon through the twelve Signs of the Zodiac. The priests were well aware what these celestial processes bring about on Earth. They knew that the material process which finds expression in the starry constellations — the material process in the outer cosmos — is the real cause of plant-growth and of human progress, human fertilisation, and so on. The priests were well aware of all these things. Far from believing that there were any other spiritual Powers here at work, they were 'enlightened' enough to believe in the mere play of material forces in material celestial space. But, for the common folk, they clothed these facts of astronomy in myths, believing, as they did, that this was necessary to delude the people; for only by such means could they be ruled and guided.

Thus, for Dupuis, the Mysteries were so many lie-factories, instituted for the purpose of clothing in suitable language, for the credulous and 'stupid' populace, what was well known to the priests themselves, namely that it is the material processes in the Heavens which bring about other material processes here on the Earth. In Dupuis' work, *Origin de tons les Cultes*, we find for example the following sentence: Truth knows no Mysteries. All Mysteries without exception belong to the realms of error and deceit ... Their origin — namely, the origin of the Mysteries — must be looked for outside the realms of truth and reason; offspring of night, they flee the light of day.

No doubt it was only a small minority who read such writings, but that is not the thing that matters. The point is that such things take effect; the point is simply that they are there. When they are voiced by an individual like Dupuis, it only means that he has the special faculty to formulate them. These things began to work from the end of the 18th century onward; and they worked on throughout the 19th.

Now we must bring forward something of the real historic truth, as against the things Dupuis discovered with such genius when he laid the foundations of his celestial materialism — for so we may justly describe it.

After all, the Philistine scientists of the 19th century only looked for the material processes in the atoms; they remained in the earthly realm. Dupuis was bold enough to propound heavenly materialism; to conceive all that is working towards the Earth from the Cosmos as material influences of the stars and constellations, and to describe the so-called 'Spiritual' as so much 'eye-wash' — the mere aftermath of the conscious deception which was practised by the priests of the old Mysteries.

This conclusion above all was drawn by Dupuis in his important and famous book: — All the great figures, in reality, are none other than facts of Astronomy, welded together and appropriately garbed for the edification of the common people. Hercules is the Sun, his twelve Labours are the passing of the Sun through the twelve Signs of the Zodiac. Isis is the Moon; what is narrated of her is the passage of the Moon through the Zodiac. Dionysos — in that great cosmic poem with its 48 cantos — is only a description of the Sun in its passage through the Signs of the Zodiacs. And so on ... the Christians merely put Christ in the place of Hercules, Dionysos and Osiris. Christ too is none other than a mask for the Sun. The priests knew well enough that the real thing is the Sun; but, for the common folk, they needed the story of the Nazarene — Christ Jesus, the Sun of the New Testament, by contrast to Hercules, Dionysos and Osiris, the Suns of the Old Testament.

Truly, a radical destruction of all religious ideas is contained in Dupuis' work, *Origine de tous les Cultes*.

The general consciousness commonly remains behind, — does not pursue these radical changes. Hence it came that in the 18th century very few people clearly perceived that these thoughts were in the air — if I may use the trite expression. Nevertheless, they left them in the air. Few, no doubt, had the courage to rise to the clear-cut conclusions of Dupuis. But these thoughts were contained in the spiritual consciousness of all educated people. And it was under the pressure of these thoughts that all the theological absurdities of the 18th century developed. The underlying fact is nothing else, than that Dupuis had pointed out to those that were of a like mind: — Just as little as Hercules or Osiris existed as physical and human personalities ; just as they were only Suns, so likewise, Christ never was a physical personality, but a Sun. It was under the pressure of this thought that for the later theologians of the 19th century Christ gradually vanished into thin air. Then they began to take the greatest pains to make the '*bon Dieu citoyen*' of Nazareth presentable. The liberal Philistines dressed him up as a humane ethical preacher; the Social Democrats as a

Social Democrat, and so on ; the psycho-pathologists as a madman or an epileptic. Thus, each one in turn set him forth under the pressure of these thoughts.

Now you may place this beside the other important truth which I have told you, namely that man really dreams historic evolution. Then you will well be able to conceive that thoughts like the above — even where they are not radically expressed — play their part in the dreams of men.

Over against it, as I said, we must now set forth the real historic truth. Look back into the ancient Mysteries — those that had their origin in the 3rd post-Atlantean epoch. Wherever these Mysteries appear, we see that esoteric as well as exoteric truths were represented. What then was esoteric, what was exoteric? This question must be applied especially to those Mysteries whose origin goes back into the 3rd post-Atlantean epoch. Esoteric — in the ancient Mysteries to which I now refer — was all that relates to physical science — to the manipulations, the technique of science. The science of religion was never esoteric in those ancient times; we give ourselves up to an utterly false belief if we imagine that the ideas about God and the Gods were esoteric in those old Mysteries. What they preserved as esoteric were the facts they knew about certain matters which we nowadays investigate in our chemical laboratories and clinics. That which related to outer physical science was in the main kept esoteric. It was this that the esotericists held to be dangerous. Never, in the Mysteries of those ancient times, did they conceive a religious truth to be in any way dangerous. Whatever they represented in matters of religion they expounded quite openly. Not so what we to-day call Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. The latter were strictly preserved and guarded; they held their hands over these sciences, and were only willing to pursue them in the severely limited circle of those who took on the obligation to keep these truths within the Mysteries. They had to make this promise under very stringent oaths indeed.

Then came a time when the Mysteries changed their policy — albeit only in a certain sense — as regards the teachings over which they held their hand. This is the case in all those Mysteries whose origin mainly goes back into the 4th post-Atlantean epoch (reaching on, therefore, into the 15th century A.D.). During this time, it was the custom in the Mysteries to keep secret not so much physical science, but what we may describe — in a certain aspect — as a kind of symbolic treatment of the mathematical, and indeed, the intellectual sciences generally. I mean for instance all that is connected with such things as circle, triangle and spirit-level — in short, all

that is mechanical, mathematical and intellectual knowledge. These things they tried to keep within the walls of certain Brotherhoods, whose members were laid under strict obligation not to betray the truths they there learned about the circle, the triangle, the spirit-level, the plumb-line and so forth. In other respects they gradually grew more lenient. Namely, in keeping esoteric the truths of physical science they grew more lax. These truths gradually penetrated out of the Mysteries, into the general consciousness of the public.

You may object: "What, after all, had the Mysteries of the 3rd post-Atlantean epoch to keep secret? Surely very little! Science was in its swaddling-clothes; there was practically no Chemistry. They knew nothing at all of the great world of facts which has been so gloriously discovered in our time." Well, if you judge so, you are merely repeating what's usually said to-day. Yet even ordinary outer history should make one hesitate to pronounce such judgments. Having discovered gunpowder as a result of their external science, the Europeans were naturally, nay indeed, justly proud. But it soon emerged that the Chinese had had gunpowder in very ancient times; and, for that matter, the art of printing, and many other inventions. One might adduce numerous instances where the accepted notion on these matters becomes very shaky, to say the least.

The plain truth is that in ancient times (to mention radical matters at once) such principles as that of the airship or of the submarine were known. Only, as forming part of physical science, they were kept strictly secret. They were withheld from the general populace; were not released from the Mysteries. In other words (for it comes to the same thing) the results that *could* have been attained by such knowledge were not made use of in the general social order.

It is an amateurish idea, for the Mysteries of the 3rd post-Atlantean epoch, not to relate the concept of 'esoteric' and 'exoteric' to these things, but to imagine that the Mysteries of that time contained within them specially mysterious and hidden truths on matters purely spiritual.

Afterwards, in the Middle Ages, they endeavoured to withhold a certain aspect of mathematical and mechanical knowledge, not letting the people in general gain access to it.

These things had their good meaning and their real value in those olden times. With the approach of modern time they gradually lost their value. As I have often said, the life of the Mysteries cannot be continued in the same

way as before. Nay, in the present — the 5th post-Atlantean epoch — it is in many respects no longer even allowable (no longer allowable, I mean, over against the higher spiritual Powers) to keep certain matters quite esoteric. The 'esoteric' nowadays would consist in certain psychological truths. In very ancient times it was the physical truths; then it became the intellectual; to-day, as I said, it would be certain psychological truths — truths of the soul-life. These truths, however, are only kept under lock and key nowadays by Brotherhoods such as those of which I told you, when I described the general world-situation of to-day as proceeding from certain dark Brotherhoods, whose origin, you will remember, I characterised last year.

Now the question arises: Why did the old Mystery-priests keep back what we may call physical science? The reason is deeply connected with the evolution of mankind. As I have often pointed out, humanity has indeed undergone an evolution, passing from form to form — from one form to another. The time in which the Mystery of Golgotha took place is, in reality, the greatest transition-time of all Earth-evolution. External history is of course unaware of this fact; indeed, it is ignorant of some of the actual facts connected with this transformation.

In olden times, my dear friends, — especially in the times that went before the Mystery of Golgotha — the human being received quite special forces when he reached the age of 14 or 15, over and above the forces he possessed in earlier childhood. At the 14th or 15th year of life, in those olden times, man received forces which have been lost to mankind since the Mystery of Golgotha. These forces are no longer there; or they are only there in a backward, atavistic manner; — no longer as normal forces of human nature generally.

The forces which the human being thus received when he became about 14 or 15 years old were simply there in his environment inasmuch as he himself was there. Moreover, they were such as could unite with the processes of physical manipulations. When a man to-day combines oxygen and hydrogen — well, he simply combines them, and he gets water. Nothing that flows out from man himself enters into the process. In those ancient times it was very different. Something that flowed out from man did indeed enter into it and became united with it. Man himself partook in the process. Laboratory manipulations became real magic by virtue of these forces which were developed in the human being at the 14th or 15th year of life.

It was for this reason that the Priests of the Mysteries had to keep the outer manipulations secret. For the outer manipulations would have become magical manipulations, simply by virtue of the then prevailing properties of man. Magic would have been spread abroad everywhere; and, needless to say, it would only too easily have become what is called 'black magic.' Therefore at that time it was necessary to veil certain truths of physical science in the deepest secrecy. It was necessary, simply on account of the prevailing human nature.

The forces man then received about the 14th or 15th year of life have gradually been lost. It was with the 15th century that they disappeared almost entirely. That is why many things that were written before the 15th century A.D. are no longer intelligible at all to-day, save with the help of Spiritual Science. For in these olden times, the moment a man set to work with any physical manipulations (such as are done nowadays quite commonly in our laboratories), — the moment he did so, he gave occasion for certain Luciferic elemental beings to arise at the same time. At any rate, he *could* give occasion for this. These Luciferic elemental beings were thoroughly effective; and, if engendered, would have played their part in the social life of men, if these things had not been kept secret.

(Such an epoch as the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century had least of all any idea of the true facts of human evolution. The men of that time had not the vaguest notion. Hence, all that proceeded from their blank ignorance was gathered up in such statements as that Truth knows of no Mysteries, or that all Mysteries belong to the realms of error and deceit.)

Human beings had to be preserved, so to speak, from any immediate knowledge of physical secrets, Moreover, not only had they to be preserved from such physical manipulations as are normally carried out to-day in our laboratories. They also had to be preserved from a purely physical knowledge of Astronomy. Therefore the spiritual counterpart of such knowledge was given out in the form of myths and legends. It was a necessary requirement of the time. But the times have now changed, and greatly so. Mankind to-day is not exposed to those Luciferic elemental spirits of whom we may speak in this connection. But in compensation for this, human beings are exposed all the more strongly to certain Ahrimanic elementals. Ahrimanic elemental spirits come into being to-day with a like necessity, as the aforesaid Luciferic beings did in antiquity. Only they come into being in a very different way — out of quite other forces and impulses in human nature. To-day (I am not merely referring to *science*, but to the

social life, which concerns all people, not only the so-called educated people), — to-day a great number of things are working in social life; things which are simply there because man has acquired purely mechanical, technical, physical, chemical thoughts, and the like; — in a word, because he possesses a certain range of physical science. Man to-day is acquainted with and makes use of machines; moreover, he applies a certain mechanical technique to the financial affairs of the world. He thinks mechanically, the whole world over. Once more, I am not merely referring to the mechanical theory of the universe. What I now refer to concerns every human being, down to the simplest peasant in the remotest Alpine hut. He, of course, knows nothing of mechanical science; but the medium in which he lives is permeated with such thoughts, and that is the thing that matters. Now just as in antiquity the mechanical, physical, chemical manipulations became mingled with a Luciferic force, so to-day (when they can no longer be held in reserve) they become mingled with Ahrimanic forces. And this is due to a certain specific circumstance. There is a Law, according to which all that proceeds from a mechanical, chemical, physical way of thinking can in a peculiar way be fertilised by that which proceeds from a *partial* human nature. I refer to the following fact. The thoughts which relate to chemical, physical, mechanical, technical, even financial matters are being thought nowadays by people who are still immersed, for instance, in a national habit of thought. (Other things too come into play in this connection.) Now the thoughts in themselves are incompatible with this; they do not agree with it. Or a man thinks physical, mechanical or chemical thoughts nowadays, in such a way that the brain which is thinking these things is at the same time filled with a national outlook; the national outlook works upon the things which he is thinking, of physical, chemical, mechanical and technical matters; and works so as to fertilise Ahriman. And by this union of a national mentality with international physical science, Ahrimanic elemental spirits come into being in our environment to-day. For by their nature, such thoughts and manipulations as are contained in modern chemistry, physics, technics, mechanics, even finance and commerce, are only compatible with a non-national way of thinking.

This is a deeply significant secret, which we must know if we would understand the texture of modern life. It lies not in the possibility of the Time to hold these things in check by any other means than by knowledge. The leaders of the ancient Mysteries sought to restrain the corresponding evils by practising secrecy. To-day the very opposite must happen: the evil must be checked and balanced by the widest possible spread of spiritual knowledge, — for spiritual knowledge works in the opposite direction.

Humanity, in this respect, has undergone a complete inversion. In the old time, certain matters of physical science had to be held back behind the barriers of the Mysteries. To-day, Spiritual Science must be spread as far and wide as possible. Only by this means can we drive out what works in the direction I have just indicated.

For the most part, humanity to-day has not an inkling of what it means to be nationally-minded on the one hand, while on the other hand one is trying to pursue international physics. These things, however, meet in human nature; they fertilise one another in human nature, and lead to Ahrimanic formations in our time, just as in ancient times they led to Luciferic. Mankind to-day have no other alternative — either they must leave off the pursuit of all that belongs to Physics, Chemistry and the like; or else they must become truly international in their way of thinking.

The people of to-day have as yet no inkling of the existence of such Laws, intimately connected as they are with the general life of mankind. Yet this very truth is beating against the doors of our consciousness at the present moment of evolution, and, for the well-being of this present evolution, it *must* gain entry. The powers most hostile to human progress are opposing these truths above all, — misleading the people of to-day to lay the most radical stress on the idea of nationality. Such things ought to be pointed out in our time, for they contain the truth; and they, perhaps, alone are able — just because they contain the pure and real truth — to heal humanity from the nonsense that figures in so many heads today. Unbelievable as it may seem, there are still many people who appear capable in our time, both in theory and practice, of not perceiving how the opposing powers of the age have artfully contrived, for instance, to produce the incarnated nonsense, and call it Woodrow Wilson. Not only what I have told you now, but many other things, are connected — essentially connected — with what is thus named and characterised.

He who lets pass through his mind all the religious systems that were right and justified before the Mystery of Golgotha, and recognises them in their real depths, knows that they all had the definite impulse to preserve men from contact with those powers who if they were not combatted would work in the way I have just described. It was one of the cardinal impulses of the old religious systems to preserve man from the harmful effects of the forces that emerged in the fourteenth or fifteenth years of life, in relation to outer physical manipulations. That their action in this respect was justified, the ancient priests of the Mysteries were able to perceive from one definite fact, namely this: — When they were initiated in

holy ancient Mysteries and were thus enabled to communicate with the dead, then they discovered the great thankfulness of the human being after death, for such measures as they had taken. The dead proved thankful, above all, for the fact that before their passage through the Gate of Death they had been saved from contact with these forces.

And the analogy exists to-day. He who becomes acquainted with the life of the human soul between death and new birth, knows how thankful the dead are if they were able to be preserved during their life from these extreme aberrations of mankind, — the separatism of groups, the strait-jacketing of men into national groups for example, and the like.

The old religions had to restrain and regulate and give the proper form to certain forces that emerged in the fourteenth or fifteenth year. With the Mystery of Golgotha, the Christ-force entered the evolution of mankind. *'In the Beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and a God was the Logos'*: — It is an indication of the Word, the incarnated Logos, who, among all the other impulses, has also the impulse to overcome every separate and special logos — all that arises from human nature into the human larynx, the creator of words, severing men into divided groups over the Earth, even through the creator of words in man.

Just as the old Gods had to overcome those other forces, likewise the Power of the Logos has to overcome the special, separating forces that are connected with the development of the word — that is, with language. To the human beings of that moment who were far more advanced than were the subsequent writers on the Christ-impulse, it was not the mere word that mattered; and when they used a word, they did so with a specific object. Notice, when the writer of St. John's Gospel used the word 'Word' itself, when he used this word and no other, he did so with the very aim which I have now described.

These things are intimately connected with the evolution of mankind. The evolution of mankind is calling out to be recognized in its deeper forces. That, once and for all, is the task of our time. We therefore will now study, above all, the things that are connected so significantly with the great and thoroughgoing transformation which was inaugurated for mankind at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, and from which in the sequel many other, smaller transformations have ensued.



2 The 33 Year Rhythmical Cycle

26 December 1917, Dornach

In the last lecture I tried to describe the course which was taken during the 19th century and on into our time; I showed how the knowledge and awareness of super-sensible impulses working in World-evolution was more and more exterminated, I tried to illustrate this by an example which is especially significant for us, namely, the complete misunderstanding of the Mysteries. We saw that there existed until the end of the 18th century a clear and distinct consciousness of the fact that there is a super-sensible essence behind the world of things sensible — behind those entities which man can reach with his ordinary, every-day intellect. Moreover, until the end of the 18th century there was a consciousness of the fact that it is necessary, somehow to bring the human soul into direct connection with this super-sensible world,

I pointed out the great contrast between such ways of thought as those of Louis Claude de Saint Martin, and of Dupuis. In Saint Martin we still find a consciousness of ancient truths of the Mysteries. This was possible for him, inasmuch as he was himself, in a certain sense, a pupil and successor of Jacob Boehme.

In Saint Martin, therefore, whose ways of thought still had great influence at that time, we found the declining aspect of the consciousness of the 18th century. In Dupuis, on the other hand, we found the other aspect — the rise of the way of thinking which was typical of the 19th century. This latter way of thinking is convinced that all Mystery-revelations are fundamentally based on error or deceit; and that no man is truly enlightened unless he does away with all that pertains to the truths of the Mysteries, and restricts himself to a science purely and simply founded on the world of the senses, and on the intellect which depends upon the senses. Then we pointed out that in contrast to the materialism which was subsequently developed in the 19th century, which was fundamentally Philistine, the materialism of Dupuis still had a certain greatness, freshness and freedom.

In a certain sense, the whole of the evolution of the 19th century — and reaching on into our time — stood under the influence of this rejection of all things super-sensible. Efforts were made, it is true, from one side and another, to introduce some kind of connection between the human soul and the super-sensible. But these attempts either remained in the most restricted circles, or else they worked with antiquated or otherwise inadequate methods. It was in fact the task of the 19th century to develop a certain fund of purely materialistic truths; this century had to collect a fund of purely materialist ideals and feelings, and impulses of will. It is for the man of to-day to bring this fact home to his consciousness, so as to draw the necessary conclusions. He must perceive the connection of the purely materialistic ideas with the results to which they have led; and he must learn the lesson, namely, that the path must now be found once more from a purely materialistic — or, as we may also put it, rationalistic — to a spiritual way of seeing things.

Comparing now the fundamental root-nerve of the life of the old Mysteries as we spoke of them yesterday, with Spiritual Science such as it must be in our time, we can say: The ancient Wisdom of the Mysteries had, above all, the task to protect mankind from using certain forces, of which we spoke yesterday, in the direction of harmful magic practices. And, as we said, in contrast to this, it is the task of spiritual Wisdom in modern time to draw the attention of mankind to the fact that the union of certain feelings with the material knowledge which has, once and for all, become a necessary thing in modern time, inevitably calls forth forces which are contrary to the true weal of man, — just as those other forces were, in another sense, of which we spoke yesterday. It is simply an inner law of the Universe: If the thoughts which must inevitably be the thoughts of modern time — the thoughts of Physics and Chemistry and economic dealings in the modern sense, of international finance and the like — if the thoughts that are applied to all these things, and that must be applied in like manner all the Earth over, are united in human souls with a mentality and outlook purely national, then, by this connection of national feeling — national pathos, one might say — with the international thoughts of Physics, Chemistry, Economics, international commerce and financial affairs and so forth, the Ahrimanic elemental beings are produced. Moreover, these elementals of an Ahrimanic kind will necessarily drive man more and more into things utterly contrary to the wholesome evolution of the last three civilisation-epochs which the human race has still before it on the Earth.

We shall see the Mystery of Golgotha in the true light, if we recognise in it that which must compensate and balance the harmful forces which are arising from these quarters: All that the Mystery of Golgotha can bring about, is such as to counteract that which proceeds from these forces. The latter cannot be rightly paralysed in any other way than by intelligent devotion to the Mystery of Golgotha. The mere narration that the Mystery of Golgotha took place at the beginning of our era — the mere repeating of the Gospel story as interpreted in the ordinary Churches of to-day — is ineffective in this sense; for it implies the fundamental prejudice that Revelation was only possible at the beginning of our era. Revelation continues. Christ Jesus is always present. The spirit and the outlook, recognising Christ Jesus as ever-present, is precisely that Christian spirit which can be gained through anthroposophical Spiritual Science. But this requires us to make ourselves acquainted in all detail with the real impulses that are connected with the Mystery of Golgotha. We must learn increasingly to recognise that which lies hidden in the Mystery of Golgotha.

One such truth I have recently pointed out. Whatever a man undertakes — not as concerns his own individual, personal Karma, but in the whole context of the social, ethical, historic working of mankind, is subject to a certain law of historic evolution, namely this: That which is done in a given year, when, as a thought, it springs forth from man, has — so to speak — a Christmas character. This, as I said, refers to the effects of our deeds in the whole nexus of the social life; not to our personal Karma. If I manufacture a pair of shoes, needless to say there is something in this act that rays back, so to speak, into my personal Karma. That is a stream by itself. But I manufacture the shoes for another human being; and inasmuch as I do so, I am already working socially. No doubt an elementary process; and it is a long way from this to the measures of political and social life on a large scale. Nevertheless, everything that lies along this line belongs to the realm of those things which become effective after 33 years. And after the 33 years — when a seed which has thus been planted has had time, as it were, to ripen, — then it goes on working. A seed of thought or of deed takes a whole human generation — 33 years — to ripen. When it is ripened, it goes on working in historic evolution for 66 years more. Thus the intensity of an impulse planted by man in the stream of history can truly be recognised in its working through three generations, that is, through a whole century.

Now the fixing of the two outstanding festivals of Christianity — Christmas and Easter — has been done in a very significant way. Christmas is a so-called immovable Feast, coinciding approximately with the Winter

Solstice. Easter is a movable Feast. Christmas is fixed because, as you know, it expresses a certain cosmic fact — a fact we cannot bring before our souls too often. It is prejudice to suppose that our Earth is no more than what Geology and Physics, Mineralogy and Geophysics, are prepared to recognise. The Earth in reality is a mighty spiritual organism. We live not only on a mineral Earth, surrounded by an airy atmosphere; we live within the mighty spiritual organism, Earth. This spiritual organism has, in a certain sense, an ascending and a descending life. It sleeps in Summer-time; its deepest sleep is at the time when the Summer Solstice has occurred, that is, at the time when — for us — the days are longest and the nights are shortest. Man's sleep is only determined by time; the sleep of the Earth is also determined by space. The different places on the Earth sleep differently. But I will only touch on that. It is in Winter that the Earth has its true waking season; then it is that that which we may call the intellect of the Earth is most active.

Herein lies the deep meaning of the Christmas Festival. It is to remind us that when the shortest days and the longest nights are with us — for the place where this is so — the Earth is most wide-awake. So, then, it is, for one who truly recognises the Christmas Festival: he should seek for the Earth-intellect, even as it can be found in the deep depths of the Earth, — just as the Christ-Child is found in a stable, or in a cave or grotto, according to the various conceptions.

Christmas is therefore an immovable Feast. Easter, on the other hand, is movable; determined by the positions of the Sun and Moon. Thereby the Easter Festival becomes the symbol of cosmic events beyond the Earth; it is, as it were, a spiritual, if celestial Festival. Materialistically minded people, as I have often pointed out, have not refrained from attacking this mobility of Easter, for the simple reason that it brings disorder into the Philistine, bourgeois order of the 19th century. I myself have often been present at discussions, notably on the part of astronomers, where it was advocated that Easter should be fixed in a purely pedantic and schematic way, say, on the first Sunday in April. From the 19th century point of view, many reasons no doubt could be adduced in favour of a fixed Easter. After all, you need but think of this: The movable Easter is completely in accord with the cosmic Book of the New Testament; it is at least in accordance with the spirit of the New Testament. But in the 19th century, and in a preparatory way even before that, there was another book which became far more important than the Gospels. People may not always admit it, but it is so. The book which became more important than the Gospels is the one on the first page of which [in German-speaking countries] the words

'Mit Gott' are always printed, though needless to say, only the ungodliest matters are entered in it, namely the figures under the respective headings *Debit* and *Credit*. In other words, it is the business man's ledger, on the front page of which — so far, at least, as my experience goes — you always find the inscription *'Mit Gott,'* although its contents are as I said.

This book, naturally enough, is thrown into no little disorder by Easter falling on a different date each year. It would be far easier to keep it in order if Easter were fixed. The proposal has often been made in one form or another. It is in fact the attack of materialism on one of the last and outermost ramparts of a spiritual view of the world, — on the arrangement of Easter according to the heavenly constellations of the Sun and Moon.

But there is a yet deeper meaning in it, that the time between Christmas and Easter is made to vary in successive years. We know that the Christmas Festival, properly speaking, belongs to the Easter Festival that follows 33 years later. This indeed is a fixed period of time, representing as it does the time, required for the working out of world-historic seeds. But there is another thing which is not so fixed, namely the following: Certain impulses — we may describe them here as Christmas-impulses — take place in a given year; others again in the next year, others the year after, and so on. Now the successive Christmas impulses in historic evolution are by no means all of equal intensity; some of them work more strongly, others more feebly. It may be, for instance, that the impulses laid down in a given year have less incisive power for the 33 years that follow, than the impulses of the next year have, for the 33 years which follow it in turn; and so on. Precisely this fact is indicated, in that the time between Christmas and Easter is longer or shorter as the case may be. Thus, even this mobility of Easter calls our attention to something which a man ought well to study, if he would truly understand the working of events in history.

Now you may raise the question: How shall man gain any idea, how strongly his impulses will work into the next 33 years? Can he gain any conception at all, as to whether his impulses are working in a favourable or in an unfavourable sense? Undoubtedly the answer to such a question is immensely difficult for our Time, inasmuch as this Time suffers from abstraction as from a terrible and insidious disease. This age only desires, wherever possible, to understand the Universe with a few abstract concepts; it would fain be removed as far as can be from any comprehension of events with the full human being, or from a living human experience of Time and of the streams of Time. If you will only recognise, as a true Science of the Heavens, what modern astronomers can calculate

with their quite abstract mathematics, it is no doubt impossible to stir your heart and mind into a full and living interest in these calculations of an abstract mathematics. Yet this is what humanity needs to evolve once more. It is necessary for mankind that we should no longer merely devote the intellect to the things we do. We should know that our very heart's blood is united with every action we perform, be it the most trivial and everyday. This is sincerely possible if we are prepared to enter earnestly into Spiritual Science, — into what Spiritual Science is and what it can be. It is quite true: a man who only wants to enter into things with abstract intellect (unless they fall within the narrow circle of his own selfish or family affairs), — he will not easily find the way to unite his heart's blood with the things he wills and does. Yet this is precisely the mission of Spiritual Science: to widen out the soul's horizon, to extend the circle of interest over far wider domains than is possible under the influence of the materialist abstractions of the 19th century. What mankind needs is, above all, this widening of the sphere of interest, and there is only one way to attain it: to fill the human soul again and again with Knowledge, which — as we have seen once more during the last week's lectures — *can* be widened out in our time far beyond the limits of the senses and the sense-bound intellect, or of the life between birth and death. Knowledge to-day can be widened out beyond these frontiers, — out into the Universal All, which, as we know, we share in common with those human souls who are in the realms between death and a new birth. We cannot learn to know these human souls unless we also learn to know the other aspects — those other aspects through which human beings have to live between death and a new birth. No doubt the thoughts about life between death and a new birth were far remote from the Philistine science of the 19th or even of the 20th century. They could not have been more remote; for this epoch believed that the only salvation lay in piecing together by intellectual association all that the senses can afford.

From this point of view Spiritual Science is indeed in sharpest opposition to the ideal of the 19th century. Spiritual Science must emphasise most vigorously the turning of the soul towards the Spirit, even as the 19th century emphasised the turning of the human soul away from the Spirit. And as I have already pointed out during our recent lectures, the two fundamental pillars of the Christian understanding of the world, — namely the Immaculate Conception of Christ Jesus, and the Resurrection of Christ Jesus — can be none other than nonsense to the natural-scientific age. Spiritual Science, on the other hand, must turn again quite definitely to these two basic pillars of the Christian world-conception.

The Roman Catholic Church has acquired a certain habit of speech whereby it is able to get away from many important problems which are contained deep down within the womb of its evolution. The Roman Catholic Church will, speak, for instance, of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary; but it will not be prepared to look for those spiritual forces in the soul whereby the fact of the Immaculate Conception would be made intelligible. If you ask the enlightened theologians of the Roman Catholic Church about the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, you certainly will not expect them to enter into a discussion such as must be brought into flow once more through Spiritual Science. They will tell you something like this: — You must rise from the idea of the woman Mary to that which the woman Mary has really become in the course of evolution, namely, the Church; The Church in reality represents the Virgin Mary. This being granted, it goes without saying that the Virgin Mary, the Church, perpetually gives birth to the Christ. Through the Holy Spirit, the Church must perpetually conceive the Christ. That is to say, the Church is under perpetual inspiration from the Holy Spirit, and that which the Church reveals is none other than the Word, the Logos.

This is the perfectly correct Catholic doctrine. In Holy Catholic Church the inspiring Holy Spirit kindles the eternal Word — the Word which was in the beginning, and which is born throughout all time by the Holy Church, the Virgin Mary. It is the correct and familiar Roman Catholic theological conception. You may tell me that one hears very little said of this. That is quite true, and for the 19th century it was just as well that there was little said of it. But the idea was all the more effective among those who were still able to be saved from the impulses of materialism.

These three, — the inspiring Spirit, the Virgin Mother, and the Logos or the Word — must of course be maintained; they must be sought for through Spiritual Science also. And would say, in an Imaginative form did endeavour to point out these things during my recent lectures, when I described the transition from the old Mysteries to the new. I said that Antiquity only got so far with its Mysteries that it was able to revere, in Pallas Athene, the Virgin Wisdom, Pallas Athene is indeed a virgin figure; but within the ancient epoch this Virgin Wisdom did not give birth to the Logos. This is precisely the characteristic feature of ancient Greece, for example; it stops short at the Virgin Wisdom, whereas the new Age passes on to the Son of the Virgin Wisdom — to the Logos, which is there on the physical plane through that which represents it: the human word, human speech or language. For human speech may truly be regarded from the point of view of its connection with Wisdom. In earthly life of man, Wisdom

lives itself out through human thought. The air that is breathed out through our larynx, configured through our larynx and its movements, is wedded to the Wisdom that dwells in our thoughts; and the content we have to express is the inspiring Spirit. Every time you speak — no matter how profane the impulse of your speaking is — you have expressed earthly representation of the Trinity. The thought in your head, and the configured air that passes through your larynx, — these two are wedded and united under the influence of the Spirit (that is to say, when you are voicing things of the sense-world, united by the percept itself).

It is indeed the earthly expression of the Trinity. And the Divine, the spiritual Trinity, must stand behind it, — the all-embracing Wisdom which becomes Teaching for mankind, and which expresses the Universal content. Anthroposophical Spiritual Science cannot admit or confess its faith in any earthly constitution; for an earthly constitution, whatever it might claim, would be unfolding mere claims of power. Anthroposophical Spiritual Science takes the Virgin cosmic Word in real earnest.

If we think in the sense of anthroposophical Spiritual Science, then, in this content of all that is brought forward by this Science, we see not a mere sum of abstractions or abstract ideas but a living entity that fills us and enfills us; For it can even fill us in our soul with active impulse. Thus it becomes the Word, the Teaching, not in a mere scholastic sense. For spiritual-scientific Wisdom grows to be of service in the social life. The Word itself becomes of social service. And the content which it expresses — brought down from super-sensible worlds into the world of sense, so to be the underlying basis of our impulses of action — is the inspiring Spirit. Thus I would say: We look for Pallas Athene, the Virgin Wisdom, the Virgin Wisdom of the Cosmos; but we also look for the Son who is born of her, who finds expression in this: that in all the things we *do* and *will* in the social life, the Virgin Wisdom is working with us, giving us that which becomes the guiding impulse of our willing and our doing. Then we express the Spirit — the Holy Spirit, the Supersensible — in our sense-perceptible actions on the physical plane.

All this implies that the Wisdom which we have to seek in the sense of Spiritual Science, must have a virginal character. Perhaps you will ask, is there any sense or meaning in this? Is it not mere talk, so many figures of speech.

There is indeed a meaning in it — important, significant, immense. Namely the following: Man turns his senses to the outer world. That is his proper task; for to this end he is placed into the world. What the senses as such receive, can only be naive and innocent; for the animals too receive it, and to the animals we cannot apply the ideas of 'should' or 'should not.' But man must go farther than that. With his intellect he combines and associates the things he perceives. What is the significance of this associative intellect? The Physical Science of to-day already gives an answer to this question (I mean, however, the Physical Science itself, and not its learned representatives).

The combinatorial, associative, intellect, and all that man thinks out concerning the impressions of his senses — his perceptions — is something that arises out of his own inner nature, and moreover, out of a comparatively lower part of his nature. Man is exceedingly proud of his brain, notably of the frontal portions. For a true Science, however, the frontal portions of the brain are of far less value than the portions that lie farther back, For the frontal portions of the brain are in their essence no more than the transmuted organ of smell. To be clever, in the sense of Physical Science, is to have developed the olfactory nerves, as man, to such an extent that you are equipped with good association-nerves. These nerves are then effective instruments for the associating or combining of sensory ideas. To be clever, in the materialistic sense, is to have a good metamorphosis of that part of the brain which, in the lower creatures — the animals — is connected with the nose. It is, so to speak, to be well "on the scent" in the associating of ideas. These things have indeed occasionally been pointed out by men who had a healthy faculty of insight and penetration. One need but think of this: if you have a sound feeling of such matters, you cannot but say that to be "sharp" or clever on the physical plane, is, in its essence, to have a peculiarly developed "scent" or sense of smell — transplanted into the human realm. It is, in a very real sense, to be able to "sniff things out," Thus the Physical Science which has arisen by association of ideas is the mere outcome of human beings "sniffing things out" on the physical plane. This may be said in an absolutely literal sense. In so doing man can arrive at all manner of constructions of atomic processes, all manner of ideas of chemical and physical laws, and the like. But it is wide of the mark to pretend that there is anything very lofty or highly developed in these things; they are but the result of a metamorphosed sense of smell.

I said: Even Physical Science bears witness to this fact. You may convince yourself of what I have told you, from the physiological and anatomical facts. Unhappily, the transmuted olfactory sense, or "nose," of our scholars is not yet quite adequate to draw this conclusion, so they most continue "nosing about" till they are able to draw this conclusion, too!

Among those who had healthy human feeling of this fact was Goethe. Goethe said something highly significant from this point of view. As I have shown for many years past and along many different lines, Goethe demanded quite another trend of Physical Science than that which actually arose in the 19th century and continued into our time. He wanted to have expunged from scientific research what is indeed quite justified in ordinary life; he wanted it radically expunged from our research into Nature. Goethe comes back to this point again and again. The thing that he wished to have expunged was precisely the combining, the interpreting, the putting constructions on the facts perceived with the senses. He wanted to have the sense-perceived facts simply described according to their own nature, as pure phenomena; he wanted to refer the sense-perceived phenomena to their archetypal phenomena, — the "*Ur*-phenomena." He did not want constructions put on them with the intellect, theorizing and inquiring as to what might lie behind them here or there.

There is a wonderful saying of Goethe's, a saying that throws a vivid light on his entire World-conception. "The blue of the sky," Goethe once said, "is in itself the Theory; you should not look for anything behind it," It was the pure perception, the pure vision of things which Goethe wanted men to seek. As to the intellect, he would only have it used to put the phenomena together in such a way that they would voice their own secrets. He wanted a Natural Research free of hypotheses and intellectual constructions. This is the very method of his Theory of Colour. People have failed to understand the fundamental point. Goethe wanted the associative intellect to refrain from putting constructions on the sense-impressions; he wished it to take another path. It amounts to this in other words: He wanted to make the human intellect — the human faculty of intellectual association — virginal, even in Natural Science. He wanted to take away the unchaste quality it has, inasmuch as it has suffered the Fall, so to speak, whereby it is now a mere transmuted organ of smell. For it is so indeed: The one part of the Fall is the event which we can place in the primeval epoch of which I have so often told you. But there was also a sequel to this "Fall into sin." Again and again in their subsequent evolution, the organs of man took on

a lower level than they should have had. The associative intellect of man is indeed subject to the Fall, inasmuch as it is working in the outer physical world.

For the outer physical world it is quite justified. This physical intellect cannot but be bound to the transmuted organs of smell. It must be so, just as for the outer physical world physical sexuality and reproduction must exist. In Science, however, we should seek the virginity of the intellect; — That is to say, we should loosen the intellect from the functions it performs when, as a mere transmuted sense of smell, it combines and associates the sensible objects. The blue of the sky should not be interpreted in the sense of Physical Science (Newtonian physics), as you will find it to-day in every textbook of Physics. The blue of the sky itself is Theory in Goethe's sense, — that is the true conception. In this sphere, too, rightly to understand Goethe is to see in him that personality who wanted to work entirely in the spirit which is also the spirit of Spiritual Science. Goethe thought consistently, right into the sphere of Natural Research. In Natural Research he demanded only those theories that go to the "*Ur-phenomena*," the archetypal phenomenon. He did not want all manner of atomic theories, — theories of ions and electrons, theories of gravitation and the like — deduce by the combining intellect from the phenomena. Inasmuch as he thought thus, in Physics itself Goethe was pointing to that which I desired to point out when I referred to Pallas Athene as the representative of Wisdom. Thereby alone, we begin even in the realm of Natural Research to turn to the Son. We only begin to do so when we free the Mother from these intellectual constructions, and turn to the vision of the pure virgin "*Ur-phenomena*."

Herein you see what a deep earnestness and significance is really contained in that which we may call Goetheanism. I simply wanted to point out to you, how — quite apart from the prevailing culture, so-called — even in the 19th century the impulses that lead in the other direction were there. Let us be mindful of this fact. Then, too, we shall interpret truly the requirements of the present time, and out of these requirements we shall derive the true and the right impulses. We live in a time of catastrophe. It would, of course, be wrong to imagine that that which is catastrophe in the Christmas sense must necessarily be catastrophe also in the Easter sense. Indeed, from the catastrophes of to-day the very opposite, the greatest things of human evolution, can result, — if only humanity finds ways and means to learn from them, and with straightforward sense and vision to observe what has taken place.

If I bring forward such ideas, which may be remote from the thoughts of many of our friends, it is only to point out again and again the important fact, that in our time we must not seek in a comfortable way to work with the old concepts and ideas, but strive in all earnestness towards new ideas and new perceptions.

What is it really underlies such a tendency as Goethe's, not to apply the combinatorial intellect to the outer phenomena, but to recognise the latter in their virgin nature; It is none other than this: that when we do so, we are not letting the intellect suffer the Fall into sin, by all manner of intellectual combinations, of atoms and groups and complexes of atoms, and ions, and gravitation, and so forth. We save the intellect from mingling with the outer sensual nature, to give birth to materialistic theories. When we do so, the intellect turns in the other, in the spiritual direction, and gives birth to the Son — that is, to the spiritual-scientific teaching which leads at length to a real understanding of man, of the whole man. For, as I told you in these days, the ancient Wisdom only led up to a certain point. Man, as it were, was not included in the wisdom of the middle epoch, — the fourth Post-Atlantean epoch. To-day we have the task of understanding man, by a true grasp of spiritual facts.

Humanity should really be pining for concepts, new ideas. We must bring this fully to our consciousness. And if we ask to-day. What thoughts will be the best Christmas thoughts, what thoughts will bear the best fruits after 33 years, the answer is: they will be those thoughts which take their start from seeking honestly and uprightly for a new grasp of the world, a new grasp of reality. To develop a longing for what the world has to reveal in the new sense will be the best of Christmas thoughts; — not to want to remain contented with the old. Alas! to this day it is an all-pervading impulse of mankind, to stop short at the old, because humanity can with such difficulty bestir itself to draw forth, from the inmost being of the soul, that which shall be made known by human lips. Man to-day can only rightly develop his task as man if he unfolds the will, down to the very centre of his being, to be genuine and true, — not only trying to ponder on the old things, but to make the new — the new that must be drawn out of the very depths of being into the content of his faith and action.

In thoughtless and inane repetition of what others say, one need not go so far as yonder politician who, wishing to send out into the world a great political manifesto in the year 1917, took up an old political *Pronunciamento* of the year 1864, and copied it almost word for word. Truly, one does not need to think very deeply if, as a dominant politician of

1917, one merely takes an old Brazilian document and copies it sentence by sentence, and places it before the world as though it were a great revelation. Truly, one need not go so far as this Woodrow Wilson, who actually contrived to fabricate the "highly important manifesto" which he sent forth a short time ago, by copying almost word for word a manifesto of the Emperor of Brazil of the year 1864. But it is necessary to see things in their true form and aspect, even such wretched details as this. One would be almost overcome with pity for poor mankind, when men are taking seriously things which if seen in their true light can only represent the most appalling untruthfulness and perfidy, passing throughout the world to-day.

I do not say this to make any attack, — nay, not even to criticise; but to awaken the sense of people, that they may open their eyes at length, and see with open eyes what is happening. Occasionally, nowadays, we see the world worshipping as greatness things that are merely absurd and laughable. These are precisely the things we must see through. If we develop the will really to see into things, then we shall also develop the Christmas thoughts which will become the true Easter thoughts. For we may even say, paradoxical as it may sound: the more full of pain and suffering this present is, the greater the fruits it can bear for the future.

A time like ours stands most in need of the poet's word not finding fulfilment in it, — I mean the word of the poet who said that "a great Time finds but it small and petty generation."

Full of pain is our Time, yet great it can be; and in a certain sense, it must find the men who can think greatly. But they will not be the Wilsonians!



3

Realities Beyond Birth and Death

29 December 1917, Dornach

The Christian consciousness of to-day is still aware — or can, at least, still be aware — of two poles, representing as it were the outermost extremes of world-outlook. The two poles to which I refer are the Christmas secret and the Easter secret. To begin with — even if you only compare them outwardly — it will strike you at once that the Christmas secret is really the secret of birth; it represents the birth of Christ Jesus, and therewithal attaches itself to the secret of birth in general, the Easter secret is connected with the secret of death, inasmuch as it is a festival associated with the death of Christ Jesus. Now birth and death are the two boundaries of human life, as it runs its course within the physical body. Thus, in truth, we may say: over against what stands before man as the visible part of his being, birth and death veil from his sight the invisible part; they are the two gateways to the invisible world.

In the festivals of Christmas and Easter, two gateways to the invisible world are thus made the basis of the Christian year; and inasmuch as this is so, the Christian world-conception is indeed connected with the Mysteries of all the World. Wherever we may look — among all peoples and in the most varied regions of the Earth, we find Mysteries everywhere associated either with the secret of birth or with the secret of death, Not that it lies so patently at hand in every case; the inner connections are not always visible at once. Thus, certain Mysteries (I am only referring now to post-Atlantean time) were connected with the secret of birth in a more indirect way. I refer to those Mysteries which place into the very centre of their life what the profane world calls the Sacred Fire; 'Sacred Fire' is very different from what the profane world can understand. It is essentially Man himself — the super-sensible Man who underlies the human being of the sense-world. What is it that the profane world knows as the Sacred Fire (or, as we might also call it, the Sacred Warmth)? What is it in reality, when they revere this Fire? It is a symbol of the super-sensible Man. It is that which descends through birth from spiritual heights to grow and evolve in its physical body. It is the invisible or super-sensible Man — perceptible, however, to an old atavistic clairvoyance!

This, then, is the type of the Mysteries which takes its start from the super-sensible Man who underlies the man of the sense-world — the super-sensible Man who passes through birth to clothe himself with a sensely garment. This is the type of Mystery which afterwards passed over into the secret of Christmas; it is essentially the Mystery of birth.

Less hidden, we may truly say, is the other kind of Mystery, — that which belongs to the secret of death. While the former is associated with Fire, this kind of Mystery is associated with the Light. Here too, however, as in the case of Fire, something quite different is meant by 'the Light.' 'The Light' refers to that which speaks to man at night-time when the star-lit sky sends him its language of Light. All astrological Mysteries in ancient time were in reality Mysteries of Light, — in the times, I mean, before the arrival of the Mystery of Golgotha. Only, here again we must remember that the ancient Astrology was not pursued with the abstract calculations of to-day, but with an atavistic clairvoyant power. Man did not merely observe the mineral-physical world of stars above him; in those most ancient times, he had an organ with which to behold the secret of the constellations. It was, especially, a customary art in certain Mysteries of olden time, to observe the Moon establishing its various positions through the constellations of the Zodiac. They knew that when the Moon was shining from the region of the Pleiades, or from Taurus, it signified something quite different than if it were shining from some other region of the sky. Likewise the other planets in their several constellations were brought home to the consciousness of men. It was, however, a very different consciousness from what has remained to us in this materialistic epoch. They knew, moreover, that the Mystery of human death is connected with what is thus spoken to man by the starry constellations. Throughout the ever-changing association of the fixed stars with the several planets, they saw the expression, as it were, of a language which he who sojourns in the body hears from the Earth, while at the same time the souls of the dead perceive it from the other side. They were clearly conscious of the fact that when a man gives himself up with devotion to the language of the stars, he lives in that element which receives the human being when he passes through the Gate of Death.

They looked on birth as on a Question, in those ancient times; and the old kind of Mysticism — that is, the experience in consciousness of the invisible or super-sensible Man — was intended as an answer to this question. What the stars were speaking through their constellations, — they did not regard it as a mere outer fact, to be summed-up as we are wont to do. No! in the times of the old Mysteries — the Mysteries of the Stars, the Mysteries of Light — they regarded the starry constellations as a

Question, and human death as the real answer thereto. Even as birth was associated with the super-sensible Man, so was death associated with the constellations. Hence we may truly call the 'Mysteries of Fire' the Mysteries of Birth, the Christmas Mysteries; and the 'Mysteries of Light' the Star-Mysteries — the East Mysteries, the Mysteries of Death. And we may add: those Mysteries which afterwards merged into the real secret of Christmas, are the ones which really underlie all that humanity possessed by way of Mystery secrets, before Golgotha, in ancient India and Egypt. Chaldea and Western Asia was more the soil for Easter Mysteries — that is to say, for a Science of the Stars.

In Western Asia, especially among the so-called Iranian peoples and notably in the 3rd post-Atlantean epoch, the Science of the Stars was well developed. Only we must conceive that in the earliest times man had an exact super-sensible vision of the entity which clothes itself at birth with the physical body, just as he had on the other hand a direct vision and perception of the language of the stars. As I have often said, when ancient charts depict all manner of Beings in the Heavens, such Beings are no mere figment of human fancy. They are the image of what the old atavistic clairvoyance actually saw in the starry sky; for the old atavistic consciousness did really see the human being in connection with the entire Universe. This consciousness was thoroughly aware of the truth that the cosmos is a self-contained organism — in which organism we, as Man, do live and move and have our being.

This consciousness, needless to say, has been lost. It must be regained by mankind in course of the 5th post-Atlantean epoch; and that, in all essentials, by the two streams aforesaid — the streams of Star-wisdom and of Mysticism — finding one another once more. In ancient times they could appear distinct — two separate poles, as it were. In our time it must be possible to unite the Christmas and the Easter Mystery in one; to see them as the two sides of one and the same Being.

When we transplant ourselves into ancient times of human knowledge, we find a clear awareness of the fact that the Zodiac is not only to be found up yonder in the Heavens, but that man too carries within him the same law and principle as is represented for example by the Zodiac, — that is to say, by the farthest circumference of the Universe of the fixed stars.

You know that in olden times not only certain places in the Heavens were thus named, as Aries and Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, etc., but the human being too was membered thus: head = Aries; neck = Taurus; the two sides

of man in their lateral symmetry = Gemini; the chest and ribs = Cancer; the heart as Leo, and so on, Man bears microcosmically within him the several regions which are also the fundamental places of the Heavens. This connection of microcosm and macrocosm was deemed most essential in those ancient times. Man, as it were, bore within him the Heavens of the fixed stars, by virtue of the Zodiac which represents it. It was said, of old time: When a man uses his larynx in speech, there sounds forth from him the same cosmic stream which flows down to us from the cosmos when the Moon is shining from the Pleiades. They felt the kinship of the Light and of that which the Light carries down when the Moon is shining from the region of the Pleiades, — they felt the kinship of this macrocosmic stream with that which issues from man when he makes use of his larynx. So too with the Sun. So too, they felt Man penetrated with the same law and principle that works in the planetary system, yet with this difference: — They knew that the system of the fixed stars corresponds to fixed places in Man, namely, the Ram to the head, the neck to the Bull, and so on. Fixed portions of the human being were thus associated with the heaven of the fixed stars. Those organs on the other hand which represent, as it were, the mobile element in man, sending the saps and fluids throughout man's nature, were connected by them, and rightly, with the planetary system. Man is himself, as it were, a heaven of the fixed stars, and he carries a planetary system within him. Thus in the oldest Mysteries they conceived an intimate relationship as between Man and the whole cosmos.

To perceive the full scope and range of this matter, must, however, also bear the following in mind. In man we have the several constellations like fixed places — Aries the head, Taurus the neck, and so on. Thereby, man stands in a certain relation — a quite individual relation — to the starry heavens. Assume for a moment that a man is born to-day in the Spring, when the Sun rises in Pisces. Pisces will be quite especially determined by his inner system of fixed stars. Now Pisces is associated with the feet, — that is to say, with what man experiences through his feet, inasmuch as he is born in the Spring, when the Sun rises in Pisces, a man is born with that part of his being which corresponds to this particular constellation to the Sun. If he were born at another season of the year, his constellation would be less in accordance with the cosmic constellation. Nowadays, this attunement or non-attunement of the human being is determined according to certain hard-and-fast schemes. In the ancient Mysteries they felt in a very living way the peculiar unison, the sounding-together of the human constellation after birth with the heavenly constellation.

Now you will bear in mind that a very special constellation existed in the age of Aries, precisely in the Mystery of Golgotha. For at that very time the whole of mankind, with that portion of the human being which corresponds to the head, was in harmony with the constellation of Aries in the Spring. Here was another reason why those who knew the Mysteries felt something quite peculiar in this correspondence of the human constellation of the head with the constellation of the Cosmos. Man is related, through the head, not with the Earth but with the Cosmos. Through the head, therefore, he is especially adapted to receive the forces of the Cosmos. With his head — that is to say, with his Aries — he reaches out into the Cosmos. What constellation will therefore be the most favourable one, of all that can exist in the Cycle of 25,920 years in which we are now living? Precisely that, in which the constellation of the Ram is with the rising Sun in Spring. In short, I wish to indicate this fact. They studied Man in his whole being, in his attunement with the macrocosm. They studied this especially because they were well aware how much depended, even for earthly events, on this attunement of Man with the macrocosm.

They perceived the manifold secrets of these constellations of the stars; and they always knew that with every secret of a starry constellation a human secret is connected. More and more, they tried to express how each secret of the stars is connected with an inner secret of Man. It is remarkable how far they got in this direction with their ancient science. We see it in the Pyramids. Even if crudely studied, the structure of the Pyramids proves to contain all manner of secrets. Take the length of the four basic sides, forming the plan of the Pyramid; compare it with the height. It corresponds exactly to the proportion of the diameter of a circle to its circumference. It is a true correspondence to a large number of decimal places. But it not only applies to things like this. Certain subdivisions in the Pyramids correspond to the Zodiacal sub-divisions of the macrocosm. The weight of the Pyramids — it has only been calculated approximately — is a certain fraction of the weight of the whole Earth. Certain measurements of the Pyramids, multiplied by a power of 18, give you the distance from the Earth to the Sun. In short, such are the measurements of the Pyramids that they can only be the result of a marvellous and intimate knowledge of the relationships of the stars and the Heavens.

These Pyramids were not really the work of the Egyptians, Whenever conquerors came into Egypt from Iranian countries, from Western Asia, they created Pyramidal structures, The Egyptians learned to build Pyramids

from these peoples, peoples who possessed Star-Mysteries; their own Mysteries were not Star-Mysteries, but rather a kind of Christmas Mysteries.

The study of the Pyramids had led to this result, even during the 19th century. Men like Carus declared that the pure study of the Mysteries was enough to show us that there was a Science in ancient times which has since been lost, and which is calculated to make the civilisation of to-day blush for shame. These are Carus' own words, not mine. The humanity of to-day are not very prone to believe that there existed in primeval human times a science — acquired by somewhat different means, it is true — but a true science none the less, able to shed its light into deep secrets of the Cosmos.

But the most important thing is not the mere fact that the Wise Men of those Mysteries were acquainted with such distant cosmic measures or secreted them into the structure of the Pyramids. The most remarkable is quite another thing. It was by no means an abstract knowledge which they had, of man's relation to the Universe of stars. It was a very concrete knowledge — a knowledge whereby Man could feel himself within the whole Cosmos. He knew that with his head, which he turns freely to the Cosmos, he is directly related to the Heaven of the fixed stars. All that appeared to the human being as the secret of the head — the Wise Men of the Mysteries perceived it as the secrets of the heaven of the fixed stars. And it is perfectly true the human head is formed by the heaven of the fixed stars. It is but a materialistic prejudice of to-day to suppose that everything is inherited from the ancestors, — that everything comes from the germ. The germ itself — in so far as it is the germ of the head — is informed and filled with forces, within the human mother, by the heaven of the fixed stars. According to his head, Man is connected with the fixed stars. His head is an image of the whole heaven of the fixed stars. You may read of it from another point of view in my booklet, *The Spiritual Guidance of Mankind*, where I have also touched upon this matter. Likewise on the other side, the rest of the human organism corresponds to all that is connected with the secret of the Sun. Even in this direction, Man is really of a twofold nature; and this was well known to those Wise Men of the ancient Mysteries who were the keepers of the Star-Mysteries, or Easter Mysteries. Man is a twofold nature: his head is assigned to the heaven of the fixed stars; and the rest of his body, with the centre in the heart, to the Sun.

Now these ancient astronomers (or you may call them astrologers, if you will) knew something else as well. When we observe the stars in their relation to the Sun, we see the Sun gradually remaining behind as against the movement of the fixed stars. Thereby the vernal point keeps on appearing at a different place; the Sun is always being left behind a little. The stars seem to go a little quicker in their annual movement than the Sun. And the strange thing is (though for the old astronomers it was not strange at all — it was a deep and significant Mystery for them) that after 72 years the fixed stars in their movement have sped on exactly a day ahead of the Sun — one day in 72 years.

What does this signify, transferred to Man; For the old astronomers it was fraught with meaning, though for the clever people of to-day, no doubt, it may seem nonsense. It meant that among all other things we also have in us this twofold, fixed-star and solar nature. With our head we go quicker than with the rest of our body. And when we have lived for 72 years (these things, of course, are only to be taken approximately), our head has gone 'ahead' of the rest of our body by a whole day of stars. That is why the average — as I have often explained from other points of view — human life lasts for 72 years. It can be much longer, of course, or shorter as the case may be; but on the average, the span of human life is 72 years. All this is connected with the duality between the course of life in the head, and in the rest of the human body. It corresponds exactly to the duality of the movements of the heaven of the fixed stars and of the Sun.

So does Man stand as a microcosm in the macrocosm. In those olden times, Man was indeed able to feel himself within the macrocosm, just as our little finger now feels itself to be part and parcel of the organism as a whole. Man was really able to feel himself a member of the whole.

And they considered this the most important thing: to perceive how human life is connected with the secret of the stars. Therefore especially the Mystery of death, the Easter Mystery, was associated with the Star-Mystery.

The Christian World-conception now had the task of connecting the two together. This must essentially be contained in the concrete development of Christian World-conceptions. The Mystery of birth, the Christmas Mystery, the Mystery of super-sensible Man on the side of birth, must be connected with the Mystery of death, the Easter Mystery, the Mystery of the super-sensible Man on the side of death.

That which is generally known as Science nowadays, concerns itself with birth; that which is generally known as Religion, concerns itself with death. The Religion of to-day lacks any inclination to turn to the super-sensible Man. It sounds a strange thing to say; but the mere fact that Religion still talks of the super-sensible Man does not imply that it has any strong inclination to concern itself with super-sensible Man in any real way. For we can only concern ourselves with the super-sensible Man if we take our start from what was felt most strongly in the ancient Mysteries of Christmas — that is to say, if, taking our start from birth, we find our way through birth into human pre-existence. Therefore the Mysteries of birth laid the greatest stress on the pre-existence — the existence before birth — of super-sensible Man. The other Mysteries — those that then culminated in the Easter Mysteries — laid especial stress on the post-existence, on the existence of Man beyond death. It is to this latter side that the Religions have inclined, at the same time rejecting the Science that is connected therewith, namely the wisdom of the stars. Meanwhile the Science of to-day, which concerns itself chiefly with problems of descent — with all that belongs to birth — has rejected what leads to the super-sensible Man and to the conscious experience of him, which is true Mysticism.

Thus it has come about that Science on the one hand, by rejecting the super-sensible Man, has become materialistic; while on the other hand Religion, by declining to study the super-sensible Man, has become unscientific. In our time the two are standing side by side, without any bridge between them. Those who seem to represent Religion — though in reality, broadly speaking, they only want to "guard their pounds and talents" — those who call themselves official representatives of the religious faiths, are most annoyed when you speak of the pre-existence of the soul, that is, of super-sensible Man in his reality.

Needless to say, I have been speaking of all this only in the briefest aphorisms. I only wished to emphasise how we must try once more to widen out man's vision, beyond what is immediately present in the physical world. Inasmuch as we have pointed to the two directions in the Mysteries, our outlook has indeed been widened in the two directions in which the sense world must be transcended. For on the one hand we must seek again for the true inner Man, who can only be found within us by the path described in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*. That is the one side; and the other is, to seek in a new form for what the stars can say to us. But we shall only find it in its new form if we are able once again to bring into direct relation to the Macrocosm what is there in Man himself. Such is the inner composition a book like *Occult Science*. Here the attempt

is made once more to build the bridge between Man and the Macrocosm. What can be found in man himself, the evolution of man, is connected with that in the macrocosm to which man's evolution belongs. Definite stages in the evolution of man are connected with definite processes in the macrocosm. Thus, in our anthroposophical Spiritual Science we have begun again to look in both directions — to look for the super-sensible man and for the secrets of the Macrocosm. This also means the building of it bridge, once more, between Religion and Science.

Religion has become void of science. Any one who will, can see that it is so. And, that the science of to-day has become void of Religion, is still more obvious. Quite unconnectedly, the two stand side by side in the so-called civilisation of our time. In this way alone was it possible for such strange errors to arise as I described in these lectures, — errors of which the sharp-witted intellectual theories of Dupuis are a particulate example. Dupuis, as I said, considered the ancient Mysteries mere error and deceit. He believed that in those ancient Mysteries certain tales were invented merely in order to delude the people, while in reality they had nothing else in view than the mere movements of the stars. Dupuis made the simple mistake of believing that the Ancients could see nothing else in the star-lit sky than a modern astronomer can see; whereas in reality, what the modern astronomer sees in the star-lit sky is precisely equivalent to what the modern anatomist sees in the human body. Just as the corpse is not the man, so too, the content of modern Astronomy is not the real heaven of the stars. Natural-scientific Astronomy is only in its initial stages; it has experienced no more, as yet, than a mere mathematical, mechanical and summary description of what goes on in the great Universe outside us. Study what is afforded by the Astronomy of to-day; you will find mathematical and mechanical relationships; it is the mere expression of an immense celestial machinery. Meanwhile, all that takes place on Earth (with the exception of the coarsest physical processes), the scientist only seeks to investigate on the Earth itself. Wherever a plant arises, wherever a human being or an animal is born, it is all supposed to be due to "inheritance." For it goes without saying, you can in no way apply to man what the modern astronomer finds in the stars. But in real fact there is a mutual interplay between the starry Heavens and the Earth. No seed or germ can arise on the Earth — neither the germ of a plant, nor of an animal or man — unless it be prepared and laid down by the whole macrocosm.

What does the scientist of to-day say? Here is the hen, and in the hen, the egg. It goes without saying: from the egg a new hen is derived, and from the hen an egg again, and thence again a hen. Therefore the scientist follows it up from hen to hen. Whereas the truth is: Here are the starry heavens, here is the hen. The whole of the heavens send their forces, from all the constellations, into the hen; and the germ inside the hen is an expression of the entire heaven of the stars.

It is strange to look into the course of evolution in this respect. A science existed, once upon a time, which might well make the people of to-day blush for shame. It has been lost and ruined. We must be conscious that we are living to this day in the age of a lost science. The first beginnings of a science have been planted again in a new form, and they must be developed. What is admired so much, in the progress of science during the last four centuries, can only justly be admired if looked upon as a beginning. It is only when the bridge is built from this beginning to the real Mysteries of Christmas and Easter — only when this bridge is built, at least for human feeling — that something real will have been achieved.

We should make this thought living in our soul, for this thought alone is prone to unite the man of to-day, in his soul, with the Universe. Every seed is united with the macrocosm; the seeds of the Spirit likewise. Man unites himself with the macrocosm when he tries to receive into his soul a macrocosmic science. To begin with at least in the idea, in the intuition thereof, this consciousness of the macrocosmic connections of Man and the Earth needs to be carried into all branches of life. Our time is far remote from such a consciousness. In this respect, our time is indeed in a certain sense in the reverse position, as compared with a certain epoch of the past. For we may ask: How could a primeval wisdom of mankind — so great and so far-reaching that this present time could blush for shame to contemplate it, — how could such a science have been lost? We need not wonder very much that it was lost. We must remember that in the evolution of humanity the positive is most certainly connected with the negative aspect. We have often spoken of the progress humanity has undergone by the spread of Christianity; let us not, however, forget that the spread of Christianity — the positive aspect — is also connected with the negative aspect of the same, namely the laying-waste of an ancient culture. Let us not forget that tens of thousands of works of ancient culture were destroyed while Christianity was being spread abroad. Thousands and thousands of symbols in which the Ancient Wisdom had been handed down, were destroyed. People to-day have little conception of the ruthless work of destruction which culminated in the third and fourth centuries of

our era. Julian the Apostate still tried to some extent to stem this work of destruction; but the time was against him. He did not succeed. Humanity to-day ought to be well aware how many things were destroyed and lost and ruined in those centuries.

Precisely from such things, we can learn that evolution, so-called, is by no means simple. Suppose for a moment that Christianity had not gone on its way through the world as an appalling destroyer. Mankind would have had to remain in their old state of un-freedom. For the attainment of freedom is after all, only possible by that Impulse which is also the Impulse of the Mystery of Golgotha.

On the other hand, the negative side must not be allowed to get the upper hand. For there exists a certain spirit which has preserved far more the negative aspect of Christianity. It appears in this form to-day: it wants to destroy — this time, in the soul-life — all that arises towards the reconquest of the Ancient Wisdom. This ought not to be allowed to happen. To-day, again and again — wherever they have the opportunity — the so-called official representatives of Christianity bring forward this idea: "At the time of Christ," they say, "in the apostolic age, there were Revelations. To-day no such thing is permissible. Today it is sin or swindle or deceit; it is anti-Christian." To see clearly in these matters is also one of the tasks of today, for every human being who strives for the truth. The striving for clarity is one of the essential tasks for to-day. Alas! in other matters too, clarity has grown befogged by all manner of feelings which people associate with mere empty phrases. I do believe the healthy feeling of the truth can only be sought and found again along the paths of the Spirit.

Words are terribly misused to-day. Think of all the words that are sounding through the world to-day, and taken seriously as though there were anything contained in the empty words. In this domain, Spiritual Science is no less important as an educator than by its immediate contents. If it claims to be true Spiritual Science, it can never feed men with mere words. Why not? For the very simple reason that you can talk of anything nowadays if you remain at the mere words, if you remain at the mere words, you can talk much about Natural Science. Fritz Mauthner proves, in his dictionary that Natural Science, whenever it claims to become a "Science," — whenever it goes beyond the mere notification of facts, — becomes a science of mere words. And in the science of History there is nothing else than words, for — as I told you — everything else is passed-through by man in a dreaming condition. And so it is in other spheres. In Politics, — go to work uprightly and honestly, and you will probably find

still less behind the words than in the other spheres of life. If you hold to the mere words, you can talk a lot nowadays about Nature and History and Politics and Economics. But you can not talk of the Spirit if you hold fast to the mere words for the Spirit, to-day, is nowhere contained in the words. I mean this in all earnestness. Yet the converse is also true. Namely, in compensation for this, the Spiritual Science of to-day is a real education, for men to grow beyond the prevailing attachment to words.

It is the paramount task of those who believe in Anthroposophy to go beyond the words to the real things; and — as the "thing" of Spiritual Science is the Spirit itself — this means to go beyond the words to the Spirit. This will be fruitful; this will endow us with new purposes and aims in all domains of life. One fruit, above all, it will bear. It will liberate — all those who are willing to be liberated — from the belief in authority; from that credulity and superstition which is so widespread in the humanity of to-day — so widespread that they even fail to notice its existence. Alas! many a bitter experience will still be necessary for poor mankind of to-day to find its way, more or less, on to the path to which I here refer.

The poor humanity of to-day! — it prides itself on the very thing which it most lacks, namely, on freedom from faith in authority, freedom from idol-worship. In the eyes of him who knows the Spirit, many an idol of the past is worth more than the idols of the present. As to the idols of the present... The conscious man, no doubt, has fallen out of the habit of prayer; but the unconscious man prays to the idols of the present all the more fervently. For in the eyes of him who sees through the evolution of the world, the Woodrow Wilsons and the rest are far more perilous idols of superstition than any idols of the past. The humanity of to-day is far more attached to its idols and superstitions than ever primeval humanity were attached to theirs. Even the clearest signs will scarcely avail the humanity of to-day. Precisely in these things, they are extraordinarily difficult to bring on to the oaths of truth.

The earnestness of the moment does indeed require it again and again. — Even when we bring forward truths that reach out into such far and wide perspectives, we must conclude with such remarks as I have made just now. It is essential to Spiritual Science to serve real life; and that which claims to be serving life nowadays is serving it least of all.



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