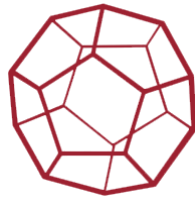


Turning Points in Spiritual History

GA 60



Turning Points in Spiritual History

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by

Rudolf Steiner

1911 & 1912

Source: [Rudolf Steiner Archive](#)

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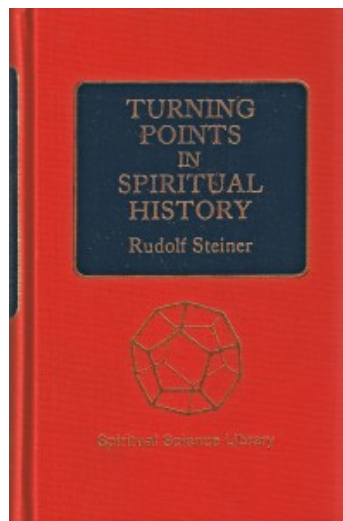
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Summary

Rudolf Steiner gave the six lectures in this volume between January 1911 and January 1912. Soon after Steiner's death in 1925, Marie Steiner — realizing the importance of those lectures for understanding the evolution of consciousness and the central role of the Christ event in that process — collected them under the title, *Turning Points in Spiritual History*.



In these lectures, Steiner provides us with astonishing views of esoteric history and shows the remarkable ways in which the spiritual world guided and nurtured the spiritual evolution in preparation for the Christ's appearance on Earth.

From the lecture series entitled, *Spiritual Science's Answer to the Large Questions of the Present Time*, published in German as, *Antworten der Geisteswissenschaft auf den Grossen Fragen des Daseins*.

Translated by Walter F. Knox



Preface

In these six public lectures, delivered in Berlin in 1911 and 1912, Rudolf Steiner presents key turning points in Mankind's spiritual development. His objective, to show how evolving human consciousness can lead to the experience of the Self as the spiritual essence of the human being, is clearly outlined through the five individuals selected. Each one of them brought into the human condition on Earth an added, different awareness of the relation between the human Spirit-Self and its earthly environment.

Having spent a lifetime presenting these past experiences of the human Spirit-Self on its spiritual journey through its various stages and conditions, Steiner concentrated, in his last years, on the new spiritual turning point of the present. His crystal-clear statements as to the nature of the present-day, different, spiritual condition of the human being places him in the same firmament as the five individuals he speaks of in these lectures. The final lecture on *Christ in the Twentieth Century*, is essentially his own announcement of the present and future human relation to the Christ, as different from, yet in addition to, what the previous five have brought into mankind with respect to the Christ-Being, the central figure in Human Beingness.

The specific, unique, necessary, new, human experience that Steiner is responsible for presenting is, the spiritual foundation of human destiny and the human laws of reincarnation based on the awakening to self-consciousness of the human Spiritual-Soul. This particular experience of self-consciousness requires that the human soul-force of the Will be trained in freedeeeds, so that the truly free, individual Self can now consciously create and determine its own destiny, its own environment, its own physical body even while earthbound.

This is a magnificent possibility that is both necessary and doable. Each human being, because of Steiner's achievements, now has the method outlined and the means made available to achieve this condition of the truly free, independent, self-conscious, human, Spiritual Being; the Tenth Hierarchy; the Entity of Love incarnate on Earth and what this awareness means in the total spectrum of the Universe.

I present the following words, selected from among Steiner's last writings, as an indication to the reader of the basis for the remarks made above as to Steiner's spiritual significance, and for placing him with Zarathustra, Hermes, Buddha, Moses and Elijah, the personalities discussed in this book.

"In the evolution of mankind consciousness descends on the ladder of unfolding Thought. There was an earliest stage in consciousness when man experienced the Thoughts in the Ego -- experienced them as real Beings, imbued with Spirit, soul and life. At a second stage he experienced the Thoughts in the astral body; henceforth they only appeared as the images of Spirit-beings -- images, however, still imbued with soul and life. At a third stage he experienced the Thoughts in the etheric body; here they only manifest an inner quickness, like an echo of the quality of soul. At the fourth, which is the present stage, man experiences the Thoughts in the physical body, where they appear as the dead shadows of the Spiritual.

In like measure as the quality of Spirit, soul and life in human Thought recedes, man's own Will comes to life. True freedom becomes possible.

It is the task of the Archangel Michael, to lead man back again, on paths of Will, whence he came down when with his earthly consciousness he descended on the paths of Thought from the living experience of the Supersensible to the experience of the world of sense.

Michael goes upward again along the paths by which mankind descended, stage by stage in the evolution of the Spirit, down to the exercise of the Intelligence. Michael, however, will lead the Will upward, retracing the paths by which the Wisdom descended to the final stage of Intelligence.

From this moment onward in World-evolution, Michael merely *shows* His way, so that man may follow it in perfect freedom. This distinguishes the present guidance by Michael from all preceding guidances of the Archangels, including even those of Michael Himself. For the former guidances did not only reveal their working. They worked themselves out in man. Hence in the working of his own life man could not be free.

To see and understand that this is so: this is the present task of man. For then he will find, with all the forces of his soul, his spiritual path within the age of Michael.

To become truly conscious of the working of Michael in the spiritual order of the World, is to solve the riddle of human freedom in relation to the Cosmos, in so far as the solution is necessary for man on Earth.

For 'Freedom' as a fact is directly given to every human being who understands himself in the present period of mankind's evolution. No one can say, 'Freedom is not,' unless he wishes to deny a patent fact. But we can find a certain contradiction between this fact of our experience and the processes of the Cosmos. In contemplating the mission of Michael within the Cosmos this contradiction is dissolved.

In my book, *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*, the 'Freedom' of the human being in the present World-epoch is proved as an essential element of consciousness. In the descriptions here given of the Mission of Michael, the cosmic foundations of the 'coming-into-being' of this Freedom are disclosed."

Bernard J. Garber
February 1987



Translator's Preface

The six lectures, translated from the German, which appear in this volume, formed part of a series of discourses delivered by Rudolf Steiner in Berlin, during the years 1911 and 1912. Their object was to draw special attention to certain outstanding periods in Spiritual History, epochs which have been of profound significance in the progress and development of mankind, and to throw the light of Spiritual Science upon various questions associated with these so-called 'Turning-Points'. Further, to contrast and compare the results of external investigation with the knowledge born of the spiritual scientific method. The reader will find that this most interesting series of lectures opens up new avenues of thought, and brings a great illumination to bear upon many obscure points occurring in the Bible, and in connection with certain religious concepts.

It is essential, in order to realize the significance and import of the text, to have an understanding of what is implied by the term Spiritual Science, and to know that its methods are true and have been proved of actual positive value, sometimes leading to results which have been found to harmonize with those of subsequent external scientific research. Spiritual Science is not some new fantastic concept, but a logical mode of probing and penetrating the deep secrets of the cosmos and the Spirit-World, and Rudolf Steiner has shown how its methods may be employed to obtain inner illumination and guidance in the conduct of life.

At the commencement of a volume entitled *Investigations in Occultism*, by Rudolf Steiner, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, will be found an introduction by H. Collison, the editor of the English translations of Steiner's works. In this introduction the editor sets forth clearly and concisely the main features of Steiner's philosophy and the principles underlying Spiritual Science. Upon this source of information the following brief statement concerning the latter is based.

Rudolf Steiner defined 'Anthroposophy' or 'Spiritual Science' (the terms are synonymous) as 'Knowledge produced by the higher self in man'. The word Anthroposophy is derived from the Greek -- *ânthrôpos*, man, and *sophia*, wisdom. In virtue of his great spiritual

gifts and profound understanding of the ancient occult teachings, Steiner was enabled to devise and evolve certain methods, whereby it is possible for man, if he will but of his own effort raise the latent powers of his soul and overcome all earthly passions and desires, to enter upon a state in which he experiences simultaneous association with two planes of existence, the material and the spiritual, and while still retaining complete consciousness of all things pertaining to the external world, his eyes are opened and his inner vision reveals to him the presence and the activities of the spirit realms. During this clairvoyant condition, which is unlike that of the customary mediumistic trance familiar to spiritualists, man finds himself in actual contact with things divine; the finer vehicles of his being, namely, the Soul or Astral Body, and the Ego or Body of Consciousness, leave for a time the Etheric and Physical Bodies (see footnote, page 190). The two former, however, still maintain, what might be termed, conscious union with the latter and it is the quality and power of the conscious union which determines the difference between this truly clairvoyant state, and that of mere sleep or ordinary trance. Throughout the whole period of such limited separation, although the soul and Ego have entered and become associated with the Spirit-World, nevertheless actual individual consciousness prevails, the personality remaining in touch with the etheric and physical bodily elements, while conscious of that life which lies beyond man's normal awareness and material vision.

When through the exaltation of the soul's powers this condition has been attained, man finds himself in a new world, the World of Spirit, and he can apprehend its reality and penetrate its secrets; that knowledge and wisdom which comes to him endures, and through it he may bring back comfort and enlightenment to aid and to benefit humanity. During such time as the Ego is directly associated with the spirit realms, man acquires a veritable understanding of truth and illusion, of good and of evil; and by having thus raised himself to the level of the departed, he is enabled to commune with them, not as does the spiritualist by bidding them descend to him, but through exalting himself to that higher sphere of life in which they abide.

Thus Steiner has shown that it is possible for mankind, even in these modern times, to have more than a mere fleeting contact with the Spirit-World, and thereby to gain knowledge and understanding, not alone of spiritual things, but also of matters of moment connected

with the proper conduct of man's life in the material world. But the power and the quality necessary to this end, come alone through earnest and unceasing endeavour, so that all feeling, thinking, and willing, may be directed toward spiritual unfoldment, and an ethical development of man's inner being through the uplifting of the soul -- *this discipline is essential.*

The methods of Spiritual Science, by which the soul may be raised, and man's Ego truly enter upon and apprehend the reality and the activities of the spiritual realms, are known as meditation or concentration exercises. These are described in great detail by Rudolf Steiner in certain of his books, entitled: *The Threshold of the Spiritual World, A Road to Self-Knowledge* and *The Way of Initiation* -- the latter is now known as *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*; all are published by G. P. Putnam's Sons. Further information is obtainable from the various Anthroposophical Centres. The chief object of the exercises is to strengthen and harmonize the three principal components of man's being, namely, body, soul and spirit, in order to bring about close touch and sympathy with those glorious regions wherein lies the source of Divine power, and through the enlightenment thus gained, a clearer understanding of the material world.

The above is a brief outline of the Methods of Spiritual Science, through which Rudolf Steiner acquired his great spiritual discernment and his outstanding intellectual power. Steiner felt that it was his mission and his duty, to expound and develop a Christian interpretation of the Gospels and of the Trinity, and to bring forward a proper and reasonable means of communication between the living and the dead. Further, he was ever ready to utilize the knowledge born of his spiritual experiences for the benefit of humanity, by giving a new impulse in any direction which he deemed worthy, and of real import in the development of mankind.

The inspiring introduction to this volume, by Marie Steiner, is indeed a fitting foreword to the beauty and the spirituality of the remarkable and impressive lectures which follow.

The works of Rudolf Steiner will live on, and as time passes, he will ever be regarded as one of those who has accomplished a great and glorious mission.

The Translator



Introduction

24 August 1918, Dornach

In the year 1902, Rudolf Steiner definitely resolved to become the Herald of Spiritual Science, and to proclaim its message to a materialistic world; by so doing he laid himself open to its scorn, ridicule, and enmity. The most gifted and talented man of his time; one who shunned every mark of approbation and willingly renounced every claim to the highest worldly honours, which honours were within his easy reach. This he did, in order that he might devote himself to the consummation of a momentous forward movement, destined to lead mankind to a reasoned and proper conception of spiritual verity. Thus might the impulse given to thought and will, enable humanity to span that dread abyss in which, even yet, Nietzsche (the great apostle of consistent materialistic philosophy) must sink, and with him a countless number of his lesser followers, who can find no way whereby they may save themselves from spiritual dissolution.

To such as these, Rudolf Steiner became at once the saviour and the helper; it was for them and for mankind that he decided upon this altruistic deed, which in itself implied a bold courageous upward sweep in the path of human progress.

This wholly unselfish action, however, called for determination, inflexibility of will, and a moderate and rational apprehension of spiritual reality, permeated throughout with a profound sense of its fundamental substantiality. But here was no worn-out intellectual faculty, no ecstasy, no mystic intoxication with Eastern tinge — austere, resolute and calm, he went his way, ever imparting spiritual enlightenment.

Rudolf Steiner made no concessions when offering spiritual blessings; but on the other hand he never wearied of expounding once again from the beginning, in each city where he lectured, those basic principles upon which he built a solid mental structure, to conform with the demands and claims arising from modern intellectual power and discernment. While insisting upon due and proper consideration, he freely acknowledged the right to challenge and to

question. He praised the achievements of Natural Science, and recommended the employment of its methods in the Science of the Spirit. He cursed the ignoramus and the extreme Kantian line of thought, and refused to accede to limits of knowledge already prescribed and confined.

No wonder that the hatred of the spiritual despots of our time, tyrants in many and varied ways, was piled mountain-high — for everywhere he brought that new animating, revivifying life, which would yet become all-potent in the future. He that would bring this life to humanity, must himself endure martyrdom, and stand as if held fast between envy, ill-will, and abuse, on the one hand — and insuperable inertia, or fool-hardy levity, and immaturity on the other. In truth, — a daily torment this bearing up against the ever-breaking waves of an hostile, or an aid-imploring clinging humanity, always in renewed and never ceasing exhausting activity. He who takes that step which anticipates future progress in evolution must bring upon himself such martyrdom; but the power, of love helps enormously in carrying the burden, while the capacity for endurance increases with the measure of the overflowing fullness of work accomplished.

Berlin was the first radiating point from which centre the lecture activities of Rudolf Steiner were spread outwards. The discourses were to serve in opening up a way toward the understanding of all that he purposed to present to the world, under the title of Spiritual Science. That which he gave in less detailed and isolated lectures in other towns in Germany, could be dealt with here in the form of a compact course, having the character of a systematic introduction to Spiritual Science; it was also planned that part of these lectures should periodically recur, even though the public could not be counted upon to respond in large numbers.

I will now give a summary of these discourses which were held at the 'Architektenhaus' (Hall of Architecture) in Berlin; as they are of historical interest. We commenced in a small hall, shortly however to pass on to one of intermediate size, and from there to one still larger. During the last year of the War, the Architektenhaus was commandeered by the War Department, and then the lectures had to be held, partly in the 'Scharwenka-Saal', and partly in the 'Oberlicht-Saal' of the 'Philharmonie' (Philharmonic Hall). When we at last came to the large hall of this latter building, the 'Köthener-Strasse'

(Koethener Street) had to be closed to wheeled traffic, because of the enormous concourse of people. Here we found the opposing factions so well organized, that it seemed as if preparations might be afoot, with the object of bringing Rudolf Steiner's public lecture activities to a premature and violent conclusion.¹

From the very beginning Rudolf Steiner had chosen the word 'Anthroposophy', to designate the matter and the theme which was his to impress upon the world; in public, however, he generally used the more simple term, Spiritual Science. After he had decided to give way, under the pressure of Theosophical Circles, and to undertake the leadership of the German Theosophical Society, he did all that lay within his power to win back for the name of Theosophy, that esteem and respect of which it was in danger of being deprived, owing to the want of maturity of that body; and his endeavours in this direction were clearly marked. It is a fact, that the burden thrust upon him due to the misuse of this name, was increased by the regrettable attitude, and the alienation of certain people; albeit these acts were condemned by many friends. Rudolf Steiner shouldered every burden which fate laid upon him, when by so doing he could serve the spirit; he regarded only the task, and the love to labour, and took no heed of the cold indifference of humanity.

As far back as the year 1900 he drew the attention of various literary societies in Berlin to his efforts in furthering the cause of spiritual revival; this he did, in the beginning, through lectures upon Goethe's fairy-tale of *The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*. From October, 1901, to March, 1902, he spoke concerning *German Spiritual Life in the Nineteenth Century*. The impulse to thought thus created was continued by means of a series of lectures during 1902 to 1903 entitled *Zarathustra to Nietzsche*, treating of the evolution of man's spiritual life from the oldest times to the present day. It was Zarathustra who gave the initial impulse to that current of thought which urged humanity to call upon the active power of the spirit, that through its aid it might strive to overcome all that is material, and thus cause the physical element to become subservient to its needs.

Rudolf Steiner drew attention to the task allotted to German patriotism in the totality of human spiritual evolution, as the bearer and upholder of the 'Principle of True Self' (Ich-Prinzips), so deeply merged in all that is of the spirit. He stated that the true 'Ich', the Ego

(endowed with the soul's achievements) must be made both the receptacle and the radiating point of the divine essence. He pointed to the hidden choked up stream of German spiritual life, which although predisposed within itself, was thrust aside by a materialistic culture, and the new imperial idea of Might and Power. He recalled with sorrow and anxiety those words of Nietzsche's — 'Extirpation of the Spirit from Germany, in favour of the Empire', and declared that what Germany awaits, and what it would so gladly welcome, is the beneficence and the blessings of the Spirit. Already at that time Rudolf Steiner spoke quite unequivocally regarding the necessity of clearly differentiating between the Western and the Eastern spiritual paths. Humanity owes, indeed, a great and inestimable debt of gratitude to the Orient, for the gift of that wondrous knowledge which has come to it from the East.

The Mystery of Golgotha forms a 'Turning-Point'. Mankind with its eyes upon modernity can never hark back to those conditions which were there before that decisive juncture, that divine source of knowledge and of upward progress; the world must learn to understand the need for the transient darkness and the gloom.

It is during that period when, by slow degrees, the personality is striving to cast aside its earthly factors and to detach them from all that is real and of the spirit, that it must learn to know itself, must grasp its essence; it dare not become obdurate, and thus descend to dust and annihilation. The very act of forcing a way through the material quality brings about the moment when it shall realize it is once more upon the further shore. Hence, the personality which has indeed made ready to pass through death's portal and onward to resurrection, finds, at last, that it is again in the true Ego, the veritable 'I' — a spiritually conscious and individualized member of the cosmos — a part of the whole, and yet 'I'. Once freed from all earthly nature, the material element falls away, even as an amputated limb from the human organism. When truly at one with the great cosmos it expands beyond all previous limitations, outward into the realms of the spirit. It was in order that such things might come to pass — yes — that man's freedom and self-determination could be won by effort and by travail, that the Mystery of Golgotha — God's own sacrifice — was needful and must be consummated.

No power on earth can ignore this fact nor stem the tide of evolution. Happenings which appear at first sight to be hindrances and restraints, do but serve to aide us in our onward progress. The power to differentiate between good and evil is the first step toward man's freedom; the narrow confines imposed upon him by materialism have placed him in the position of being unable to grasp the meaning of this earthly life, and to realize his true personality; but now he must rise above his limited conceptions and the achievement lies in the province of his conscious will. The Deity has, as it were, relinquished the guidance, and the control. Man must decide whether the Divine Will shall quicken within him or whether he shall give himself over to disavowal and negation. Here, then, humanity comes upon a new 'Turning-Point', and its present task is to make ready, so that it may be met with open eyes, and not blindly and in ignorance. Such was the work to which Rudolf Steiner found himself committed.

In the Anglo-Indian theosophical movement there was a certain risk attached to the revival of the Yoga-Exercises by the uninitiated, for these were suited to another period, and a differently constituted human organism. Again, in reviving the mysticism of the Middle Ages lay a danger that there might be a turning away from true life, and an increased egotism in a soul which had yielded itself to selfishness. Both these currents of thought failed to take into consideration the requirements of the times and the laws of evolution. The future and the salvation of humanity lies in the understanding of the real significance of the Mystery of Golgotha, and in extending and strengthening the power of human consciousness in order that it shall advance beyond the narrow limits of man's present intellectual powers, and not in its repression and constraint. Those who opened their hearts to words such as these, were certainly not to be found among the celebrities of science; they were modest, unassuming people, knowing of no course which they might follow that was suited to the times, and who, therefore, gave themselves over to the study of Oriental Wisdom, in that form in which it was presented by the Theosophical Society. These people approached Rudolf Steiner with a request that he should become the teacher and leader of their association; but he definitely declined to consider their appeal. Never, so he said, would he do otherwise than point out the difference between the two paths, and advocate the necessity for the development of Western methods, suitable to modern requirements. No longer can there be a mere reaching back, in order to obtain

primeval wisdom; forward progress must be made with true regard to all that has been acquired since those ancient times, through intellectual achievement, and must in future follow that path marked by history, wherein the essentials of development in the unfolding of the human spirit are clearly indicated.

Although the wisdom of the East deserves our warmest feelings of admiration and wonder, nevertheless, the fundamental principle underlying its historical onward progress does not appear as a vital factor; this element must now be introduced by the West, to which task it should regard itself as directly committed. The Mystery of Golgotha is the central point, that mystery which is neither recognized nor understood by the Orientals nor by the New-Theosophists. As far back as the Autumn of 1900, I have heard such words from the lips of Rudolf Steiner, when harassed by the importunity of ardent followers of the Theosophical school of thought. Those who listened with understanding, fully realized that here, indeed, was an inflexible will, and the expression of an urgent historical need. One could not help but wonder that people really existed, who would attempt adverse argument and persuasion. It was, however, on account of this attitude that Rudolf Steiner gave a course of interesting lectures on *Mysticism at the Beginning of Modern Spiritual Life*, which were followed, in the Autumn of 1901, by others entitled *Christianity as a Mystical Fact*.

Soon after the commencement of these discourses, I had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the most distinguished among the Theosophical Leaders. I had joined the Theosophical Society and was requested to undertake some special work at Bologna, the representative of the Anglo-Indian movement having founded a branch in Italy. In the spring of 1902, during a period of three weeks, I translated from English into Italian the lectures of the Indian Theosophist, Jinarajadasa, who has since been nominated as the future President of the Theosophical Society. While thus engaged, I frequently found it difficult to write and to voice the ideas which I had to express, concepts that were oft-times entirely at variance with my own inner reasoned feelings. I stood aghast before the sentences, so material was their essence and their spirit. At such times, my thoughts would hark back to the words of Rudolf Steiner, regarding the vital difference between Western and Eastern mysticism; but I knew that the truth and the solution lay in the Christ-Mystery, of which he had both inner knowledge and understanding. Veritable

primeval wisdom contains the heart and principle; while in the ever onward progress of man's evolution are found the metamorphoses — death and resurrection — where, then, is the point of juncture? — IN THE CROSS — and it is Rudolf Steiner who reveals its secret.

About this time a memorable incident occurred, namely, the German Theosophists invited me to go to Berlin, in order to take over the work of their retiring representative. After some hesitation I decided to accede to their request. Shortly after this event came the joyful news that Rudolf Steiner had yielded to the pressure of the Theosophists, and had accepted the directorate of a new section which was about to be formed; this he had done, however, under the specific condition that he should introduce into the movement that current of thought which he himself advocated. There was indeed universal rejoicing; and the General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in England — a good German scholar — who highly esteemed Steiner's two works — *Mysticism at the Beginning of Modern Spiritual Life* and *Christianity as a Mystical Fact* — expressed himself as completely in accord with the new programme. This illustrious scholar, Dr. Bertram Keightley, who is Professor at the University of Lucknow, has since that time, become a member of the Anthroposophical Society.

Thus it was that the work began, environed by the activities of the Theosophical Society and undertaken with the greatest loyalty in respect to that body. The subject matter of the public lectures delivered at the Architektenhaus in Berlin in 1903 was as follows:

1903,	19 March.	Theosophy, and the onward progress of Religion. (The Tower of Babel.)
	26 "	The Cardinal Teachings of Theosophy. (Reincarnation and Karma.)
	2 April.	Theosophy, and the Modern Scientific Spirit.

In the spring of 1904, also in the Architektenhaus, Rudolf Steiner spoke concerning certain subjects which contained within them the germ of his later pioneer work in social and pedagogical spheres;

these were included under the title, *Psychic Teachings in Theosophy*, as follows:

1904,	16 March.	I.	Body and Soul. How can we study the life of the Soul? Religion, Science, and the Soul Question.
	23 "	II.	The Soul and Human Destiny. What are Desire and Suffering? What is Destiny? Has man earned his fate? Optimism and Pessimism. Genius and Insanity.
	30 "	III.	Soul and Spirit. Immortality. Hypnotism and Clairvoyance. Spiritual Healing. Education in the light of Spiritual Cosmic Conception.

Another series of lectures took place in Vereins Haus, at 118 William Street (Wilhelmstrasse), Berlin; in these discourses Rudolf Steiner endeavoured to throw light upon that border-land existing between the perceptual and superperceptual worlds; a subject which has claimed the attention of science and in which lie concealed so many dangers for the uninitiated. The dates and titles of these discourses are given below:

7 March.	Theosophy and Somnambulism.
11 April.	The History of Spiritualism.
9 May.	The History of Hypnotism and Somnambulism.

Regarding the above, I find among my notes the following entry: 'The two latter themes were subsequently used as subject matter for lectures which were held in the "Architektenhaus" from April onwards, every second Monday in the month; a further series which took place in the same building during the autumn of 1904, were especially directed towards the development and extension of the scientific rudiments of Theosophy.' The subjects were:

1904,	29 Sept.	What does man find in Theosophy to-day?
	6 Oct.	Is Theosophy Unscientific?
	13 "	The Elements of Theosophy I.
	20 "	The Elements of Theosophy II.
	3 Nov.	Theosophy and <i>Tolstoi</i> .
	10 "	The Elements of Theosophy III.
	17 "	The Elements of Theosophy IV.
	1 Dec.	Theosophy and Nietzsche.
	3. "	Is Theosophy Buddhist Propaganda?
	15. "	The Elements of Theosophy V.

In the spring of 1905 Rudolf Steiner set forth and expounded his views before various Faculties; his introductory lecture held on 4th May, was on *Schiller and the Present*, those which followed were:

1905,	11 May.	The Theological Faculty and Theosophy.
	18 "	The Juristic Faculty and Theosophy.
	25 "	The Medical Faculty and Theosophy.
	8 June.	The Philosophical Faculty and Theosophy.

A series of lectures which were started in October, 1905, commenced with '*Haeckel, "The Riddle of the Universe" and Theosophy*'. It was indeed essential that Rudolf Steiner should take Haeckel as the starting-point for these discourses, because he was of opinion that in virtue of the outstanding nature of his achievements in

the sphere of natural science, Haeckel was worthy and entitled to become a decisive spiritual power in our present philosophical outlook, [would he but apprehend and acknowledge the divine spirit latent within his works — and at this point lay the parting of their ways (Ed.)]. On the other hand, Steiner repudiated entirely the claims made by the courageous and ingenious Haeckel, who was already venturing to encroach and become active in the domains of Philosophy, and the formation of world opinion. Here must the bolt be shot and the mischief averted. This Rudolf Steiner did with the greatest energy and consistency, but it did not prevent him from expressing himself in words conveying the warmest appreciation whenever he could perceive the positive element in Haeckel's works.

Never have I found this side of Rudolf Steiner's nature rightly understood; people always seemed wilfully to regard it as inconsistent that the same man should at one time praise, and at another find fault; but this he did with whole-hearted enthusiasm on the one hand, or with merciless severity and logic on the other, the while, however, he never allowed his personal feelings to influence either his praise or his censure. He rose above all such bias, and was ever delighted to observe productive and creative capacity in others. He enraptured those who heard him when he expressed his approval through the warmth of his approbation; but, when he made reference to that which was harmful and pernicious, he evoked surprise by the unexpected keenness and rigour of his demonstrations and reasoning. He ever maintained the greatest affection for Ernest Haeckel, and it was a delightful experience to be present when these two met — the youthful freshness of Haeckel, his elasticity of tread — the waving of the broad-brimmed, wide-awake hat — his beaming childlike blue eyes — all in one who judged by years, should have been already numbered with the aged. Haeckel was no mere philosopher, but a man of deeds with a penetrating flashing glance as of one profoundly observant. He was ever moved by an impetuous warmheartedness, his true being filled with loving patience and tolerance; he was a factor in the world's history, and his influence will continue to be felt in days yet to come.

Notes for this page:

1. This is no exaggeration, for about this time, and at Munich, an attempt was actually made upon his life by the Communist Party. [Ed.]



I. Zarathustra

19 January 1911, Berlin

Among the fundamental principles underlying Spiritual Science and to which your attention has been drawn in previous lectures, the most prominent is the idea of Reincarnation. According to this generally unpopular and little understood concept, it is maintained that human individuality is constrained to manifest again and again in a single personality, during its enfoldment in the course of repeated earth-lives. It has been previously pointed out that many and diverse questions are associated with this conception, and that such is the case will become more and more apparent as we proceed.

What deep meaning, we might ask, underlies the fact that the span of man's life on earth is destined to recur, not once only, but many times, and that during each successive period between rebirth and death human individuality persists. When we study the evolution of mankind in the light of Spiritual Science, we find therein a progressive purport, a design of such nature that each age and each epoch presents in some fashion a different content, and we realize that human evolution is ever destined to maintain a definite upward trend. Thus do we become aware of a profound latent significance, when we know that the varied influences which act upon mankind are indeed potent and become absorbed over and over again by the Ego during the course of human development. A condition which is only possible because man, with all that comprises his being, is brought into contact not once alone, but recurrently, with the great living stream of evolution.

When we regard the whole evolutionary process as a rational progression, ever accompanied by fresh contents, there dawns a true comprehension of those Great Spiritual Beings who set the measure of progress. We are then able to realize the import and proper relation of these outstanding leaders, from whom have come new thoughts, experiences and impulses destined to further the advancement and progressive evolution of humanity.

During this Cycle of Lectures I shall speak of many such Spiritual Beings who have acted as guides to mankind, and at the same time bring forward and elucidate various matters connected with this subject. The first human individuality to claim our attention from such a point of view is Zarathustra, about whom, although there is much discussion in these days, little is known; for as far as external investigation goes his history is especially problematical, as it is shrouded in mystery and unrecorded in ancient documents.

When we consider the characteristics of such a personality as Zarathustra, whose gifts to mankind, as far as they are preserved for us, seem so strange to our present age, we at once realize how great is the dissimilarity in man's whole being at different periods of earthly progress. Casual reflection might easily lead to the conclusion, that from the very beginning humanity has always had the same ideas concerning morality, the same general thoughts, feelings and conceptions as those which exist in our time. From previous lectures, however, and from others which will follow, you will know through the teachings of Spiritual Science that during man's development great and important changes take place, especially as regards the life of the human soul, the nature of human apprehension, emotions and desires. Further, you will realize that man's consciousness was very differently constituted in olden days; and that there is reason to believe that in the future yet other stages will be reached in which the conscious condition of mankind will vary considerably from its normal state to-day.

When we turn our attention to Zarathustra we find that we must look back over an extremely long period. According to certain modern researches, he is considered to be a contemporary of Buddha; the approximate date of his life being fixed at some six to six and a half centuries before the birth of Christianity. It is, however, a remarkable and interesting fact that other investigators of late years, after carefully studying all existing traditions concerning Zarathustra, have been driven to the conclusion that the personality concealed beneath the name of the ancient founder of Persian religion must have lived a great many centuries before the time of Buddha. Greek historians have stated over and over again that the period ascribed to Zarathustra should be put back very many, possibly five to six thousand years before the Trojan War (the date of which has been placed at about 1200 B.C.).

From the above, and from what has been learned through research in many directions, we can now feel certain that historical investigators will in the end be unwillingly forced to acknowledge that the claims of Grecian scholarship regarding the great antiquity of the Zarathustran era, as indicated by ancient tradition, are justly founded and must be accepted as authentic. Spiritual Science, in its statements and theories, fully concurs with the old Greek writers who already in olden days had fixed the period of the founder of Persian religion so far back in time. We have, therefore, good reason for maintaining that Zarathustra, living as he did thousands of years before the birth of Christianity, was doubtless confronted with a very different class of human consciousness from that which exists in our present age.

It has often been pointed out, and we will again refer to this matter, that in ancient times the development of human consciousness was such that the old 'dream state', or 'clairvoyant condition' (we will avoid misusing this term, as is so often done in these days), was in every way perfectly normal to man, so that his conceptions and ideas were such that he did not contemplate the world from that narrow perceptual point of view that is so prevalent to-day.

We can best picture the impressions made by the world upon the consciousness of the ancients, if we turn our thoughts to that last enduring remnant of the old clairvoyant state, namely, dream consciousness. We all know those fluctuating dream pictures that come to us at times, the most of which carry no meaning, and are so often merely suggestive of the outer world, although there may now and then intrude some higher level of conscious thought; dream visions, which in these days we find so difficult to interpret and to understand. We might say that our sleep consciousness runs its course pictorially in ever-changing scenes, and which are at the same time symbolical. For instance, many of us have had the experience that events connected with some impressive happening — say, a conflagration — have been after a time once more figuratively manifested to us in a dream. Let us now consider for a moment this other horizon of our sleeping state, where clings in truth that last remnant of a conscious condition belonging to a by-gone age in the grey and distant past.

The consciousness of the ancients was such that in reality they lived in a life of imagery. The visions which came to them were not merely indefinite unrelated creations, for they had reference to an actual outer world. In olden days primitive man was capable of intermediate conscious states, between those which prevail when we sleep and when we are awake; then it was that he lived in the presence of the Spirit-World, and the Spirit-World entered into his being. To-day this door is closed, but in those ancient times such was not the case. It was while in this intermediate condition that man became aware of visions which resembled to some extent dream pictures, but were definite in their manifestation of a spirit life and of spiritual achievement existing beyond the perceptual world. Although in the Zarathustran era, such visions had already become somewhat confused and vague, there was nevertheless still close contact with the world of spirit, therefore these ancients could say from direct observation and experience: 'In the same way as I realize this outer physical world and this perceptual life, even so do I know that there exists another conscious condition belonging to a different region — a spiritual realm — related to that which is material, and where I do of a verity experience and observe the workings of the Divine Spirit.'

It is a fundamental principle underlying the evolution of the human race, that in no case can any one quality be developed except at the expense of some other attribute; hence it came about that from epoch to epoch, the faculty through which in olden times mankind obtained a clear inner vision of the spiritual realms became ever less and less pronounced. Our present day exact methods of thought, our power of expression, our logic, all that we regard as the most important driving forces of modern culture did not exist in the remote past. Such faculties have been acquired during later periods at the expense of the old clairvoyant consciousness, and it is now for mankind to regain and cultivate this long-lost power. Then in the future of human evolution a time will come when in addition to man's purely physical consciousness, his intellectuality and his logic, he will again approach the condition of the ancient seer.

We must differentiate between the upward and downward tendency of human consciousness. Evolution has a deeper meaning when we realize that in the beginning man was entirely of a spiritual realm, where he lived in the soul, and that when he descended into the physical world it was ordained that he should gradually relinquish his

clairvoyant power in order that he might acquire qualities born of the existing purely physical conditions; such as intellectuality and logic. When this stage in his development has run its course he will again return to the world of spirit.

Regarding the circumstances connected with these curious clairvoyant states and experiences of the ancients we have no historical record. Zarathustra lived in that same remote age, and was one of those great leading personalities who gave immense stimulus to the advancement of culture and civilization. Such guiding personalities must ever draw from the creative source that which we may term Illumination, whereby they are initiated into the higher mysteries of the world, irrespective of the standard of normal human consciousness existing in their time. Other such outstanding personalities of whom mention will be made during these lectures are: Hermes, Buddha and Moses.

Zarathustra lived at least 8000 years before the present era, and those glorious gifts to civilization which emanated from his illumined spirit have been reflected in the great cultural progress of humanity. His influence has long ago been clearly recognized, and can be detected even to this day, by all who take note of the mysterious currents underlying the whole of human evolution.

We now realize that Zarathustra belonged essentially to those Great Ones in whose souls lived a measure of the spiritual elements of truth, wisdom and perception, far surpassing the customary standard of human consciousness of their period. His mission was to proclaim to his fellow men, in that part of the world later known as the Persian Empire, those grand truths which emanated from the superperceptual regions — a world utterly beyond the apprehension of man's normal consciousness in that dim and distant age.

If we would understand the true significance of Zarathustra's teachings, we must remember that it was his task to present to a certain section of humanity, in an intelligible manner, a particular world aspect; while on the other hand, various movements which had been in progress among the peoples of other regions, had given a different trend to the whole sphere of man's culture.

The personality of Zarathustra is of special interest because he lived in a territory, contiguous upon its South side to a country which was inhabited by Indian tribes, upon whom spiritual blessings flowed in

quite a different manner. When we look forward from those by-gone times we find upon the selfsame soil where dwelt these ancient Indian tribes, the peoples among whom at a later period arose the poets of the Vedas. To the North, where spread the great Brahman Doctrine, is situated that region which was permeated throughout by the powerful and compelling teachings of Zarathustra. But that which he gave to the world was in many respects fundamentally different from the teachings of the great Leaders among the Indians, whose words have lived on in the moving poetry of the Vedas, in their profound philosophy, and has reached yet an echo in that final glorious blaze of light — The Revelation of the Buddha.

We can understand the difference between that which was born of the flow of thought from Zarathustra and the teachings of the ancient Indians, when we bear in mind that we may approach the region of the superperceptual world from two sides. Already in other lectures we have spoken of the path which man must traverse in order that he may enter into the spirit realms. There are two possible methods by which he may raise the energy of his soul, and the capacities latent in his inner being, so much above their normal level that he can pass out of this perceptual into the superperceptual world. The one method is that by which man enters or retires, more and more deeply into his soul, and thus merges himself in his very essence. The other leads behind the veil which is spread around us by our material state. Man can enter the superperceptual region by both these methods.

When we experience within our very being a deepening of all values of our spiritual feelings, conceptions and ideas — in short, of our soul impulses; when in fact we creep more and more into ourselves, so that our spiritual powers become ever stronger and stronger; then can we, as it were, in some mystic way merge ourselves within and pass through all that we hold of the physical world to our actual spirit essence — the soul Ego — which Ego continues from incarnation to incarnation, and is not perishable but everlasting. When we have overcome our lusts and passions and all those experiences of the soul which are ours because we are of the body in a physical world, then can our true being pierce the surrounding veil and for ever enter the world of spirit.

On the other hand, if we develop those powers which will enable us not merely to be sensible of the outer world with its colours, tone sensations, heat and cold; and if we so strengthen our spiritual forces that we shall be aware of that which lies beyond the colours, the sound, the heat and the cold, and all those other earthly sense-perceptions which hang as a mist about us — then will the enhanced powers of our soul take us behind the enshrouding cloud and into that boundless superperceptual region which is without confine and stretches ever into the infinite.

There is one way leading to the Spirit-World which we may term the 'Mystical Method', and another which is properly called 'The Method of "Spiritual Science"'. All great spiritual personalities have followed these paths, in order to attain to those truths and revelations which it was their mission to impress upon humanity in the form of cultural progress. In primeval times man's development was of such nature, that great revelations could only come to the people of any particular race, through one of these methods alone. But from that period on, in which the Greeks lived, that is, at the dawn of the Christian era, these two separate thought currents commingled, and became more and more one single cultural stream. When we now speak of entering the higher spheres, we understand, that he who would penetrate into the superperceptual region, develops *both* qualities of power in his soul. The forces necessary to the 'Mystical Method' are evolved within the inner being, and those essential to the course of 'Spiritual Science', are strengthened while man is yet conscious of the outer world. There is to-day no longer any definite separation of these two paths, as since about the time of that epoch marked by the life of the Grecian race, these two currents have run their course together — in the one, revelation comes about through a mystic merging of man's consciousness within his very being — in the other, the veil is torn asunder by the enhanced power of his spiritual forces, and man's awareness stretches outward into the great cosmos.

In olden times before the Grecian or Christian era, these two possible methods were in operation separately among different peoples, and we find them working in close proximity, but in divers ways, in the Indian culture which found expression among the Vedas, on the one hand, and that of Zarathustra, further North, on the other. All that we look upon with such wonder in the ancient Indian culture, and which later found expression through Buddha, was achieved by

inner contemplation, and turning away from the outer world — through causing the eyes to become less sensitive to physical colours, the ears to physical sounds, and bringing about a deadening of the sense organs in general to the perceptual veil — so that the inner soul forces might be strengthened: — Thus did man press on to Brahma, there to feel himself unified with that which ever works and weaves as the Inner Spirit of the Universe, — In this way originated the teachings of the Holy Rishis, which live on in the poetry of the Vedas, in the Vedantic philosophy, and in Buddhism.

The Doctrine of Zarathustra was, however, entirely based upon the other method above-mentioned. He taught his disciples the secret of strengthening their powers of apprehension and cognition, in order that they might pass beyond the mists surrounding the outer perceptual world. He did not say to his followers, as did the Indian teachers: 'Turn away from the colours, and from the sounds, and from all outer sense-impressions, and seek the path to the spiritual realms only through the merging of yourselves within your very souls', — but he spoke thus: — 'Strengthen your powers of perception, in order that you may look around upon all things, the plants, the animals, that which lives in the air and in the water, upon the mountains, and in the depths of the valleys, and cast your eyes upon the world.' We know that the disciples of the Indian mystics regarded this earth upon which we live as merely maya (illusion), and turned from it in order to attain to Brahma. On the other hand, Zarathustra counselled his followers *not* to draw away from the material world, but to pass outward and beyond it, so that they might say: — 'Whenever we experience perceptual manifestations in the outer physical world, we realize that therein lie concealed and beyond our sense perceptions the workings and achievements of the spirit.'

It is remarkable that the two paths should have been thus united in early Grecian times, and just because in that period true spiritual knowledge was more profound than in our day (which we are inclined to regard as so amazingly enlightened!) all things found expression in imagery, and the images gave rise to Mythology. Thus do we find these two thought currents commingled and fostered in the Grecian culture — The Mystical tending inward, and the Zarathustran outward into the great cosmos.

That such was the case becomes evident from the fact, that one of these paths was named after Dionysos, that mysterious god who was reached when man merged himself ever deeper and deeper within his inner being, there to find a questionable sub-human element, as yet unknown, and from which he first developed into man. It was this unclean and half-animal residue to which was given the name of Dionysos. On the other hand, all that comes to us when we regard our physical sense perceptions from a purely spiritual standpoint, was termed Apollo. Thus we find in ancient Greece, in the Apollo current of thought, the teaching of Zarathustra; and in the Dionysos current, the doctrine of mystical contemplation, side by side in contrast. In Greece they united and operated conjointly — the Zarathustran and the Mystical Methods, those methods which had been at their highest level, working separately, in the days of the ancient Indians.

Here we might say, that already in olden times these two thought currents were destined to commingle in the coming Grecian cults of Apollo and Dionysos, and thenceforward they would continue as one; so that in our present cultural period, when we raise ourselves to a certain spiritual understanding, we find them still unified and enduring.

It is very remarkable, and one of the many riddles which present themselves to the thinking mind, that Nietzsche in his first work, *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, gave evidence of a vague suspicion that in the Grecian creeds of Dionysos and Apollo, the Mystical current meets the stream of scientific spiritual thought.

A further matter of interest lies in the fact, that Zarathustra actually taught his disciples to recognize in detail, the hidden workings of the Spirit in all material things, and from this starting-point the whole of his gifts to culture emanated. He emphasized that it was not sufficient for man merely to say: — 'There before us spreads a material world, behind which ever works and weaves the Divine Spirit.' Such a statement might appear at first sight full of significance, it leads, however, only to a general pantheistic outlook, and means nothing more, than that some vague nebulous spirit underlies all material phenomena. Zarathustra, like all other great personalities of the past who were exalted and had direct contact with the Spirit-World, did not present these matters to his followers and the people in any such indefinite and abstract manner; he pointed out, that in the same way as individual physical happenings vary in import, so is it with the latent

spiritual factor, it being sometimes of greater and sometimes of less moment. He further stated that the sun, regarded purely from the physical point of view as a member of the stellar system, is the source of all earthly phenomena, life, and activity, while concealed within is the centre of spiritual existence in so far as we are immediately concerned.

These things Zarathustra impressed earnestly and clearly upon his disciples, and, using simple words, we can picture him as addressing them somewhat as follows: — 'When you regard man, you must realize that he does not only consist of a material body — such is but an outer expression of the spirit which is within. Even as the physical covering is a manifestation in condensed and crystallized form of the true spiritual man, so is the sun which appears to us as a light-giving mass when considered as such, merely the external manifestation of an inner spiritual sun.' In the same way as we term the human spirit element as distinguished from the physical, The Aura, to use an ancient expression, so do we call the all-embracing hidden spiritual part of the sun, The Great Aura (Aura Mazda); in contradistinction to man's spiritual component, which is sometimes called the Little Aura.

Now, Zarathustra named all that lies hidden within and beyond man's mere apprehension of the physical sun — 'Aura Mazda' or 'Ahura Mazdao' — and considered this element as important to our spiritual experiences and conditions, as is the physical sun to the wellbeing of plants and animals, and all that lives upon the face of the earth. There behind the physical sun lies the Spiritual Master — The Creator — 'Ahura Mazdao' or 'Aura Mazda', and from 'Ahura Mazdao' came the name, 'Ormuzd', or, 'The Spirit of Light'.

While the Indians mystically searched their inner being, in order to attain to Brahma — The Eternal — who shines outward as a point of light from within man's essence, Zarathustra urged his disciples to turn their eyes upon the great periphery of existence, and pointed out that there within the body of the sun, dwells the great Solar Spirit — Ahura Mazdao — 'The Spirit of Light'. He taught them that, just in the same way as when man strives to raise his spirit to perfection, so must he ever battle against his lower passions and desires, against the delusive images suggested by possible deception and falsehood, and

all those antagonistic influences within, which continually oppose his spiritual impulses. Thus must 'Ahura Mazdao' face the opposition of 'The Spirit of Darkness' — 'Angra Mainyus' or 'Ahriman'.

We can now realize how the great Zarathustran conception could be evolved from experiences born of sensations and sense contents. Through these, Zarathustra could advance his disciples to a point where he could make clear to them that: — Within man there is a 'Perfecting Principle', which tells him that whatever may be his present condition this principle will work persistently within, and through it he may raise himself ever higher and higher; but at the same time there also operate impulses and inclinations, deceit and falsehood, all tending towards imperfection. This Perfecting Principle must therefore be developed and expanded, in order that the world may be destined to attain to wiser and more advanced states of perfection; it is the 'Principle of Ahura Mazdao', and is assailed throughout the whole world by Ahriman — 'The Spirit of Darkness' — who through imperfection and evil brings shadows into the light. By following the method above outlined, Zarathustra's disciples were enabled to realize and to feel, that in truth each individual man is an image of the outer universe.

We must not seek the true significance of such teaching in theories, concepts and ideas; but in active vivid consciousness and in the sensations impressed when through it man realizes that he is so related to the universe that he can say: — 'As I stand here, I am a small world, and as such I am a replica of the Great Cosmos.' Just as we have within us a principle of perfection, and another which is antagonistic, so throughout the universe is Ormuzd opposed by Ahriman. In these teachings the whole cosmos is represented as typical of a widespread human being; the forces of greatest virtue are termed Ahura Mazdao, while against these operate the powers of Angra Mainyus.

When a man realizes that he is in direct contact with the workings of the universe and the attendant physical phenomena, but can only apprehend the perceptual, then as he begins to gain spiritual experience, a feeling of awe may come over him (especially if he is materialistic in thought) when he learns through Spectrum Analysis, that the same matter which exists upon the earth is found in the most distant stars. It is the same with Zarathustranism, when man feels

that his spiritual part is merged in that of the whole cosmos, and that he has indeed emanated from its great spirit. Herein lies the true significance of such a doctrine, which was not merely abstract in character, but on the contrary wholly concrete.

In this present age it is most difficult to make people understand (even when they have a certain sense for the spiritual that lies behind the perceptual) that it is necessary to a true and spiritually scientific view of the cosmos, that there be more than one central unity of spirit-power. But even as we distinguish between the separate forces in Nature, such as Heat, Light, and Chemical forces, so in the world of spirit must we recognize not merely one centralized power (whose existence is not denied) but we must differentiate between it and certain subservient uplifting forces, whose spheres of action are more circumscribed than are those of the all-embracing spirit. Thus it was that Zarathustra made a distinction between the omnipotent Ormuzd, and those spirit beings by whom he was served.

Before we turn to a consideration of these subservient spirit entities, we must draw attention to the fact that the Zarathustran theory was not a mere Dualism — a simple doctrine of two worlds — the worlds of Ormuzd and of Ahriman; but that it maintained that underlying this double flux of cosmic influence, is a definite unity — a single power — which gave birth to both The Realm of Light (Ormuzd) and to The Realm of Darkness (Ahriman). It is not easy to gain a right understanding of Zarathustra's conception concerning this 'Unity' underlying Ormuzd and Ahriman. With reference to this point the Greek authors state that the ancient Persians worshipped, and regarded as a 'Living Unity', that which lay beyond the light, and which Zarathustra termed 'Zervane Akarene'. How can we gain a comprehension of what Zarathustra in his teachings meant by 'Zervane Akarene' or 'Zaruana Akarana'?

Let us consider for a moment the course of evolution; this we must regard as of such nature, that all beings tend towards greater and greater perfection. So that if we look into the future, we see more and more of the radiance from the Light-Realms of Ormuzd; but if we turn our eyes upon the past, we realize how the powers of Ahriman, which oppose Ormuzd, are circumstanced; and we then know that with the passing of time, these must be conquered and for ever ended.

We will now picture to ourselves that the path into the future and that into the past each lead to the same point; a conception which present-day man finds most difficult to grasp. Let us take as an example a circle; if we pass along the circumference from the lowest point in one direction, we come to the opposite point above, if, however, we go along the other side, we come to the same point. When we consider a larger circle, then the circumference is flatter, and we must traverse a greater distance in each case. We will now suppose a circle to expand ever more and more, then ultimately the path on either side becomes a straight line, and is infinite. But just before the circle becomes infinite we would reach the same point whether we went by the one path or the other. Why, then, should not the same happen when the circumference is so flattened that the periphery becomes a straight line? In this case the point at infinity on the one must be identical with that on the other, and therefore we must be able to travel to it, from the lowest point in one sense (say, positive), and return as if coming from the opposite (negative) direction. This means that when our conception is infinite, we have a straight line extending without limit on either side, but which is in reality the circumference of an infinite circle.

The abstraction given above lies at the basis of Zarathustra's conception of what he termed *Zaruana Akarana*. Here, with regard to time, we look in one direction into the future, in the other into the past, and when we consider an infinite period time closes in upon itself as in a circle. This self-contained and infinite time circle is symbolically represented as a serpent eternally biting its own tail, and into it is woven upon the one side, The Power of Light, shedding upon us continually a greater and greater radiance; and upon the other, The Power of Darkness, becoming ever more and more profound. When we are midway, then is the light (*Ormuzd*) intermingled with the shadows (*Ahriman*); all is interwoven in the self-embracing infinite Flux of Time, '*Zaruana Akarana*'.

There is something more about this ancient cosmic conception; its basic ideas were treated seriously, there were no mere vague statements such as: — 'Without and remote from all that is material in this perceptual world, beyond those things which affect our eyes, our ears, and sense organs in general — abides The Spirit'. But it was

definitely asserted, that in everything which could be seen and apprehended, therein could be discerned something of the nature of spirit signs, or a manifestation of the Spirit-World.

If we take a sheet of paper upon which are inscribed alphabetical characters, these may be combined into words; but we must first have learnt how to read. Without this ability no one could read about Zarathustra; for they would merely perceive certain characters which could only be followed with the eyes. Actual reading can only take place after it is clearly understood how to connect such characters with that which is within the soul. Now, Zarathustra discerned a written sign underlying all that was in the perceptual world, particularly in the manner in which the stars are grouped in the universe. Just as we recognize written characters upon paper, so did Zarathustra descry in the starry firmament something similar to letters, conveying a message from the Spirit-World. Hence, arose an art of penetrating into the World of Spirit, and of deciphering the signs indicated by the arrangement of the stars, and of finding a method of reading and construing from their movements and order, in what manner and way those spiritual beings that are without, inscribe the facts concerning their activities in space.

Zarathustra and his disciples had a paramount interest in these matters. To them it was a most important sign that Ahura Mazdao, in order to accomplish his creations and to reveal his message to the world, should (in the language of Modern Astronomy) 'describe a circular path'. This fact was regarded as a sign traced in the heavens indicating in what manner Ahura Mazdao worked, and the relation which his activities bore to the universe as a whole. It is important that Zarathustra was able to point out that the constellations of the Zodiac, taken together as forming a closed curve in space, should symbolize a continuous and also retroactive time flux; and we can realize that there is indeed a most profound significance underlying the statement, that one branch of this time-curve stretches outward into the future, while the other leads backward into the remote past. Zarwana Akarana is that bright band of stars, later known as the Zodiac, that self-contained time-line ever traversed by Ormuzd, The Spirit of Light. In other words, the passage of the sun across the constellations of the Zodiac is an expression of the activity of Ormuzd;

while the Zodiac itself is the symbol of Zaruana Akarana. In reality, Zaruana Akarana and The Zodiac are identical terms, just in the same way as are Ormuzd and Ahura Mazdao.

There are two special circumstances to be considered in this connection. First, when the passage of the sun through the Zodiac takes place while it is light, as in the summer. At such time the solar radiance falls full upon the earth, bringing with it the power emanating from those spiritual forces ever flowing outward from the Light-Realms of Ormuzd. That part of the Zodiac traversed by Ahura Mazdao in the daytime, or during the summer, denotes the manner in which He works and weaves unhindered by Ahriman. On the other hand, those Zodiacal constellations which lie far beneath the horizon — dark regions through which we might picture the passage of Angra Mainyus — are symbolical of the Kingdom of The Shadows.

We have stated that Zarathustra regarded Ormuzd as associated with the bright sections of the Zodiac (Zaruana Akarana), while he looked upon Ahriman as connected with the gloom. In what way do the activities of Ormuzd and Ahriman find expression in our material world? In order to understand this point we must realize that the effect of the solar rays is different in the morning from that at noon; varying as the sun ascends from Aries to Taurus, and again during its descent toward the horizon. The influence exerted is not the same in winter as in summer, and differs with every passing sign of the Zodiac. Zarathustra regarded the changing aspects of the sun in connection with the Zodiacal constellations as symbolical of the activities of Ormuzd proceeding from different directions, and from which came those spiritual beings that are both His servants and His sons, and who are ready at all times to execute His commands. These are the 'Amschaspands' or 'Ameschas Pentas', subservient entities, to each of whom is allotted some special duty.

While Ormuzd controls all active functions in the Light-Realms, the Amschaspands undertake that specific work which finds expression in the transmission of the sun's light when in Aries, Taurus, Cancer, etc. But the true vital activity of Ormuzd is manifested in the full radiance of the sun, shining throughout all bright signs of the Zodiac, from Aries to Libra or Scorpio. Following the Zarathustran line of thought, we might say: — 'It is as though the evil powers of Ahriman came through the earth from those dark regions where abide his servants —

his own Amschaspands — who are opposed to the good genii standing by the side of Ormuzd.' Zarathustra actually distinguished between twelve different subservient spirit entities; six or seven on the side of Ormuzd, and five or six on that of Ahriman. These are regarded as typical of good or evil genii (Amaschas Pentas — lower spirits), according as to whether their influence comes with the sun's rays from the bright Signs of the Zodiac, or emanates from those which are in gloom.

Goethe had the subservient spirits of Ormuzd in mind when he wrote the following words at the beginning of *Faust in the 'Prologue of Heaven'*:

*'But ye, God's sons in love and duty,
Enjoy the rich, the ever-living Beauty!
Creative Power, that works eternal schemes,
Clasp you in bonds of love, relaxing never,
And what in wavering apparition gleams
Fix in its place with thoughts that stand for ever!'*

(Trans: BAYARD TAYLOR)

From the above it is apparent that the conception which Goethe formed of 'God's sons' as the servants of the Highest Divine Power, is similar to Zarathustra's concept concerning the Amschaspands, of which, as already stated, he recognized twelve different kinds. Again, subservient to these Amschaspand entities, according to Zarathustranism, are yet lower orders of spiritual powers or forces, among which some twenty-eight separate types are usually distinguished. These are the so-called 'Izarads' or 'Izeds'; the number of different classes into which they may be divided is, however, indeterminate, being variously estimated from twenty-four up to twenty-eight, and even as high as thirty-one. There is yet a third division of spiritual powers or forces, termed by Zarathustra 'Ferruhars' or 'Frawaschars'. According to our conceptions, the Ferruhars have the least influence of any upon our tendencies and dispositions in the material world, and are regarded as that spiritual element which permeates the great macrocosm, and underlies all

perceptual physical activity. They are the reality behind everything of which we are conscious and appears to us as merely external and material.

While we picture the Amschaspands as controlling the twelve forces which are at work during all physical effects engendered by the action of light, and the Izedes, as governing those which influence the animal kingdom, so do we consider the Ferruhars, in addition to possessing the quality above-mentioned, as spiritual entities having under their guidance the 'Group-Souls' of animals.

Thus did Zarathustra discern a specialized realm beyond this perceptual universe — a perfectly organized superperceptual world — and his concept was absolutely definite, and in no sense of the nature of an abstraction. Behind Ormuzd and Ahriman he pictured Zaruana Akarana, further the good and bad Amschaspands, below these the Izedes, and lastly the Ferruhars.

Man, as he is fashioned, is a replica in miniature of the great universe, and therefore all forces operative in the cosmos must be present in some manner within his being. Just as the benevolent powers of Ormuzd are expressed during that inner struggle to attain to perfection, and the unclean forces of Ahriman are in evidence while there is gloom and temptation, so do we find also the trace of other spiritual powers — those of the lower genii.

I will now make a definite statement, which when viewed from the standpoint of modern cosmic ideas, is liable to awaken bitter feeling, namely: — I assert that before long it will be discovered and recognized by external science, that a superperceptual element underlies all physical phenomena, and that latent spirit exists in everything that comes within the limits of our sense perceptions. Further, that science will be driven to admit, that in the physical structure of man there is much that is a counterpart of those forces which permeate and spread life throughout the whole universe, and which flow into the body, there to become condensed.

Let us go back to the Zarathustran Doctrine, which in many ways is similar to that of Spiritual Science. According to its concepts, Ormuzd and Ahriman are regarded as influencing mankind from without. Ormuzd being the source of inward impulses toward perfection, while

Ahriman is ever in opposition. The Amschaspands also exert spiritual activity, if we consider their forces as being, so to speak, condensed in man, then it should be possible to trace and recognize their action to the point of physical expression.

In Zarathustra's time, anatomy, as we understand it to-day, did not exist. Zarathustra and his disciples, by means of their spiritual insight, actually saw the cosmic streams to which reference has been made; they appeared to them in the form of twelve cosmic outpourings, flooding in upon man, there to maintain activity. Thus it came about that the human head was regarded by Zarathustra's followers as a symbol of the inflowing of the seven good, and five evil, Amschaspands. Within man we have a continuance of the Amschaspand flux; how, then, is this flux to be recognized at this much later period? The anatomist has discovered that there are twelve principal pairs of brain nerves, which pass from the brain into the body. These are the physical counterparts, as it were, of the twelve condensed Amschaspand out-flowings, namely, twelve pairs of nerves of extreme potency in bringing about either the highest perfection, or the greatest evil. Here, then, we find reappearing in our present age, but transformed into material terms, that concept which had come to Zarathustra from the Spirit-World, and which he preached to his disciples.

There is, however, in all this a point of controversy. It is so easy for anyone in our day to maintain that the statements of Spiritual Science become wholly fantastical when it is alleged that Zarathustra, speaking of twelve Amschaspands, had in mind something connected with the twelve pairs of nerves which are in the human head! But the time will come when the world will gain yet another item of knowledge, for it will be discovered in what manner, and from the spirit, which permeates and lives throughout the universe, continues active in man.

The old Zarathustranism has arisen once again in our modern physiology. For in the same way as the twenty-eight to thirty-one Izedes are the servants of the Amschaspands, so are the twenty-eight spinal nerves subordinate to those of the brain. Again, the Izedes, who are present in the outer universe as a spirit flux, enter the human body, and their sphere of action is in those nerves which stimulate the lower soul-life of man; in these nerves they crystallize, as it were, and assume a condensed form. And where the Ized-flux, as such, entirely

ceases, and the term 'nerve' can no longer be applied, is the actual centre where our personality receives its crowning touch. Further, those of our thoughts which rise slightly above mere cognition and simple brain action, are typical of the Frawaschars or Ferruhars.

Our present period is connected in a remarkable manner with the Doctrine of Zarathustra. Through his teachings and by means of his spiritual archetypes, Zarathustra was enabled to enlighten his people regarding those regions which spread beyond the perceptual world, while his imagery was ever as a flowing contact with that which lies hidden behind the veil. With reference to this great doctrine it is most significant that after it had acted as an inspiration to humanity for a long period, always tending to promote greater and greater effort in various directions of cultural progress — only to lose its influence from time to time — there should arise once more, in our day, a marked tendency toward a mystical current of thought.

It was the same with the Greeks after the two methods of approach to the Spirit-World had commingled, for they also, at times, showed a preference for either the mystical or the Spiritual Scientific thought current. It is owing to the modern predominating interest in mysticism that many people find themselves drawn towards the Indian Spiritual Science, or Method of Contemplation. Hence it is, that the most essential and deeply significant aspects of Zarathustranism — in fact, its very essence — hardly appear in the spiritual life of our time, although there is abundant evidence of the nature of Zarathustra's concepts and his methods of thought. But all that lies at the very base, and is absolutely vital to his doctrine, is in a sense lost to our age.

When once we realize that in Zarathustranism is contained the spiritual prototype of so many things which we have rediscovered in the domain of physical research (numerous examples of which might be quoted), and of others that will be rediscovered later, then will a fundamental chord in our culture give place to one which will be founded upon the old Zarathustran teachings. It is remarkable that the profound attention which Zarathustranism paid to macrocosmic phenomena caused the world to recede, as it were, or appear of less moment; while in nearly all other beliefs with which a flood of mystical culture is associated, the outer world plays an important part, this is also the case in our materialism.

That great fundamental concept concerning two opposing basic qualities, and which recurs again and again throughout the religious doctrines of the world, we regard in the following manner; we consider it as symbolized by the antithesis of the sexes — the male and the female — so that in the old religious systems which were founded upon mysticism, the Gods and Goddesses were in reality, antithetical symbols of two opposing currents which flow throughout the universe. It is amazing that the teachings of Zarathustra should rise above these conceptions, and picture the origin of spiritual activity in so different a manner, portraying the good, as the resplendent, and the evil as the shadows.

Hence, the chaste beauty of Zarathustranism and its nobility, which transcends all those petty ideas which play so ugly a part in our time, when any endeavour is made to deepen man's conception of spiritual life. Where the Greek writers state that the Supreme Deity in order to create Ormuzd, must also create Ahriman, so that He should obtain an antithesis; then, since Ahriman opposed Ormuzd, we have an example of how one primordial force is conceived as set against another. This same idea finds expression in the Hebrew, where evil comes upon the world through the woman — Eve — but we find nothing in Zarathustranism concerning ills that the world suffered through the antithesis of the sexes.

All those hateful ideas which are disseminated throughout our daily literature, pervading our very thoughts and feelings, distorting the true significance of the phenomena of disease and health, while failing to comprehend the intrinsic facts of life, will disappear, when that wholly different concept, the antithesis exhibited by Ormuzd and Ahriman — a conception so lofty and so powerful when compared with present-day paltry notions — is once more voiced in the words of Zarathustra, and enters to permeate and influence our modern culture. In this world, all things pursue their appointed course, and nothing can hinder the ultimate triumph of Zarathustran conceptions, which will, little by little, insinuate themselves into the life of the people.

When we look upon Zarathustra in this way, we realize that he was indeed a Spirit, who in bygone times brought potent impulses to bear upon human culture. That such was the case becomes evident, if we but follow the course of subsequent events which took place in Asia

Minor, and later among the people of Assyria and Babylonia, on down to the Egyptian period, and further even to the time of the spreading of Christianity. Everywhere we find in different lines of thought something which may be traced back, and shown to have its origin in that Great Light, which Zarathustra set blazing for humanity.

We can now understand how it was that a certain Greek writer (who wished to emphasize the fact that some among the Leaders had always given their people instruction in matters that they would only require at a later period in their culture) should have stated, that while Pythagoras had obtained all the knowledge that he could from the Egyptians concerning the methods of Geometry, from the Phænicians concerning Arithmetic, and from the Chaldeans concerning Astronomy — he was forced to turn to the successors of Zarathustra, in order to learn the secret teachings regarding the relation of humanity to the Spirit-World, and to obtain a true understanding of the proper conduct of life. The writer who made these statements regarding Pythagoras further asserts that the Zarathustran method for the conduct of life leads us beyond antitheses, and that all antitheses can be considered as culminating in the one great contrast of Good and Evil, which opposing condition can be finally absorbed, only by the purging away of all evil, falsehood and deceit. For instance, the worst enemy of Ormuzd is regarded as that one which bears the name of Calumny, and Calumny is one of the outstanding characteristics of Ahriman. The same writer states that Pythagoras failed to find the purest and most ideal ethical practice, namely, the one directed toward the moral purification of man, among either the Egyptians, the Phænicians, or the Chaldeans; and that he had again to turn to Zarathustra's successors, in order to acquire that lofty conception of the universe which leads mankind to the earnest belief that through self-purification alone may evil be overcome. Thus did the great nobility and oneness of Zarathustra's teachings become recognized among the ancients.

We would here mention that the statements made in this lecture are supported in every case by independent historical research; and we should carefully weigh all assertions coming from the representatives of other sciences, and judge for ourselves, whether or no they are in accord with our fundamental concepts. For instance, take the case of Plutarch, when he said that in the sense of Zarathustranism, the essence of Light as it affects the earth, is regarded as of supreme

loveliness, and that its spiritual counterpart is Truth. Here is a definite statement made by an ancient historian, which is in complete agreement with all that has been said. We shall also find as we proceed that many historical events become clear and understandable when we take into consideration the various factors to which we have drawn attention.

Let us now go back to the ancient Vedantic conception; this was based upon the mystical merging of man within his very being; but before he can attain to the inner Light of Brahma, he must meet with, and pass through, those passions and desires which are induced by wild semi-human impulses that are within him, and which are opposed to that mystical withdrawal within the spirit-soul, and into the eternal inner being. The Indian came to the conclusion that this could only be accomplished, if pending his mystic merging in Brahma, he could successfully eliminate all that we experience in the perceptual world which stimulates sensuous desires, and allures through colours and through sounds. Just so long as these play a part during our meditations, so long do we keep within us, an enemy opposed to our mystical attainment to perfection.

The Indian teacher said: — 'Put away from yourselves all that can enter the soul through the powers that are external; merge yourselves solely within your very being — descend to the Devas — and when you have vanquished the lower Devas, then will you find yourselves within the kingdom of the Deva of Brahma; but shun the realm of the Asuras, whence come those malignant ones who would thrust themselves upon you from the outer world of Maya; from all such you must turn away, whatsoever may befall.'

Zarathustra, on the other hand, spoke to his disciples after this fashion: — 'Those who follow the leaders among the people of the South can make no advance along the path which they have chosen, because of the different order of their search after those things which are of the Spirit; in such manner can no nation make headway. The call is not alone to mystic contemplation and to dreaming, but to live in a world which provides freely of all that is needful — man's mission lies with the art of agriculture, and the promotion of civilization. You must not regard all things as merely Maya, but you must penetrate that veil of colours, and of sounds, which is spread around you; and avoid everything that may be of the nature of the Devas, and which

because of your inner egoism, would hold you in its grasp. The region wherein abide the lower Asuras must be traversed, through this you must force your way, even up to the highest; but since your being has been especially organized and adapted to this intent, you must ever shun the dark realms of the Devas.'

In India, the teaching of the Rishis was otherwise, for they said to their followers: — 'Your beings are *not* suitably organized to seek that which lies within the Kingdom of the Asuras — therefore avoid this region and descend to that of the Devas.'

Such was the difference between the Indian and Persian culture. The Indian peoples were taught that they must shun the Asuras and regard them as evil spirits; this was because through the method of their culture they were only aware of the lower Asuras; the Persians, on the other hand, who found only low types of Devas in the Devas regions were adjured by their leaders thus: — 'Enter the Kingdom of the Asuras, for you are so constituted that you may attain even unto the highest of them.'

There lay within the impulse that Zarathustra gave to mankind a great fervour, which found expression when he said: — 'I have a gift to bestow upon humanity which shall endure and live throughout the ages, and will smooth the upward path, overcoming all false doctrines, which are but obstacles diverting man from his struggle toward the attainment of perfection.' Thus did Zarathustra feel himself to be the servant of Ahura Mazdao, and as such he experienced personally the opposition of Ahriman, over whose principles his teachings should enable mankind to achieve a sweeping victory. This conviction he expressed in impressive and beautiful words, to which reference is found in ancient documents. These, however, were necessarily inscribed at a later date; but what Spiritual Science tells us concerning Zarathustra and his pronouncements comes from other sources. Throughout all his telling adjurations there rings forth the inner impulse of his mission, and we feel the power of that great passion which overcame him, when, as the opponent of Ahriman and the Principle of Darkness, he said: — 'I will speak! draw nigh and listen unto me, ye that come with longing from afar, and ye from near at hand — mark my words! — No more shall he, the Evil One, this false teacher, conquer the Spirit of Good. Too long hath his vile breath bemingled human voice and human speech. But now I will denounce

him in the words which The Highest — The First One — has put into my mouth, the words which Ahura Mazdao has spoken. To him who will not harken unto my words, and who will not heed that which I say unto you — to him will come evil — and that, ere ever the world hath ended its cycles.'

Thus spoke Zarathustra, and we can but feel that he had something to impart to humanity, which would leave its impress throughout all later cultural periods. Those among us who have understanding and will but pay attention to that which persists in our time, even if only dimly apparent, who will note with spiritual discernment the tenor of our culture, can even yet, after thousands of years, recognize the echo of the Zarathustran teachings. Hence it is that we number Zarathustra among Great Leaders such as Hermes, Buddha, Moses, and others, about whom we shall have much to say in subsequent lectures. The spiritual gifts possessed by these Great Ones, and the position which they occupied among men, are indicated, and fitly expressed in the following words: —

*'God sends us Spirits that shine as stars,
From the spheres of eternal love.
May we behold that glorious light,
They reflect from the realms above.'*



II. Hermes and the Mysteries of Ancient Egypt

16 February 1911, Berlin

It is of great importance to Spiritual Science to follow the gradual development of man's spirit, from epoch to epoch, as it slowly evolves, and pressing ever upward, emerges from the dark shadows of the past. Hence it is that the study of ancient Egyptian culture and spiritual life is of especial moment. This is found to be particularly the case when we endeavour to picture and live in the atmosphere and conditions associated with the latter.

The echoes which reach us from the dim grey vistas of by-gone times seem as full of mystery as is the countenance of the Sphinx itself, which stands so grimly forth as a monument to ancient Egyptian civilization. This mystery becomes intensified as modern external scientific research finds that it is constrained to delve ever deeper and deeper into the remote past, in order to throw light upon later Egyptian culture; regarding which most important documents are extant. Such investigations have found traces of certain things, clearly related to the active cultural life of Egypt, which date back to a period at least 7,000 years before the beginning of the Christian era. Here, then, is one reason why this particular civilization is of such paramount interest, but there is another, namely, present-day man, although living in times of broader and more general enlightenment has nevertheless a feeling, whether acceptable or not, that this ancient culture is in some singular and mysterious manner, connected with his very aims and ideals.

It is indeed significant that a man of such outstanding intellect as **Kepler**, should, at the very dawn of modern scientific development, have been moved to express the feelings which came over him, while engaged in astronomical research, in words somewhat as follows: — 'During my attempt to discover the manner of the passing of the planets around the sun, I have sought to peer into the deep secrets of the cosmos; the while it has oft-times seemed as if my fancy had led me into the mysterious sanctuaries of the old Egyptians — to touch

their most holy vessels, and draw them forth that I might bestow them upon a new world. At such moments the thought has come to me, that only in the future will the true purport and intent of my message be disclosed.'

Here we find one of the greatest scientists of modern times overcome by a sense of such close relation to the ancient Egyptian culture, that he could find no better way of expressing the fundamental concepts underlying his work, than by representing them as a regeneration, naturally differing as to word and form, of the occult doctrines taught to the disciples and followers in the by-gone Egyptian Sanctuaries. It is therefore a matter of the greatest interest to us that we should realize the actual sentiments of these olden Egyptian peoples, in regard to the whole meaning and nature of their civilization.

There is an ancient legend that has been handed down through Greek tradition which is most suggestive, not only of what the Egyptians themselves felt regarding their culture, but also the way in which their civilization was looked upon by the ancients as a whole. We are told that an Egyptian sage once said to Solon: — 'You Greeks are still children, you have never grown up, and all your knowledge has been acquired through your own human observation and senses; you have neither traditions nor doctrines grey with age.' We first learn what is implied by the expression, 'doctrines grey with age', when the methods of Spiritual Science are employed in an endeavour to throw light upon the nature and significance of Egyptian thought and feeling. But, as has been before stated, when we approach this matter we must bear in mind that during successive periods of man's development he gradually acquired different forms of consciousness, and that that order of conscious apprehension which is ours to-day, with its scientific method of thought, and through which we realize the outer world in virtue of our senses working in conjunction with reason and intellect, did not always exist. Deep down, underlying all human cognition, there is what we term 'Evolution', and evolution affects not only the outer world of form, but also the disposition of man's soul. It follows, that we can only really understand the events which took place at the ancient centres of culture, when we accept that knowledge which Spiritual Science can alone obtain, from the sources of information at its disposal. We thus learn that in olden times instead of our present intellectual consciousness, there existed a

clairvoyant state that differed from our customary normal conscious condition, of which we are cognizant from the moment we awake until we again fall asleep. On the other hand, the ancient clairvoyant state cannot be likened to the insensibility produced by slumber. Hence, the primeval consciousness of prehistoric man should be regarded as an intermediate condition now only faintly apparent, and retained, as one might say, atavistically in the form of an attenuated heritage in the picture world of our dreams.

Now, dreams are for the most part chaotic in character, and therefore meaningless in their relation to ordinary life. But the old clairvoyant consciousness, which also found expression in imagery although often of a somewhat subdued and visionary nature, was nevertheless a truly clairvoyant gift, and its symbolical manifestations had reference, not to our physical world, but to that realm which lies beyond all material things, in other words — the world of spirit. We can say that in reality all clairvoyant consciousness, including the dream-state of primitive man, as well as that acquired to-day through those methods to which we have previously referred, finds expression pictorially and not in concepts and ideas, as is the case with externalized physical consciousness. It is for the possessor of such faculty to interpret the symbols presented in terms of those spiritual realities, which underlie all physical perceptual phenomena.

We have reached a point where we can look back on the evolution of the ancient races, and of a surety say: — Those wondrous visions of by-gone times of which tradition tells us, were not born of childish fantasy and false conception of the works of Nature (this, as I have pointed out, is the wide-spread opinion in the materialistic circles of to-day), but were in truth veritable pictures of the Spirit-World, flashed before the souls of men in that now long distant past.

He who seriously studies the old mythologies and legends, not from the point of view of modern materialistic thought, but with an understanding of the creation and spiritual activities of mankind, will find in these strange stories a certain coherence which harmonizes wonderfully with those cosmic principles that dominate all physical, chemical and biological laws; while there rings throughout the ancient mythological and religious systems a tone of spiritual reality, from which they acquire a true significance.

We must clearly realize that the peoples of the various nations, each according to disposition, temperament and racial or folk-character, formed different conceptions of that vision world in which they conceived higher powers to be actively operating behind the accustomed forces of Nature. Further, that during the gradual course of evolution, mankind passed through many transitional stages between that of the consciousness of the ancients, and our present-day objective conscious state. As time went on, the power necessary to the old clairvoyance dimmed and the visions faded; one might say — the doors leading to the higher realms were slowly closed, so that the pictures manifested to those whose souls could still peer into the Spirit-World, held ever less and less of spiritual force, until towards the end, only the lowest stages of supersensible activity could be apprehended. Finally, this primeval clairvoyant power died out, in so far as humanity in general was concerned, and man's vision became limited to that which is of the material world, and to the apprehension of physical concepts and things; from that time on, the study of the interrelation of these factors led, step by step, to the birth of modern science. Thus it came about, that when the old clairvoyant state was past, our present intellectual consciousness gradually developed in diverse ways among the different nations.

The mission of the Egyptian peoples was of a very special nature. All that we know regarding ancient times, even that knowledge attained through modern Egyptian research, if rightly understood, tends but to verify the statements of Spiritual Science regarding the allotted task and true purpose of the Egyptian race. It was ordained that these olden peoples should still be imbued with a sufficiency of that primal power which would enable them to look back into the misty past; when their leaders in virtue of outstanding individualities and highly developed clairvoyant faculties, could gaze far into the mysteries of the Spirit-World. [Spiritual Science asserts that it was in accordance with 'The Great Eternal Plan' that the Egyptians should gain wisdom and understanding from this source, to be a guide and a benefit in the development of mankind.] And we have learnt that it was to this end that this great nation was still permitted to retain a certain measure of that fast-fading clairvoyant power so closely associated with a specific disposition of soul. Although these qualities were, at that time, weak and ever waning in intensity, nevertheless they continued active until a comparatively late period in Egyptian history.

We can therefore make this statement: — The Egyptians, down to less than 1000 years before the Christian era, had actual experience of a mode of vision differing from that with which we are familiar in every-day life, when we merely open our eyes and make use of our intellect; and they knew that through this gift man was enabled to behold the spiritual realms. The later Egyptians, however, were unable to penetrate beyond the nethermost regions as portrayed in their pictorial visions, but they had power to recall those by-gone times in the Golden Age of Egyptian culture, when their priesthood could gaze both far and deeply into the world of spirit.

All knowledge obtained through visions was most carefully guarded and secretly preserved for thousands of years with the greatest piety, thankfulness and religious feeling, especially by the older Egyptians. At a later period, those among the people who still retained somewhat of clairvoyant power, expressed themselves after this fashion: — 'We can yet discern a lower spiritual realm — we know therefore that it is possible for mankind to look upon a Spirit-World; to question this truth would be as sensible as to doubt that we can really see external objects with our eyes.' Although these later Egyptians were only able to apprehend weak echoes, as it were, of the inferior spiritual levels, nevertheless they felt and divined that in olden times man could indeed penetrate far into the mystic depths of that realm which lies beyond all physical sense perceptions. There is a doctrine grey with age, still preserved in wonderful inscriptions in Temples and upon columns. (It was this doctrine to which the sage referred when he spoke to Solon.) These inscriptions tell us of the broad deep penetration of clairvoyant power in the remote past.

That being to whom the Egyptians attributed all the profundity of their primordial clairvoyant enlightenment they called THE GREAT WISE ONE — THE OLD HERMES. When, at a later period, some other outstanding leader came to revive the ancient wisdom, he also called himself Hermes, according to an old custom prevalent among exalted Egyptian sages, and because his followers believed that in him the primeval wisdom of the old Hermes lived once again. They named the first Hermes, — 'Hermes Trismegistos' — the Thrice-Great Hermes; but as a matter of fact it was only the Greeks who used the name of Hermes, for among the Egyptians he was known as 'Thoth'. In order

to understand this being, it is necessary to realize what the Egyptians, under the influence of traditions concerning Thoth, regarded as true and characteristic cosmic mystics.

Such Egyptian beliefs as have come to us, one might say from outside sources, seem very strange indeed. Various Gods, of whom the most important are Osiris and Isis, are represented as not wholly human; oft-times having a human body and an animal head, or again formed of the most varied combinations of manlike and animal shapes. Remarkable religious legends have come down to us regarding this world of the Gods.

Again, the veneration and worship of cats and other animals by this ancient race was most singular, and went to such lengths that certain animals were considered as holy, and held in the greatest reverence, and in them the Egyptians saw something akin to higher beings. It has been said that this veneration for animals was such that when a cat, for instance, which had lived for a long time in one house, died, there was much weeping and lamentation. If an Egyptian observed a dead animal lying by the wayside, he did not dare to go near it, for fear that someone might accuse him of having slain it, in which case he would be liable to severe punishment. Even during the time that Egypt was actually under Roman rule, so it has been said, any Roman who killed a cat went in danger of his life, because such an act produced an uproar among the Egyptians. This veneration of animals appears to us as a most enigmatic part of Egyptian thought and feeling. Again, how extraordinary do the Pyramids, with their quadrilateral bases and triangular sides, seem to modern man; and how mysterious are the sphinxes and all that modern research drags forth from the depths of this ancient civilization and brings to the surface, to add to our knowledge an ever-increasing clarity. The question now arises: — What place did all these strange ideas occupy in the image world of the souls of those olden peoples? What had they to say regarding those things which the Thrice-Great Hermes had taught them, and how did they come by these curious concepts?

We must henceforth accustom ourselves to seek in all legends a deeper meaning, especially in those which are the more important. It is to be assumed that the purpose of some of these legends, is to convey to us in picture form, information regarding certain laws which govern spiritual life, and are set above external laws. As an example

we have the fable of the god and goddess, Osiris and Isis. It was Hermes himself who called the Egyptian legends 'The Wise Counsellors of Osiris'. In all these fables, Osiris is a being who in the grey dawn of primeval times lived in the region where man now dwells. In the legend Osiris, who is represented as a benefactor of humanity, and under whose wise influence Hermes, or Thoth, gave to the Egyptians their ancient culture, even to the conduct of material life, was said to have an enemy whom the Greeks called Typhon. This enemy, Typhon, waylaid Osiris and slew him, then cut up his body, hid it in a coffin, and threw it into the sea. The goddess Isis, wife and sister of Osiris, sought long her husband who had been thus torn from her by Typhon, or Seth, and when she had at last found him, she gathered together the pieces into which he had been divided, and buried them here and there in various parts of the land, and in these places temples were erected. Later, Isis gave birth to Horos. Now, Horos was also a higher being, and his birth was brought about through spirit influence which descended upon Isis from Osiris, who had meanwhile passed into another world. The mission of Horos was to vanquish Typhon, and in a certain sense re-establish control of the life-current emanating from Osiris, which would continue to flow and influence mankind.

A legend such as this must not be regarded simply as an allegory, nor as a mere symbolism; in order to understand it rightly, we must enter into the whole world of Egyptian feeling and perception. It is far more important to do this than to form abstract concepts and ideas; for by thus opening the mind, we can alone give life to the sentiments and thoughts associated with the ideal forms of Osiris and Isis. Further, it is useless to attempt to explain these two outstanding figures by saying that Osiris represents the Sun, and Isis the Moon, and so forth — thus giving them an astronomical interpretation, as is the custom of the sciences of to-day outside of Spiritual Science — for such a theory leads to the belief that a legend of this nature is a mere symbolical portrayal of certain events connected with the heavens, and this is not true. We must go far back to the primeval feelings of the Egyptians, and from these as a starting-point try to realize the whole peculiar nature of their uplifted vision of the supersensible, and conception of those invisible forces beyond man's apprehension which underlie the perceptual world. It is the spiritual interrelation of these factors that finds expression in the ideal forms of Osiris and Isis.

The old Egyptians associated these two figures with ideas similar to the following: There is a latent higher spiritual essence in all mankind which did not emanate from that material environment in which it now functions; at the beginning of earth-life it entered into physical bodily existence in condensed form, there slowly to unfold and grow throughout the ages. Man's human state was preceded by another and more spiritual condition, and it is from this primordial condition from which the human being gradually developed. The Egyptian said: — 'When I look into my soul, I realize that there is within me a longing for spiritual things; a longing for that true spirituality from which I have descended, and I know that certain of the supersensible forces which operate in the region from which I come still live within me, and that the best of these are intimately related to the ultimate source of all superperceptual activity. Thus do I feel within me an Osiris power, which placed me here — a spirit embodied in external human form. In times past, before I came to this state, I lived wholly in a spiritual realm, where my life was confused, dim and instinctive in character. It was ordained that I be clothed with a material body, so that I should experience and behold a physical world, in order that I might develop therein. I know of a verity that in the beginning I have lived a life which compared to this physical perceptual existence, was indeed of the spirit.'

According to ancient Egyptian concepts the primordial forces underlying human evolution were regarded as dual, the one element being termed Osiris, while the other was known as Isis; hence we have an Osiris-Isis duality. When we give ourselves over to inner contemplation and are moved by the feelings and perceptions of the old Egyptians concerning this dualism, we at once find that we are involved in a process of active and suggestive thought, leading to certain conclusions. In order to follow this mental process we have only to consider the manner in which the mind operates when we think of some object, such for instance as a triangle. In this case, active thought must precede the actual conception of the figure. After the soul has been thus engaged in primary contemplation, we then turn our minds passively to the result of our thought concepts, and finally see the fruit of our mental activity pictured in the soul. The act of thinking has the same relation to final thought, as the act of conceiving to the final concept, or activity to the result of activity or its ultimate product. If we contemplate our mental process when we picture the Egyptian past, and are mindful of the mood of these

ancient peoples, we realize that they looked upon the relation between Osiris and Isis in a somewhat similar manner to our conception of the order and outcome of thought activity. For instance, we might consider that activity should be regarded as a Male, or Father-Principle, and that therefore the Osiris-Principle must be looked upon as an active Male-Principle, a combative principle, which imbues the soul with thoughts and feelings of potency and vigour.

[We can form an idea of the old Egyptian concept concerning Osiris and Isis from the following considerations]: — In the physical body of man are certain components such as those that are active in the blood and those which are the basis of bone formation. The whole human system owes its being to the interaction of forces and matter, which combine to create and to enter the material form; these elements can be physically recognized, they were, however, at one time dispersed, and spread throughout the universe. A similar idea prevailed among the ancient Egyptians concerning their conception of Osiris-Force, which was conceived as actively pervading the entire cosmos, as Osiris. Even as the elements which form the physical body enter into it, there to combine and become operative, so did those olden peoples picture the Osiris-Force, as descending upon man to flow into his being and inspire within him the power of constructive thought and cognition — the veritable Osiris-Force. On the other hand, the expression Isis-Force was applied to that universal living cosmic influence which flows directly into the thoughts, concepts and ideas of mankind — it was this influence that was termed the Isis-Force. It is in the above manner that we must picture the uplifted vision in the souls of the old Egyptians, and it was thus that they regarded Osiris and Isis.

In that creation which surrounds us during our material existence, the ancient consciousness could find no words wherewith to express concepts such as these; for everything which is about us appeals alone to the senses, and has only meaning and value in a perceptual world, proffering no outer sign suggestive of a superphysical region. In order, therefore, to obtain something in the nature of a written language, which could express all such thoughts as moved the soul strongly, as for instance, when man exclaimed: — 'The Osiris-Isis-Force works within me,' the ancients reached out to that script which is written in the firmament by the heavenly bodies, and said: — That supersensible power which man feels as Osiris, can be apprehended

and expressed in perceptual terms if regarded as that active force emanating from the sun and spread abroad in the great cosmos. The Isis-Force may be pictured as the sun's rays reflected from the moon which waits upon the sun, so that she may pass on the power of his radiance in the form of Isis-Influence. But until she receives his light the moon is dark — dark as a soul untouched by active uplifting thought. When the old Egyptian said: — 'The sun and the moon that are without reveal to me how I can best express, figuratively, my ideas concerning all that I feel within my soul,' he knew that there was some hidden bond, in no way fortuitous, between these two heavenly bodies which appear so full of mystery in the vast universe — the light-giving sun and the dark moon every ready to reflect his splendour. And he realized that the light dispersed in space, and that reflected, must bear some unknown but definite relation to those supersensible powers of which he was conscious.

When we look at a clock we cannot see what it is that moves the hands so mysteriously, apparently with the aid of little demons, for all that can be seen is a piece of mechanism; but we know that underlying the whole mechanical structure, is the thought of the original designer, which thought had its origin in the *soul* of a man; so that in reality the mechanism owes its construction to something spiritual. Now, just as the movements of the hands of a clock are mutually related, and fundamentally dependent upon certain mechanical laws which exist in the universe, and finally upon those that are operative in the soul of a man (as when he speaks of experiencing the influence of the Osiris-Isis-Force), so are the movements of the Sun and Moon interrelated, and these bodies appear to us as indicators on the face of a mighty cosmic clock. The Egyptian did not merely say: — 'The Sun and Moon are to me a perceptual symbol of the relation between Osiris and Isis,' but he felt and expressed himself thus: — 'That force which gives me life and is within, underlies the mysterious bond existing between the Sun and Moon, and it likewise endowed them with power to send forth light.'

In the same way as Osiris and Isis were regarded with reference to the Sun and Moon, so were other heavenly bodies looked upon as related to different gods. The ancient Egyptians considered that the positions of the various orbs in space were not merely symbolical of their own supersensible experiences, but likewise of those which tradition told them had been the experiences of seers belonging to the

remote past. Further, they saw in the cosmic clock an expression of the activity of those forces, the workings of which they felt in the ultimate depths of the human soul. Thus it came about that this mighty clock, this grand creation of moving orbs, so wondrously interrelated with others that are fixed, was to the Egyptians a revelation of those mysterious spiritual powers which bring about the ever-changing positions of the heavenly bodies, and thus create an universal script, which man must learn to know and to recognize as a means whereby superperceptual power is given perceptual expression.

Such were the feelings and perceptions which had been handed down to the old Egyptians from their ancient seers, regarding a higher spiritual world of the existence of which they were wholly convinced, for they still retained a last remnant of primeval clairvoyant power. These olden peoples said: — 'We human beings had our true origin in an exalted spiritual realm, but we are now descended into a perceptual world, in which manifest material things and physical happenings, nevertheless, we are indeed come from the world of Osiris and of Isis. All that is best and which strives within us, and is fitted to attain to yet higher states of perfection, has of a verity flowed in upon us from Osiris and from Isis, and lives unseen within as active force. Physical man was born of those conditions which are of the external perceptual world, and his material form is but as a garment clothing the Osiris-Isis spirit within.'

Predominant in the souls of the old Egyptians was a profound sentiment concerning primeval wisdom, which filled their whole soul-life. The soul may indeed incline towards abstract notions, particularly the mathematical concepts of natural science, without in any way touching the moral and ethical factors of its life, nor affecting its fate or state of bliss. For instance, there may be discussion and debate relative to electrical and other forces, without the soul being moved to enter upon grave questions concerning man's ultimate destiny.

On the other hand, we cannot ponder upon feelings and sentiments such as we have described regarding the Spirit-World and the inner relation of the soul's character to Osiris and Isis, without arousing thoughts involving man's happiness, his future, and his moral impulses. When the mind is thus occupied, man's meditations are prone to take this form: — 'There dwells in me a better self, but because of what I am within my physical body, this "better self" is

repressed and draws back, it is therefore not at first apparent. An Osiris and an Isis nature are fundamental to me; these, however, belong to a primordial world — to a by-gone golden age — to the holy past; now they are overcome by those forces that have fashioned the human form. But the Osiris-Isis power has entered and persists within that mortal covering which is ever subject to destruction through the external forces of Nature.'

The 'Legend of Osiris and Isis' may be expressed in terms of feeling and sentiment in the following manner: — Osiris, the higher power in man, which is spread throughout cosmic space, is overcome by those forces which bring about utter degeneration in all human nature. Typhon confined the Osiris-Force within the body, as in a coffin formed to receive man's spiritual counterpart; there the Osiris-Element lies concealed — invisible and unheeded by the outer world. (The name Typhon has linguistic connection with the words — 'Auflösen', to dissolve; and 'Verwesen', to decompose.) The Isis-Nature, hidden within the confines of the soul, was always mysterious to the Egyptians. They considered that at some future period its influence would bring mankind back to that state which he enjoyed in the beginning; and that this return would ultimately be brought about through the penetrative force of intellectual power; for they fully recognized that in humanity there is a latent disposition which ever strives to re-endow Osiris with life.

The Isis-Force lies deep within the soul, and its profound purpose is to lead mankind, step by step, away from his present material state, and bring him back once more to Osiris.

It is this Isis-Force which — so long as man does not cling to his physical quality — makes it possible for him (even though he remain outwardly a physical man in a material world) to detach himself from his perceptual nature, and henceforth and for ever more to look upward from within his being to that more exalted Ego, which in the opinion of the most advanced thinkers, lies so mysteriously veiled at the very root of man's powers of thought and action. This being, not the outer physical one, but the true inner man who has ever the stimulus to strive towards higher spiritual enlightenment, is as it were, the earth-born son of that Osiris who did not go forth into the material world, but remained as if concealed in the realms of the spirit. In their souls, the Egyptians regarded this invisible personality that struggles

toward the attainment of a higher self, as Horos — the posthumous son of Osiris. It was thus that these old Egyptians visualized, with a certain feeling of sadness, the Osiris-origin of man; but at the same time they looked inward and said: — 'The soul has still retained something of the Isis-Force which gave birth to Horos, the possessor of that never-ceasing impulse to strive upward towards spiritual heights, and it is *there*, in that sublimity, that man shall once again find Osiris.'

It is possible for present-day humanity to bring about this mystic meeting in two ways. The Egyptian said: — 'I have come from Osiris, and to Osiris I shall return, and because of my spiritual origin, Horos lies deep within my being and Horos leads me on, back to Osiris — to his Father — who may alone be found in the world of spirit; for he can in no way enter into man's physical nature; there he is overcome by the powers of Typhon, those external forces which underlie all destruction and decay.'

There are but two paths by which Osiris may be attained, the one is by way of the Portal of Death; the other passes not through the Gateway of Physical Dissolution, for Osiris may be reached through Initiation and the consecration of life to Sacred Service.

Under the title of *Christianity as a Mystical Fact*, I have gone more fully into this belief. The Egyptian conception was as follows: — When man has passed through the Portal of Death, and after certain necessary preparatory stages have been completed, he comes to Osiris, and being freed from his earthly envelope, there awakes in him a consciousness of actual relationship with that supreme deity; and he realizes that henceforth he will be greeted as Osiris, for this form of salutation is always bestowed upon those who have experienced death and entered into the World of Spirit.

The other pathway which likewise leads back to Osiris, that is to say, into the Spiritual Realms is, as we have already stated, by way of Initiation and Holy Devotion. Such was regarded by the Egyptians as a method through which knowledge might be gained of all that is supersensible and lies concealed in man's nature, in other words of Isis, or the Isis-Power. We cannot penetrate into the depths of the soul, and thus reach the Isis-Force within, in virtue of mere earthly wisdom born of the experiences of daily life, but nevertheless, we

have a means at hand whereby we may break through to this inner power and descend to the true Ego; there to find that this same Ego is ever enshrouded by all that is material in man's physical disposition. If, indeed, we can but pierce this dark veil, then do we find ourselves at last in the Ego's veritable spiritual home.

Hence it was that the old Egyptians said: — 'Thou shalt descend into thine own inner being — but first cometh thy physical quality, with all that it may express of that self that is thine, and through this human disposition must thou force a way. When thou regardest the stones, and the justness of their fashion — when thou considerest the plants, the inner life thereof and wonder of their form and when thou lookest upon the animals about thee — there of a verity, in these three Kingdoms of Nature, beholdest thou the outer world as begotten of spiritual and supersensible powers. But when thou standest before man, look not alone upon the outer form, but seek that which is within, where abideth the soul's strength — even as the Isis-Forces.' Therefore, in connection with the rites of initiation, there was included certain instruction as to what things should be observed during such time as the soul might remain incarnated.

The experiences of all who have in truth descended into their innermost being, have been fundamentally the same as those which come about at the time of passing, differing only in the manner of their occurrence. [One might say that if this method of approaching the spirit realms be followed, then] — *Man must pass through the Portal of Death while he yet lives.* He must learn to know that change from the physical to the superphysical outlook, from the material to the spiritual world — in other words, he must acquire knowledge of that metamorphosis which takes place at the time of actual death. And in order that he may obtain such enlightenment, he that would become initiated must take that way which leads him into the very depths of his being, for thus alone may true understanding and experience be attained. When this method is employed, the first real inner experience is connected with the blood, as formed by Nature, and the blood is the physical agent of the Ego, just as the nervous system forms the material medium in connection with [the three ultimate modes of consciousness], Feeling, Willing and Thinking. We have already referred to this matter in a previous lecture.

According to the ancient Egyptians, he who desires to descend into his being in order to realize profound association with the primary material media, must first pass down into his physical-etheric sheath and enter the etheric confines of his soul; he must learn to become independent of that force in his blood upon which he normally relies; he can then give himself up to the workings and the wonder of the blood's action.

It is essential that man must first thoroughly understand his higher nature in regard to its physical aspect. To do this he must learn to view his material being as a detached and wholly separate object. Now, man can only recognize and be fully conscious of an object, as a specific thing, when external to it; hence he must learn to bring about this relation in respect to himself, if he would indeed comprehend the actuality of his being. It was for this reason that Initiation was directed towards the development of such powers as enabled the Soul-Forces to undergo certain experiences independently of the physical media, or agents. So that finally the aspirant could look down upon such media objectively, in the same way as man's spiritual element looks down upon the material body after death.

The primary duty of one who would know the Isis-Mysteries was to acquire knowledge concerning his own blood; after which he underwent an experience that can be best described as — *'Drawing nigh unto the Threshold of Death.'* This was the first step in the Isis-Initiation; and he who would take it must have power to regard his blood and his being externally, and pass into that sheath which is the medium of the Isis-Nature. Further, the neophyte was led before two doors — within some Holy Sanctuary — the one was closed, the other open; and as he stood in that place there came before him visions depicting the most intimate experiences of his very life, and he heard a voice saying: — 'It is thus that thou art, so dost thou appear when thou beholdest thy true self pictured in the soul.' How remarkable are these teachings the echoes of which are still heard after thousands of years have passed, and how wonderfully they harmonize with man's present-day beliefs, even though they have since received materialistic interpretation.

According to the ancient Egyptian seer — when man takes the initial step and comes upon the world of his inner form he is there confronted by two doors — 'Through two doors shalt thou enter thy

blood and thy innermost being.' The anatomist would say: — 'Through two inlets situated in the valves on either side of the heart.' [There are two pairs of valves in the heart, one pair on one side and one on the other; in each case when one of these valves is open, in order to let the blood-stream flow into a part of the system, that which is adjacent is closed (Ed.)]. Hence, he who desires to penetrate beneath his outer form must pass through the open door; for the gateway which is closed merely confines the blood to its proper course. We thus find that the results of anatomical investigation are certainly analogous to those born of clairvoyant vision in olden times; and although not so clear and accurate as are the conclusions of the modern anatomist, nevertheless they portray what the clairvoyant consciousness actually apprehended, when it regarded man's inner form from an external stand-point.

The next step in the Isis-Initiation was what one might term the proving or profound study of Fire, Air and Water. During this period the Initiate gained complete knowledge of the Sheath-Quality of his Isis-Being, of the properties of Fire and how, in a certain form, it flows in the blood, using it as medium, and becomes fluid. He further received instruction concerning the manner in which Oxygen is infiltrated into the system from the air. All this wisdom descended upon him — the understanding of Fire, Air, Water, the warmth of his breath, and the true nature of the fluidity of his blood.

Thus it came about that the aspirant, in virtue of the knowledge he acquired of his Sheath-Quality through his newly-born comprehension of the elements of Fire, Air and Water, became so purified that when his vision at last penetrated beneath the enfolding envelope, he entered into his veritable Isis-Nature. We might say that at this point, the Initiate felt for the first time that he was in contact with his actual being, and that he was able to realize that he was indeed a spiritual entity, no longer limited by his external relation to humanity, and that he truly beheld the wonder of the spiritual realms.

It is a definite law that we can only look upon the sun in the daytime, for at night it lies concealed by matter; but the powers in the spiritual world are never thus veiled to those who have acquired the true gift of sight, for they are best discerned when the physical eyes are closed to all material things. Symbolically, in the sense of the Isis-Initiation, we would say: — 'He who is purified and initiated into the

Isis-Mysteries, may discern that spiritual life and power to which the sun owes its origin, even though there be darkness as at midnight, for, metaphorically speaking, he may at all times behold the great orb of day and come face to face with the spirit beings of the superperceptual world.'

Such was the description of the method, or as one might say, the path leading to the Isis-Forces within, and we are told that it could be traversed by all who, during earthly life, would but earnestly seek the deepest forces of the soul. There were, however, yet higher mysteries, The Mysteries of Osiris, in which it was made clear that through the medium of the Isis-Forces, and in virtue of those supersensible primordial spiritual powers to which man owes his origin, he could exalt himself and thus attain to Osiris. In other words, he was initiated into those methods by which the human soul might be so uplifted, that it could at last enter upon the presence of that supreme deity.

When the Egyptians wished to portray the nature and character of the relation between Isis and Osiris, they had recourse to that special script which is written in the firmament by the passage of the Sun and Moon; while in the case of other spiritual powers, reference was made to the movements and interrelations existing between the various stars. Most prominent among the astronomical groups in such portrayals was the Zodiac, with its condition of comparative immobility, and the planets which move across its constellations. It was in the revelations of the Heavens, as manifested in spiritual symbols, that the old Egyptian found the true method of expressing those deep feelings which touched his soul. He knew that no earthly means were competent to indicate clearly the vital purpose of that urgent call to seek the Isis-Forces, that mankind might, through their aid, draw nearer to Osiris. He felt that in order to describe this purpose fittingly, he must reach out and make use of those bright groups of stars that ever shine in the firmament.

Hence we must regard Hermes, The Great Wise One, who according to Egyptian tradition, lived upon the Earth in the dawn of antiquity — and was endowed with the most profound clairvoyant insight concerning man's relation to the Universe — as having possessed in high degree the power of apprehending and explaining the true nature of the connection between the constellations and the forces of the Spirit-World; and of interpreting the signs portraying events and

happenings, as expressed in the language of the stars, in terms of their mysterious interrelations. Now, if in those olden days it was desired to enlighten the people with regard to the nature of the bond existing between Osiris and Isis, this matter was put forward in the form of an exoteric legend; but in the case of the Initiates the subject was treated more explicitly by means of symbolical reference to the light which emanates from the Sun and is reflected by the Moon, and the remarkable conditions governing its changes during the varying phases of the latter. In these phenomena the Egyptians found a practical and genuine analogy, expressive of the sacred link between the Isis-Force within the human soul and that supreme spiritual figure — Osiris.

From the movements of the heavenly bodies and the nature of their interrelations, there originated what we must regard as the very earliest form of written characters. Little as this fact is as yet recognized, we would nevertheless draw attention to the following statement: — If we consider the consonants of the alphabet, we note that they imitate the signs of the Zodiac, in their comparative repose; while the vowels and consonants are connected in a way which may be likened to that relation which the planets and the forces which move them bear to the constellations of the Zodiac as a whole. Hence it would appear that in the beginning, written characters were brought down to earth from the vault of heaven.

The sentiments which moved the ancient Egyptians when their thoughts turned to Hermes were such as we have described, and they realized that his great illumination came from those spiritual powers which called to him out of the heavens, prompting him with counsel concerning that activity which persisted in the souls of mankind. Ay! and more than that — he was instructed even in the deeds of everyday life, and in those directions in which such sciences were needed as Geometry and Surveying, both of which **Pythagoras** learnt from the Egyptians, who ascribed all this knowledge to the primordial wisdom of Hermes. One might say that 'The Old Wise One' saw in the interrelation of all things spread abroad upon the earth a counterpart of that which exists in the firmament, and finds expression in the mystic writings of the stars. It was Hermes — 'The Thrice-Blessed' — who first gave this Stellar Script to the world, and through its aid, and in the dawn of Egyptian life, he instilled into the minds of the people

the elements of the science of mathematics, while he adjured them to look up to the heavens, there to seek guidance even regarding mundane matters.

The very life of the Egyptian nation in that olden time was dependent upon the overflowing of the Nile, and the deposits which it swept down from the mountainous country to the South. We can therefore readily understand how absolutely essential it was that there should be a certain pre-knowledge of the date of the coming of flood periods, so that they might anticipate the accompanying changes in natural conditions thus brought about in the course of any particular year. In those early days the Egyptians still reckoned time according to that Stellar Script which was written in the canopy of heaven. When Sirius, the Dog Star, was visible in the Sign of Cancer, they knew that the Sun would shortly enter that part of the Zodiac from whence its rays would shine down upon the earth and conjure forth, as if by magic, that life brought thereto by the deposits of the overflowing Nile. Hence, they looked upon Sirius as 'The Watcher', who gave them warning of what they might expect; and the movements of Sirius formed part of their celestial clock. They gazed upward with thankful hearts, for the timely warnings of their 'Watcher' enabled them to cultivate and to tend their land in such manner that it might best bring forth all things necessary to external life.

When questions of import arose such as the above, these old Egyptian peoples sought enlightenment and guidance from those writings which they saw spread across the firmament; the while they looked back into that dim grey past, when first they learnt that the passage of the stars was in truth an expression as of movements among the parts of some mighty cosmic clock. In Thoth, or Hermes, they recognized that Great Spirit who, according to their ancient traditions, set down the very earliest chronicles concerning cosmic wisdom. From that inspiration which came to him through the wondrous Stellar Script, Hermes conceived the forms underlying the physical alphabet, and through their aid taught mankind the principles of Agriculture, Geometry and Surveying; indeed, he instructed them in all things needful for the conduct of physical life. Now, physical life is nought but the embodiment of that spiritual life so deeply interwoven throughout the cosmos — and it was from the cosmos that the spirit of wisdom descended upon Hermes. It was evident to the Egyptians of

that period to which we refer, that the influence of The Great Wise One was still active throughout their civilization, and they felt that this mystic bond was both profound and intimate in character.

The method adopted by the old Egyptians for the purpose of time calculations, and which continued in use for many centuries, was most convenient in operation and lent itself readily to all simple computations of this nature. They regarded the year as made up of *exactly* 365 days, which they divided into 12 months each of 30 days, thus leaving 5 days over, which were separately included. But modern Astronomy tells us that if this method be employed, then one quarter day every year is not taken into account [the actual difference is 6 hours, 9 min., 9 sec.]. Therefore, the Egyptian year came to an end one quarter day too soon. This difference gradually spread backward through the months until a coincidence was reached at the beginning of a certain year; and such coincidence took place every four times 365 years. Hence, after the lapse of each 1,460 years, the terrestrial time estimate would be for a moment in agreement with astronomical conditions, because at that particular moment the sum of the annual differences would be equivalent to one whole year.

Let us now suppose that at a certain time in 1322 B.C. an Egyptian looked up into the heavens, there, at that moment any visible constellation would occupy a definite position in the firmament [which position could be used as a basis of computation]. If we calculate backwards over a period of three times 1,460 years from 1322 B.C., we come to the year 5702 B.C., and it was some time prior to this date to which the Egyptians ascribed the dawn of that primordial Holy Wisdom which came to them in the beginning. They said: — 'In bygone times man's power of clairvoyance was truly at its highest, but with the passing of each great Sun-Period' [of 1,460 years, which brought about the balance of terrestrial reckoning] 'the divine gift of "clear seeing" gradually faded, until in this fourth stage in which we now live it is weak and ever-failing. Our civilization reaches far into the remoteness of antiquity, where the voice of tradition is all but stilled. In thought we hark back beyond three long Cosmic Periods, to that glorious and distant past when our greatest teacher, his disciples, and his successors, imparted to us the elements of the ancient wisdom which now finds expression — albeit in strangely altered form — in the character of our script, our Mathematics, Geometry, Surveying, our general conduct of life, and also in our study of the heavens. We

regard the cosmic adjustment of our human computation, with its convenient factors of twelve times 30 days with five supplementary thereto, as a sign that we are ever subject to correction by the divine powers of the Spirit-World, because through error of thought and reason we have turned away from Osiris and from Isis. We cannot with exactitude measure the year's length, but when our eyes are raised on high we can gaze into that hidden world from whence those spirit powers that ever guide the courses of the stars, remedy our faults and bring harmony where man has failed to find the truth.'

From the above it is clear that the old Egyptians realized the feebleness of man's powers of intellect and understanding, so that, even in the case of their Chronology, they sought the aid of those higher spiritual forces and beings beyond the veil. Beings who correct, watch over, and protect mankind during the activities and experiences of earth life, bringing to bear upon these problems the mystic laws of the Great Cosmos. Hermes, or Thoth, was held in greatest veneration as One inspired by the ever vigilant heavenly powers, and in the souls of these ancient peoples this outstanding personality was looked upon, not merely as a great teacher, but as a being who was indeed exalted, and whom they regarded with the most profound feelings of reverence and thankfulness, so that they cried out: — 'All that I have cometh from Thee. Thou went on High in the dim grey dawn of antiquity and Thou hast sent down, by those who were the carriers of Thy traditions, all that flows throughout external civilization, and which is of greatest human service.' Hence, with reference to the actual Creator of all supersensible forces, and those who watch over them, as well as Osiris and Hermes, or Thoth, the Egyptians felt in their souls not merely that they were imbued with knowledge begotten of wisdom, but they experienced a sentiment in deepest moral sense, of greatest veneration and gratitude.

The graphic descriptions of the past tell us that the wisdom of the ancient Egyptians was permeated throughout with a certain religious quality and mood, particularly noticeable in olden times, but by degrees these characteristics became less and less marked. In those days the people felt all knowledge to be closely associated with holiness, all wisdom with piety and all science with religion. As this attitude waned it gradually decreased in purity of form and expression. A similar change has taken place throughout the evolution of mankind among all those various civilizations whose mission has

been to alter the trend of spiritual thought, and lead it in some wholly new direction. When each nation had reached the pinnacle of achievement, and its task was ended, there followed a period of decadence.

The greater part of our knowledge concerning ancient Egyptian culture is connected with an epoch of this nature, and the significance of all that lies beyond is merely a matter of conjecture and supposition. For instance, what is the true meaning of that extraordinary, and to us grotesque, worship of animals in that by-gone age, and of the curious feeling of awe we experience when our thoughts dwell upon the pyramids? The Egyptians themselves tell us that there was an era during which not only mankind, but also beings from the higher spiritual realms descended upon the earth. This was in the beginning before the knowledge and wisdom that was then vouchsafed had truly developed and become active.

If we would indeed know man's innermost nature, we must not alone regard the outer form, but penetrate to the true self within. All external qualities with which we come in contact are but stages of manifestation which have remained 'in situ', as one might say, and are seen as if representing in powerful, albeit diminutive imagery, ancient principles which are dominant in the three kingdoms of nature. Consider the world of minerals and of rocks — here we find those same relations of form which man has used in the architecture of the pyramids; while the inner forces of plant-life are expressed in the beauty of the Lotus-Flower; and lastly, distributed along that path which culminates in man himself, we find in the brute creation existences which have not attained to the higher level of humanity; they are, as it were, a crystallization of divine forces that have been embodied and scattered abroad in separate and distinct animal shapes.

We can well imagine that the feelings of the old Egyptians gave rise to thoughts of the above nature, when they recognized in animal life a manifestation of the unaltered primordial forces of the gods. For they looked back into the grey past when all earthly things were begotten of divine supersensible powers, and developed under their guidance. From this concept they conjectured that among the creations in Nature's three kingdoms certain of these higher primal forces, which had lived on unchanged over a long period, had ultimately undergone

some intimate modification which had raised them to that higher standard exhibited in the human form. When considering these ancient peoples we must ever have regard for their feelings, perceptions and the necessities of their life. It is from these factors that we can best realize how close was the moral bond between their wisdom and the soul, so that the latter might not swerve from the path of rectitude and morality.

The Egyptians believed, that because of the manner in which the Spirit-World was created and fashioned by the divine supersensible powers, there must be some definite moral relation which extends to the creatures of the animal kingdom. The grotesque and singular modes in which this concept ultimately found expression came about, only, after the final decline of the nation had commenced.

From the study of the later periods of Egyptian culture, it is clear that human frailty and imperfection were unknown in primordial times, for we learn from this source that in the early dawn of Egyptian life civilization was of a high standard, and it was then that man knew and experienced the most intimate divine spiritual revelations. We must not fall into that error, so common in our days, of assuming that all forms of human culture had their inception under the most simple and primitive conditions. In reality it was only after the impulse imparted by those first glorious blessings had waned, and a period of decline set in, that man's life became crude and uncultured.

Hence, we should not look upon the barbaric tribes merely as peoples in whom intellection is expressed in its most elementary form, but, on the contrary, we must consider the aboriginal races as representative of civilizations which have fallen away from some exalted primordial state. This assertion is not at all to the liking of that branch of science which would have us believe that all culture had its inception under the most elementary conditions, such as those which are still found among the savages of our time. Nevertheless, Spiritual Science affirms, in virtue of knowledge obtained through the medium of its special methods, that the primitive states of mankind are in truth manifestations of long perished civilizations, and that all human life had its inception under cultural conditions directly inspired by divine beings — mentors from the Spirit-World — who descended upon the earth in the dim dawn of antiquity, and over whose deeds is cast a veil impenetrable to external history.

Man has long believed that if we trace life's course backward through the ages we should in the end arrive at childish conditions, similar to those found among barbaric peoples. It was certainly not expected that in so doing we would find ourselves confronted with noble and exalted concepts and theories. Now, Spiritual Science definitely asserts that if we peer into the past, then, at the beginning of human life we shall not find rudimentary cultural states, but lofty and glorious civilizations, which at some later period fell away from their first high spiritual standard. At this point we might well ask: — 'Does this assertion, as advanced by Spiritual Science, bring it into conflict with the results of modern scientific research — the logical methods of which delve deeply and without prejudice, into all matters that come within the scope of its investigations?' Let us see how external science itself replies to this question.

With this object I will give a literal quotation from a recent work by Alfred Jeremias [Licentiate Doctor and Lecturer at the University of Leipzig], entitled *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*.¹ From the text we learn that external science while engaged in the gradual unfoldment of ancient history, has reached back into the remote past, and there found traces of a highly spiritual primeval civilization, whose culture was imbued with the most momentous and intellectual conceptions. It is further emphasized that those cultural states, which we are so accustomed to term barbaric, should in reality be regarded as typical of primordial civilizations that have fallen away from some higher level. The actual quotation to which I have referred is as follows: —

'The earliest records, as well as the whole ancient civilized life about the Euphrates valley, indicate the existence of a scientific and at the same time religious theoretical conception, which was not merely confined to the occult doctrines of the temple; but in accordance with its precepts, state organizations were regulated and conducted, justice declared and property administered and protected. The more ancient the period to which we can look back, the more absolute does the control exercised by this concept appear. It was only after the downfall of the primal Euphratean civilization that the influence of other powers began to make itself felt.'

From the above excerpt it is clear, that external science has truly made a beginning toward the opening up of new paths that tend to bring harmony and agreement into those matters [so often regarded as controversial] which it is the province of Spiritual Science to bring forward and impress upon our present civilization. In a previous lecture we have drawn attention to a similar progress in connection with the science of Geology. If in the future we continue to advance in like fashion, we shall gradually be compelled to recede ever further and further from that dull and lifeless conception which would have us regard all primordial civilization as primitive and childish in its nature. Then, indeed, shall we be led back to those great personalities of the remote past, who seem to us the more transcendent, because it was their divinely inspired mission to endow a yet clairvoyant people with those priceless blessings which are evident throughout all cultural activity in which we now play our part. Such noble spirits in human form as Zarathustra and Hermes at once claim and rivet our attention. They appear to us so exalted and so glorious, because it was THEY who in the dim dawn of human life gave to mankind those first most potent and uplifting impulses. The old Egyptian sage had this sublime concept in mind when he spoke to Solon concerning 'doctrines grey with age'. (Vide p. 86.)

Thus do we honour and revere Hermes, even as we venerate the great Zarathustra. To us he shines forth as one of those grand outstanding individualities — veritable leaders of mankind — the very thought of whom engenders a feeling of enhanced power within, and begets the indubitable conviction through which we know that the Spirit is not merely abroad in the world, but weaves beneath all earthly deeds, and is ever active throughout the evolution of humanity. Then are our lives strengthened, a fuller confidence is in our every action, hopes are assured and destiny stands out the more clearly before us. It is at such times that we exclaim: — 'Those yet to be born will of a surety lift up their hearts to the glorious spirit mentors who were in the beginning, and will seek the verity of their being in the gifts which are of the inner forces of the soul. They shall acknowledge and discern in the ever recurrent impulses which come as an upward urge to mankind the workings of a divine power, and the eternal manifestations of those Great Ones from the Spirit-World.'

Addendum

The above lecture was delivered in Berlin on the 16th of February, 1911. In the interim, external science has probed further into the secrets of that highly advanced primal civilized life about the valley of the Euphrates, to which reference has been made *on page 123*. The following brief outline will indicate some of the results of Archæological research carried out in Mesopotamia at the site of the olden city known as 'Ur of the Chaldees'. At this place, most important discoveries have been made in connection with ancient Euphratean civilization, as the outcome of a Joint Expedition arranged by the British Museum and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania in 1922, under the direction of C. Leonard Woolley, M.A., Litt. D. In a lecture given before 'The Royal Society of Arts' on the 8th of November, 1933, and which duly appeared in their *Journal*, Dr. Woolley said: 'Certainly the discoveries that we made at Ur in the last ten years have tended to set scientists by the ears rather than satisfying them with the new information obtained ... few surprises in recent years have been so great as that occasioned by the excavation of the great cemetery lying beneath the ruins of Ur.'

In the tombs of Kings, in vaulted chambers of rubble masonry, dating as far back as 3500 B.C. were found treasures of gold, silver, mosaic, etc., wrought by the Sumerian workers and of a degree of technical excellence unsurpassed by the craftsmen of to-day. In one case, when referring to an especially fine specimen of polychrome art which had been discovered, and is now known as 'The Ram Caught in a Thicket', Dr. Woolley drew attention to the fact, that this particular polychrome sculpture, while characteristic of the work of the ancients in 3400 B.. in the Near East, was actually suggestive of that of some rather late Italian Renaissance artist. As the investigations proceeded it became abundantly clear, that the ancient people who had so skilfully fashioned the strange and wonderful treasures brought to light, 'were not tyros, they must have had behind them long traditions, long apprenticeship'.

With the view of obtaining an insight into the history of this by-gone and highly developed civilization, excavations were commenced at a point which was actually the ground level of 3200 B.C., where through a depth of over sixty feet relics of the dim past were unearthed in clearly marked strata. Traces of eight superimposed cities were

revealed, and deep down beneath the remains of an ancient pottery factory, so Dr. Woolley tells us, the excavators suddenly came upon a mass, eleven feet thick, of water-laid sand and clay, perfectly uniform and clean, which was undoubtedly the silt thrown up by "The Flood". — 'We can,' said Dr. Woolley, 'actually connect it with the flood which we call Noah's Flood'. The verge of this deluge was found to be up 'against the flank of the mound on which stood the earliest and most primitive city of Ur '. Below this deposit were 'the remains of antediluvian houses ... the lowest human buildings rested upon black organic soil ... and that in turn went down below sea-level'.

The excavations proved that the ancient Sumerian architects were familiar with concrete at the beginning of the fourth millennium B.C., and possibly earlier. They were acquainted with every basic form of modern architecture, and Dr. Woolley further states that there is no doubt that, 'the arch, the vault, the apse, and the dome, used in Europe for the first time in the Roman period', specimens of which were found among the ruins, 'are a direct inheritance from the Sumerian peoples of the fourth millennium B.C. *at least, and they may well go back to a date still more remote*'. (The italics are ours.) Further, it has been shown that continuity in Sumerian civilization undoubtedly extended from the fifth millennium B.C., up to the sixth century B.C. This fact has come to light as a result of discoveries made by digging beneath the foundations of the massive staged tower, known as the Ziggurat of Ur, the main religious building of the city; and by tracing the dates and character of cylinder seals of different periods, carried by these by-gone peoples for the purpose of signing written documents.

Toward the close of his most interesting lecture, Dr. Woolley stated that imports into Egypt before the First Dynasty, seemed to indicate that the Sumerians imparted to the then barbarous people of that country an impulse, which enabled them to develop their remarkable civilization. He further said: 'Civilized as the Babylonians were, they made no new discoveries at all; they hardly advanced beyond what their predecessors had known and they preserved civilization rather than invented it. We know, too, that the Sumerians sent out the ancestors of the Hebrews with all the traditions of law, civilization, religion and art, which they had themselves enjoyed in their home country and which the Hebrews never entirely forgot, but by which they were profoundly influenced.'

Thus has this Joint Archæological Expedition, under the able leadership of Dr. Woolley, thrown the light of modern external science upon one of those glorious spiritual civilizations of the dim grey past, so often referred to by Rudolf Steiner, which endured just so long as its people opened their hearts to the guidance of the Spirit, but fell away and perished when they left the true path, and gave themselves up to material things. [Ed.]

Notes for this lecture:

1. *Manual of Biblical Archaeology*, 2 Vols. Translated from the second German Edition, by C. L. Beaumont. Edited by the Rev. Canon C. H. W. Johns, Litt.D. Published by Williams and Morgate, 1911.



III. Buddha -or- Buddhism and Christianity

2 March 1911, Berlin

In these days there is much discussion concerning The Buddha and the Buddhist Creed; and this fact is the more interesting to all who follow the course of human evolution, because a knowledge of the true character of the Buddhist religion, or perhaps more correctly, the longing felt by many for its comprehension has only recently entered into the spiritual life of the Western nations. Let us consider for a moment that most prominent personality, **Goethe**, who exerted such a powerful influence on Occidental culture, at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which influence continued so potently right on into our own period. When we examine his life, his works, and his intellectuality, we find no trace of the Buddhist doctrine; but a little later we note in the concepts of that genius, **Schopenhauer** (who was in a certain sense a disciple of Goethe), a clear and definite touch of Buddhistic thought; and since that period in which Schopenhauer lived, the interest taken in Eastern spiritual conceptions has steadily increased. Hence it is that there is now a widespread and inherent desire, to analyse and discuss all those matters connected with the name of the Great Buddha, which have found their way into the course of human evolution.

It is a remarkable fact that most people still persist in associating Buddhism, primarily, with the idea of recurrent earth lives, to which concept we have often referred in these lectures. Such an assumption is, however, found to be unwarranted when we have regard to the essential character of the Buddhist belief. We might say, that with the majority of those people who interest themselves in this subject, the notion of repeated earth lives, or as we term it, Reincarnation, forms a well-established and essential part of their preconceived ideas regarding Buddhism. But on the other hand it must be said, even though it sounds grotesque, that to those who probe more deeply into these matters, the association of Buddhism with the idea of reincarnation, appears almost equivalent to saying, — that the most complete knowledge of ancient works of art is to be sought among those peoples who have destroyed them at the commencement of universal development and progress in the Middle Ages. This certainly

sounds grotesque, but it is nevertheless true, as we at once realize when we consider that the aim of Buddhism is directed towards the disparagement of our apparently inevitably recurring earth lives, and the reduction of their number as far as may be within our power. Hence, we must regard as the essential moving principle underlying the whole trend of Buddhist spiritual thought that principle which operates in the direction of freedom, that is, redemption from repeated rebirth, or liberation from reincarnation which it accepts as an established and unquestionable fact; in this concept is expressed the true and vital essence of Buddhism.

Even from a superficial glance at the history of Western spiritual life, we learn that the idea of repeated earthly existence is quite independent of an understanding of Buddhism, and vice versa; for during the course of our Occidental spiritual development we find ourselves confronted with a conception of reincarnation, presented in a manner both lofty and sublime, by a personality who most certainly had remained untouched by Buddhist views and trend of thought. This personality was **Lessing**, who in his treatise on *The Education of Mankind*, which is regarded as the most matured and mellow of his works, closes with the confession that he himself was a believer in the Doctrine of Reincarnation. With regard to this belief, he gives expression to those deeply significant words, — 'Is not all eternity mine?' Lessing was of opinion that the repetition of our earthly lives was proof that benefit would accrue from mundane endeavour, and that existence in this world is not in vain. For while we toil we look forward to ever widening and fuller recurring corporal states, in which we may bring to maturity the fruits of our by-gone earthly lives. The conception which Lessing really formed was of the prospect and anticipation of a rich and bountiful harvest, to be garnered in the fullness of time coupled with the knowledge that throughout human existence there is ever an inner voice, which in actual expectation of recurrent earth lives, calls to us, saying, — 'Thou shalt persist in thy labours.' From what has been said, it is now apparent that it is in the very essence of Buddhism that man must ever strive to obtain such knowledge and wisdom as may serve to free him from those future reincarnations, the prevision of which lies in the spirit. Only when during one of our earth lives we have at last freed ourselves from the need of experiencing those which would otherwise follow, can we enter peacefully upon that condition which we may term Eternity.

I have persistently endeavoured to make it clear that the idea of reincarnation, both with regard to Spiritual Science and **Theosophy**, was not derived from any one of the ancient traditions, not even from Buddhism; it has in fact thrust itself upon us during our time, as a result of independent observation and reflection concerning life in connection with spiritual investigation. Hence, to associate Buddhism so directly with the idea of reincarnation indicates a superficial attitude. If we would indeed look into the true character and nature of Buddhism, then we must turn our spiritual eyes in quite another direction.

I must now once again draw your attention to that law in human evolution which we met with when we were considering the personality of the great Zarathustra. In accordance with this law, as was then stated, during the gradual passing of time the whole condition and character of man's soul changed, while it went through varying transitional states. Those events regarding which we obtain information from external historical documents, represent as far as man is concerned, only a comparatively late phase in the evolution of humanity. If, however, we look back with the aid of Spiritual Science to prehistoric times, we gain much further knowledge; we then find that a certain condition of soul was common to primitive man, whereby the normal state of human consciousness was quite other than that of our day.

That pre-eminently intellectual order of consciousness, which leads to the manner in which, during the course of our normal human life, we now regard all things around us combining them by means of our mental powers acting through the brain, so that they shall be connected with and become a part of our wisdom, and our science — was first developed from another form of conscious state. I have emphasized this point before, but I must lay particular stress upon it once again. We have in the chaotic disorder of our dream-life, a last remnant — a species of atavistic heritage — of an old clairvoyance, which was at one time to a certain extent, an ordinary condition of the human soul, and in which mankind assumed a state between that of sleeping and that of being awake; he could then look upon those things hidden behind the perceptual world.

In these days in which our consciousness mainly alternates between the sleeping and the waking conditions, it is only in the latter that we seek to apprehend a state of intellectuality in the soul; but in olden times, clairvoyant visions were not so meaningless as are the dream forms of our period, for they could be quite definitely ascribed to specific superperceptual creations and events. Mankind had in connection with these ancient fluctuating visions a species of conscious state out of which our present intellectuality gradually evolved. Hence, we look back to a certain form of primeval clairvoyance which was followed by the long drawn out evolution of our consciousness as recognized to-day. Because of this by-gone dream-like clairvoyance, prehistoric man could gaze far into the superperceptual worlds, and through this connection with the supersensible, he gained not knowledge alone but a feeling of profound inner satisfaction and bliss from the full realization of the soul's union with the Spirit-World.

Just as present-day man is now convinced through his sense perceptions and intellectuality that his blood is composed of substances which exist without in the physical universe, so was prehistoric man confident that his soul and spiritual nature emanated from that same hidden Spirit-World which he could discern in virtue of his clairvoyant consciousness. It has already been pointed out that there are phenomena connected with the history of mankind, and which are also apparent in certain external facts and happenings, that can only be fully understood when we pre-suppose some such primordial condition of man's earthly existence. It has further been stated that modern science is coming more and more to the conclusion that it is erroneous to assume, as has been done by the materialistic Anthropology of the nineteenth century, that in primeval times the prevailing state common to man was similar to that found among the most primitive peoples of to-day. It is, in fact, becoming more and more clear that the prehistoric races had extremely exalted theoretical conceptions regarding the Spirit-World, and that these concepts were given to them in the form of visions. All those curious ideas which come to us through myths and legends can only be rightly understood, when they are first connected with and referred back to that ancient wisdom which came to man in a way wholly different from that by which our present intellectual science has been attained.

In these modern times there is not much sympathy expressed with the view that the position in which we find the primitive peoples of our day is not typical of the universal primordial condition of mankind, but is in reality an example of decadence from a primarily highly clairvoyant spiritual state common to all peoples. But facts will yet force a general acceptance of some such hypothesis as that put forward by Spiritual Science as a result of its investigations. Here, as in many other cases, it can be shown that fundamentally there is complete accord between spiritual and external science. Further, a time will come when the conclusions which Spiritual Science has formed regarding the probable future of man's evolution, viewed from the scientific stand-point, will be entirely confirmed. We must look back, not merely to a form of primeval wisdom, but to a specific order of primordial feeling and apprehension, which we characterize as a clairvoyant bond, erstwhile existent between man and the divine regions of spirit.

We can easily understand that during the transition from the old or clairvoyant state of the human soul to our modern direct, unprejudiced and intellectual method of regarding the external perceptual world, there should arise two different currents of thought. As time went on the first of these made itself manifest more especially among those peoples who had clung to memories of the past, and to their fading psychic power, in such manner that they would say: — 'In by-gone days mankind was truly in contact with the spirit realms in virtue of the clairvoyant faculty, but since then he has descended into the material world of sense perception.' This feeling spread throughout the whole soul's outlook, until those ancient peoples would cry out: — 'We are indeed now come into a world of manifestations where all is illusion — all is Maya.' Only at such time as man might commune with the spirit spheres could he truly comprehend, and be united with his very being. Thus it was that there came to those nations who still preserved a dim remembrance of the ancient primal clairvoyant state, a certain feeling of sadness at the thought of what they had lost, and an indifference to all material things which man might apprehend and understand through the medium of his intellect, and with which he is ever in direct and conscious contact.

On the other hand, the second of the two thought currents to which I have referred, may be expressed in the following manner: — 'We will observe and be active in this new world which has been given to us.'

Thought of this nature is especially noticeable throughout the Zarathustran doctrine. Those who experienced this call to action did not look back with sorrow and longing to the loss of the old clairvoyant power, but felt, ever more and more, that they must keep in close and constant touch with those forces by the aid of which they might penetrate into the secrets and nature of all material things, knowing full well that knowledge and guidance, born of the spirit, would flow in upon them if they would but give themselves up to earnest and profound meditation and piety. Such people felt impelled to link themselves closely with the world — there was no dreaming of the past, but an urge to gaze resolutely into the future and to battle with what might come. They expressed themselves after this fashion: — 'Interwoven throughout this world, which is now our portion, is the same divine essence that was spread about us and permeated our very beings in by-gone ages; and this spiritual component we must now seek amid our material surroundings. It is our task to unite ourselves with all that is good and of the spirit, and by so doing, to further the progress and evolution of creation.' These words indicate the essential nature of that current of thought which was occupied with external physical perception, and went forth from those Asiatic countries where the Zarathustran doctrine prevailed, and which lay Northward of the region where mankind looked back in meditation, pondering over that great spiritual gift which had passed away, and was indeed lost.

Thus it came about that upon the soil of India there arose a spiritual life which is entirely comprehensible, when we regard it in the light of all this retrospection concerning a former union with the Spirit-World. If we consider the results in India of the teachings of the Sankhya and Yoga philosophies and the Yoga training, we find that these may be embodied in the following statement: — The Indian has ever striven to re-establish his connection with those Spirit-Worlds from whence he came, and it has been his constant endeavour to eliminate from his earthly life all that was spread around him in the external creation, and by thus freeing himself from material things, to regain his union with that spiritual region from whence humanity has emanated. The principle underlying Yoga philosophy is reunion with the divine realms, and abstraction from all that appertains to the perceptual world.

Only when we assume this fundamental mood of Indian spiritual life can we realize the significance of that mighty impulse brought about by the advent of the Buddha, which blazed up before our spiritual sight, as an after-glow across the evening sky of Indian soul-life, but a few centuries before the Christ-impulse began to dominate Western thought. It is only in the light of the Buddha-mood, when regarded as already characterized, that the outstanding figure of the Buddha can be truly comprehended. In view of that basic assumption to which we have above referred, we can readily conceive that in India there could exist an order of thought and conviction, such as caused mankind to regard the world as having fallen from a spiritual state into one of sense-illusion, or that 'Great Deception', which is indeed Maya. It is also understandable that the Indian, because of his observations concerning this external world with which humanity is so closely connected, pictured to himself that this decline came about suddenly and unexpectedly from time to time, during the passing of the ages. So that Indian philosophy does not regard man's fall as uniform and continuous, but as having taken place periodically from epoch to epoch. From this point of view we can now understand those contemplative moods, underlying a form of culture which we must regard as being in the departing radiance of its existence; for so must we characterize the Buddhist conception, if we would consider it as having a place in a philosophy such as we have outlined.

Indian thought ever harked back to that dim past when man was truly united with the Spirit-World. For there came a time when the Indian fell away from his exalted spiritual standard; this decline persisted until a certain level was reached, when he rose again, only to sink once more. He continued to alternate in this fashion throughout the ages, every descent taking him still further along the downward path, while each upward step was, as it were, a mitigation granted by some higher power, in order that man might not be compelled to work and live, all too suddenly, in that condition which he had already entered upon during his fall. According to ancient Indian philosophy, as each period of decline was ended there arose a certain outstanding figure whose personality was known as a 'Buddha'; the last of these was incarnated as the son of King Suddhodana, and called Gautama Buddha.

Since those olden times, when humanity was still directly united with the Spirit-World, there have arisen a number of such Buddhas, five having appeared subsequent to the last fall. The advent of the Buddhas was a sign that mankind shall not sink into illusion — into Maya — but that again and again there shall come into men's lives something of the ancient primal wisdom, to succour and to aid humanity. This primordial knowledge, however, because of man's constant downward trend, fades from time to time; but in order that it shall be renewed there arises periodically a new Buddha, and as we have stated, the last of these was Gautama Buddha.

Before such great teachers could advance, through repeated earth lives, to the dignity of Buddhahood, if we may so express it, they must have already been exalted and attained the lofty standing of a Bodhisattva.¹ According to the Indian philosophical outlook, Gautama Buddha, up to his twenty-ninth year, was not regarded as a Buddha, but as a Bodhisattva. It was therefore as a Bodhisattva that he was born into the royal house of Suddhodana; and because his life was ever devoted to toil and to striving, he was at last blessed with that inner illumination, symbolically portrayed in the words, 'Sitting under the Bodhi tree'; and that glorious enlightenment which flowed in upon him found expression in the 'Sermon at Benares'.

Thus did Gautama Buddha rise to the full dignity of Buddhahood in his twenty-ninth year, and from that time on, he was empowered to revive once again a last remnant of by-gone primeval wisdom; which, however, in the light of Indian conceptions, would be destined to fall into decadence during the centuries to come. But according to these same concepts, when man has sunk so low, that the wisdom and the knowledge which this last Buddha brought, shall have waned, then will yet another Bodhisattva rise to Buddhahood, the Buddha of the Future — the Maitreya Buddha; whose coming the Indian surely awaits, for it is foretold in his philosophy.

Let us now consider what took place at that time when the last Bodhisattva rose to Buddhahood; when, as we might say, his soul became filled with primordial wisdom. By so doing we can best realize and understand the true significance of that great change, wrought by struggle and toil through repeated earth lives.

There is a legend which tells us that until his twenty-ninth year he had seen nothing of the world outside the Royal Palace of Suddhodana; and that he was protected from that misery and suffering which are factors of existence ever antagonistic to human prosperity in life's progress. It was under these conditions that the Bodhisattva grew up; but at the same time he was possessed of the Bodhisattva-consciousness, that consciousness so imbued with inner wisdom garnered from previous incarnations. Hence, as he developed, during life's unfolding, he looked only upon those things which would bring forth true and goodly fruits. Since this legend is so well known, it is only necessary to refer to the main points. It states that when the Buddha at length came outside the Royal Palace he had an experience such as could not have occurred before — namely, he beheld a corpse — and he realized on seeing this body that life is dissolved by death; and that the death element breaks in upon life's procreative and fruitful progress. He next came upon an ailing and feeble man; and knew that disease enters upon life. Again, he saw an aged person, tottering and weary; and he understood that old age creeps in upon the freshness of youth.

From the stand-point of Buddhism, Indian Philosophy presupposes that: — He who having been a Bodhisattva, and is exalted to Buddhahood, regards all experiences, such as the above, with the Bodhisattva-consciousness. This supposition must be clearly understood. Gautama realized that in the great wisdom which underlies development in all being, there is an element destructive to existence; and the legend states that when this truth first dawned upon him, his great soul was so affected that he cried out: — 'Life is full of misery.'

Let us now place ourselves in the position of those who look upon experiences of this nature, solely from the Buddhistic point of view, for instance, in the position of this Bodhisattva-Gautama. Gautama was possessed of a higher wisdom which lived within him, but was as yet not fully developed. He had, up to this period, seen only the fortunate and wealthy side of life, and now for the first time beheld the elements of decay and dissolution. If we consider the way in which he must have regarded these happenings, as viewed from the stand-point of assumptions forced upon him in virtue of his being, we can readily understand how it was that this great spiritual Buddha came to express himself in words somewhat as follows: — 'When we attain to

knowledge and to wisdom, it comes about that in virtue of such wisdom we are led onwards toward development and progress; and because of this enlightenment, there enters into the soul the thought of an ever continuous and beneficial growth and advancement; but when we look upon the world about us we see there the elements of destruction as expressed in sickness, old age, and death. Verily, it cannot be wisdom that would thus mingle these destructive factors with life, but something quite apart and distinctive in character.' At first the great Gautama did not fully grasp all that his Bodhisattva-consciousness implied, and we can well realize how it was that he became imbued with those thoughts which caused him to exclaim: — 'Man may indeed be possessed of much wisdom, and through his knowledge there may come to him the idea of plenteous benefits; but in life we behold about us not alone the factors of sickness and death, but many another baneful element which brings corruption and decay into our very existence.'

The Bodhisattva thus saw around him a condition which he could not as yet fully comprehend. He had passed through life after life, always applying the experiences gained through his previous incarnations to his soul's benefit; the while his wisdom became ever greater and greater, till at last he could look down upon all earthly existence from a more exalted vantage-point. But when he came forth from the King's Palace, and saw before him for the first time the realities of life, its true nature and significance did not at once penetrate his understanding. That knowledge which we gain from the repeated experiences of our earth lives, and which we store within us as wisdom, can never solve the ultimate secrets of our being, for the true origin of these mysteries must lie without — remote from that life which is ours as we pass from reincarnation to reincarnation.

Such thoughts matured in the great soul of Gautama and led him directly to that sublime enlightenment known as 'The Illumination under the Bodhi Tree'.² There, while seated beneath this tree, it became clear to the Buddha that this world in which we have our being is Maya, — illusion; that here life follows upon life, and that we have come upon this earth from a spiritual realm. While we are yet here we may indeed be exalted, and even rise to noble heights in the divine sense, and we may pass through many reincarnations, becoming ever more and more possessed of wisdom; but because of that which is material and comes to us through contact with this

earthly life, we can never solve the great ever-present mystery of existence which finds expression in old age, disease and death. It was at this time of enlightenment that the thought came to Gautama that the teachings born of suffering held for him a greater significance than all the wisdom of a Bodhisattva.

The Buddha expressed the fundamental concept underlying his great illumination as follows: — 'That which spreads itself abroad throughout this world of Maya is not veritable wisdom, indeed, so little of this quality is manifested in life that we can never hope to gain from external experiences a true understanding of affliction, nor acquire that knowledge which will show us the way by which we may be freed from suffering; for interwoven throughout all outer existence is a factor of quite another character, which differs from all wisdom and all knowledge.'

It is therefore obvious that what the Buddha sought was an element through the agency of which the destructive forces of old age, sickness and death become commingled with earthly life, and in which wisdom has no part. He held that freedom from these baneful factors can never come through mundane knowledge and learning for the path which leads to deliverance does not lie in that direction, and can only be found when man withdraws himself entirely from the external world, where life follows upon life and reincarnation upon reincarnation.

Thus it was the Buddha realized from the moment of his illumination that in the teachings and experience born of affliction, lay that basic element necessary to humanity for its future progress; and he conceived a factor (wherein was no wisdom) which he termed *The Thirst for Existence* to be the true source of all that misery and sorrow which so troubles the world. Upon the one side wisdom, upon the other a thirst for existence, where wisdom has no part. It was this thought which caused Gautama to exclaim: — 'Only liberation from recurrent earth life can lead humanity to the realization of perfect freedom; for earthly wisdom, even that of the highest learning, cannot save us from grief and anguish.' He therefore gave himself up to meditation, and sought some means whereby mankind might be led away from all this restlessness in the world of his incarnations, and guided into that transcendent state which Gautama Buddha has designated **Nirvana**.

What, then, is the nature of this state — this World of Nirvana — which man shall enter when he has so advanced in his earthly life that 'The Thirst for Existence' has passed, and he no more desires to be reborn? We must understand this concept rightly, for then shall we avoid those grotesque and fantastic ideas, so frequently spread abroad. Nirvana is a condition that can only be characterized in the Buddhist sense. According to this conception, it is a world of redemption and of bliss that can never be expressed in terms of things which may be apprehended in the material state in which we have our being. There is nothing in this physical world, nor in the wide expanse of the cosmos, which can awaken in mankind a realization of the sublime truth underlying such redemption.

Hence, we should forbear from all pronouncements and assertions regarding that glorious region where humanity must seek salvation; and all earth-born predications and profitless statements — such as man is ever prone to make — must be stilled, for in them is nought pertaining to the spheres of eternal bliss. There is, indeed, no possibility of picturing that realm, where all may enter who have overcome the need for reincarnation, since it is not of those things of which we may have awareness on this earth life. When, therefore, we would speak of this condition we must use a negative, an indefinite, term and such a term is Nirvana. He who has conquered all mundane desires shall yet know the nature and the aspect of that other world which we can but indicate with the one vague and neutral word Nirvana. It is a region which, according to the Buddhist, no language can portray. It is not a 'Nihilism', it is indeed so far removed from such a concept that we can find no words wherewith to describe this state of being, so complete, so perfect, and all abounding in ecstasy and bliss.

We are now in a position to grasp and apprehend the very essence of Buddhism, its sentiments and its convictions. From the time of the Sermon at Benares, when first the Buddha gave expression to the 'Doctrine of Suffering', Buddhism became permeated with thought and understanding concerning the inner nature of life's misery and distress, and of that yearning, that Thirst for Existence which leads but to sorrow and affliction. There is, according to this doctrine, only one way in which humanity may truly progress, and that is through gaining freedom and redemption from further reincarnations. Mankind must find that path of knowledge which extends outward and beyond all

earthly wisdom — that path which is the way and the means whereby slowly, step by step, man may become so fitted and conditioned that he can at last enter upon that ideal state — Nirvana. In other words, he must learn to utilize the experiences of his rebirths, in such manner that finally recurrent earth life is no longer essential to his development, and he is freed therefrom for evermore.

If we now turn from this brief summary of the conceptions which underlie Buddhism, to the root and essence of this religion, it at once strikes us as peculiar when viewed in the light of our ideas concerning humanity regarded as a whole — for Buddhism in point of fact isolates the individual. Questions are raised relative to man's destiny, the purport and aim of his existence, his place and relation to the world — all from the stand-point of detached and separate personality. How, indeed, could any other trend of thought underlie a philosophy built upon a fundamental disposition of mind such as we have outlined? A philosophy evolved from a basic mood, which conceives man as being descended from spiritual heights and now finding himself in a world of illusion; from which material existence the wisdom of a Buddha may, from time to time, free him; but this very wisdom (as was seen in the case of the last Buddha) causes him to seek redemption from his earthly life. How could the goal of human existence, born as it was of convictions such as these, be characterized other than by representing man as isolated in his relation to the whole of his environment? According to this philosophy, the fundamental aspect of being is such as to represent decline, while development and evolution in earthly life implies degeneration.

The manner in which the Buddha sought enlightenment is both remarkable and significant, but unless we consider also the peculiar characteristics and circumstances connected with 'The Illumination', neither the Buddha himself, nor Buddhism, can be properly understood. When Gautama craved enlightenment, he went forth into solitude; to a place where he could find entire and absolute isolation. For all that he had acquired from life to life, must be overcome in the utter detachment of his being, so that there could break in upon his soul that clear light whereby he might comprehend and solve the mystery of the world's wretchedness. There in that place, as one in complete aloofness, dependent upon himself alone, the Buddha awaited the moment of illumination — that moment when there should come to him an understanding which would enable him to

realize that the true cause of all human suffering lay in the intense longing manifested by individual man to be born again into this material world. And further, that this yearning for reincarnation, this thirst for existence, is the fundamental source of all that misery and distress which is everywhere about us, and of those pernicious factors which bring ruin and destruction into our very being.

We cannot rightly comprehend the unusual and singular nature of the Buddha-Illumination and of the Buddhistic Doctrine unless we compare them with the knowledge and experience we have gained through Christianity. Six hundred years after the advent of the Great Buddha, there arose in Christendom a wholly different conception, in which we also find man's position relative to the world and all that is about him expressed in definite terms.

Now, regarding Buddhism, and speaking in an abstract and general manner, we can say: — The philosophic outlook concerning the cosmos, as set forth in Buddhistic teachings, is not treated historically, and this unhistoric method is thoroughly typical of all Eastern countries. These countries have seen one Buddha epoch follow upon another, only to gradually die out and eventually come to an end. Such descriptions as are concerned merely with man's descent from higher to lower states, do not of themselves constitute what we term history, for the factors of true history would include the upward endeavour of humanity to reach some appointed goal, and the nature and possibilities of man's association and union with the world as a whole, both in the past and in the future. We would then have veritable history. But the Buddhist stands isolated and alone, concerned only with the basic principles of his being, ever seeking to gain through the conduct of his personal life those powers which may lead him to freedom from 'the thirst for existence', so that having attained to this freedom he may at last win redemption from rebirth.

In Christendom, six hundred years after the Buddha period, the attitude of individual man toward the evolution of humanity in general was of quite another kind. Putting aside all prejudice, which is so common a failing throughout the world, we can characterize one particular Christian trend of thought as follows: — From that part of the Christian concept which is founded upon the stories in the Old Testament it is realized that the ancients were related to the spiritual realms in a manner wholly different from that which was subsequently

the case; as is seen in the grand and lofty imagery depicted in Genesis. Now, a curious fact comes to light, namely, in Christendom we find man's relation to the world to be of a character entirely unlike that which obtains in Buddhism. The following may be considered as the Christian's point of view: — 'Within my being is understanding begotten of that condition of soul which is now mine; and because of the way and the manner in which I observe and comprehend this outer perceptual world, there is born in me wisdom, intelligence and an aptitude for the practical conduct of life. But I can look back into the distant past when the human soul was differently conditioned, and there came about a circumstance, namely, "The Fall of Man", which cannot be regarded simply from the Buddhistic stand-point.' This event, which we so often find portrayed in a figurative form based upon misconception, the Buddhist believes to be a [natural result of man's] descent from Divine spiritual heights into a world of Maya, or illusion. This great 'Fall' must, however, be looked upon in a quite different way, for truly characterized it is The Fall of Man [as caused wholly through his own transgression, and was not due as the Buddhist thinks, merely to his coming down from a higher spiritual state and entering a world of deception].

Although man may have his own opinion concerning this matter, nevertheless, there is one thing we must admit, and that will suffice for the present, namely, that in connection with the thought of 'The Fall' there is an inner sentiment which causes man to exclaim: — 'As I am now there work within me certain impulses and forces that have of a surety not developed in my being alone, for similar factors were active in a not so very distant past, when they played a part in happenings of such a nature that the human race, to which I belong, not only lapsed from its former higher spiritual standard, but is so far fallen that mankind has come into another relation with the world to the one which would have been, if the original conditions had but endured.'

When man fell away from his previous high spiritual state, he sank to a definitely lower level, and this change was brought about by what may be termed his own conscious sin. We are therefore not merely concerned with the fact of descent, as is the case when 'The Fall' is viewed from the Buddhist stand-point, for we must take into consideration varying mood during this period of decadence. If man's

first nature had but continued unchanged this decline would not have that character which it has now assumed, where the soul-state is such that he is ever prone to fall into temptation.

He who penetrates beneath the surface of Christianity and studies deeply, learns that while history ran its course man's soul-quality altered. In other words, because of certain events which happened in ancient times, man's soul (the working of which may be likened to a subconscious mind with his being) took to itself a quality quite other to that which was primarily intended. Now, the Buddhist's position relative to the material world may be expressed as follows; he would say: — 'I have been taken out of a Divine spiritual realm and placed upon this earth; when I look around me I find nought but illusion — all is Maya.' But the Christian, on the other hand, would exclaim: — 'When I came down into this material life, had I but conformed to the order and intent of that Divine plan in which I had my part, I could even now look beyond this perceptual pretence, behind all this deception, this Maya; and I would at all times have power to realize and discern that which is genuine and true. But because, when I descended upon this earth my deeds were not in harmony with those things which had been ordained, I have, through my own act, caused this world to become an illusion.'

To the question: — 'Why is this world one of Maya?' the Buddhist answers: — 'It is the world itself that is Maya.' But the Christian says: — 'It is I who am at fault, I alone; my limited capacity for discernment and my whole soul-state have placed me in such a position that I can no more apprehend that which was in the beginning; and my actions and conduct have ceased to be of such a nature that results follow smoothly, ever attended with beneficial and fruitful progress. I myself have enwrapped this material life in a veil of Maya.' The Buddhist's stand-point is: that the world is a great illusion, and must be overcome. The Christian exclaims: — 'I have been placed upon this earth and must here find the purpose and object of my being.' When he once understands that through Spiritual Science knowledge may be acquired concerning recurrent earth lives, he then realizes that he may use this wisdom for the achievement of the true aim of his existence. He then becomes convinced that the reason why we now look upon a world of sorrow and deception, is because we have wandered from our allotted path. He considers that this change to Maya is the direct result of man's deeds, and the manner in which he regards the world.

The Christian, therefore, is of opinion that in order to attain to eternal bliss, we must not seek to withdraw ourselves from this earth-state but master that condition which we alone have brought about, and through which the aspect of all material things has been transformed into one of illusion, such that we no longer apprehend them in their truth and reality; we must turn back and overcome this deception, then may we follow the course of our first duly appointed destiny — for latent within each one of us abides a higher personality. If this more noble hidden-self were not hindered and could but look around upon the world, it would apprehend it in all its verity; man would then no longer continue an existence hampered by sickness and by death but lead an everlasting life in all the freshness of youth.

Such, then, is the true inner self that we have veiled. Veiled, because in the past we have been associated with a certain event in the world's development, the effects of which have continued on, while the primary impulses still work within us, thus proving that we do not exist isolated and alone. We must *not* believe that we have been led to our present condition through a 'thirst for existence' common to individual man; but rather must we realize that each one of us is a definite unit in the sum total of humanity, and as such must take his share and suffer from the results of any original transgression committed by mankind.

It is in this way that the Christian feels that he is historically united with the whole human race, and while he looks into the future, he exclaims: — 'Through travail and toil I must regain touch with that greater self which because of Man's Fall, now lies enshrouded within my being. It is not *Nirvana* that I must seek, but my more noble Ego. Alone, must I find the way back to my true nature, then will the outer world be no longer an illusion, a vision of unreality, but a world wherein I shall overcome, of my own power and effort, all sorrow, sickness, and death. While the Buddhist would seek freedom from earthly conditions and from rebirth, through his struggle with 'The Thirst for Existence', — the Christian seeks liberation from his lower personality, and looks forward to the awakening of his higher self, that more exalted Ego, which he alone has veiled; so that through his awakening he may at last apprehend this perceptual world in the light of Divine truth.

When we compare those significant words of St. Paul: — 'Yet not I but Christ liveth in me' (Galatians ii, 20) with the wisdom revealed by the Buddha, the contrast is as that between light and darkness. In St. Paul's words, we find expressed that positive knowledge, that definite consciousness, which is ever active deep within us, and in virtue of which we take our place as human personalities in the world. According to the Buddhist, mankind has lapsed from spiritual heights, because this material world has pressed him down and implanted in him a 'thirst for existence'; and this desire he must overcome — he must away! The Christian, on the other hand, says: — 'No! the world is not to blame because of my present state, the fault lies with me alone.'

We Christians dwell upon this earth equipped with our accustomed consciousness; but beneath all awareness and understanding there is a something ever active in each individual personality which in by-gone times found expression in the form of a clairvoyant visioned consciousness, now no more extant, for even while we possessed this faculty, we transgressed. If we would indeed reach the ultimate goal of our existence, then must we first atone for this human error. No man who is advanced in years may say: — 'In my early life I have sinned; it is unjust that I should now be called upon to make atonement for youthful faults, committed at a time when I had not yet attained to that fuller knowledge which is now mine.' It would be equally wrong for him to assert that it is unfair that he be expected to use his present conscious power to such end that he may compensate for misdeeds enacted while in possession of a different conscious faculty, which faculty no longer exists, for it has been replaced by an intellectual cognition.

The only way in which man may truly atone, when indeed the will is there, is for him to raise himself upward from his present conscious-state and existing Ego, to a higher plane of personality — a more exalted 'I'. Those words of St. Paul, — 'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,' could then be characterized as follows, — 'Yet not I, but a higher consciousness liveth in me.' The Christian conception can be expressed in these words: — 'I have fallen from a higher spiritual state, and have entered upon a different condition from that which was previously ordained; but I must rise again; and this I must do, not through that quality of Ego which is mine, but in virtue of a power that can enter into my very being, uplifting me far above that "I", which I

now possess. Such a change can alone come to pass when the Christ-influence is once more active within, leading me onward until the world has lost all power of illusion, and I can apprehend it in its true reality. Ever upward until those baneful forces which have brought sickness and death upon the earth may be vanquished, — conquered by that higher spiritual power which Christ has quickened within my being.'

The innermost essence of Buddhism is best understood by comparing the Buddhist creed with that of Christianity. When we do this, we at once realize why it was that Lessing should have made use of the phrase, — 'Is not all Eternity mine?' — in his book entitled *The Education of Mankind*. These words imply that if we employ the experiences gained during our repeated reincarnations, in such manner as to suffer the Christ-force to abide ever more and more within us, we shall at last reach the eternal spheres which realms we cannot as yet hope to attain, because we have of our own act, enveloped the inner being as with a veil. The idea of reincarnation will present a wholly different aspect when illumined by the glory of Christianity; but it is not merely the actual belief in rebirth which matters for the present, for with the advance of Christian culture, humanity will gradually be driven to the acceptance of this concept as a truth brought forward by Spiritual Science. But it is important that we should realize that, whereas the deepest sentiments and convictions of the Buddhist's faith cause him to blame the World for everything that is Maya — the Christian, on the other hand, looks upon himself, and mankind in general, as responsible for all earthly deception and illusion. The while he stores within his innermost being those qualities which are prerequisite and necessary to him, in order that he may rise to that state which we term Redemption. In the Christian sense, however, this does not only imply deliverance, but actual resurrection; for when man has attained to this state, his Ego is already raised to the level of that more exalted 'I' from which he has fallen. The Buddhist, when he looks around upon the world, finds himself concerned with an original sin, but feels that he has been placed upon this earth merely for a time, he therefore desires his freedom. The Christian likewise realizes his connection with an original sin, but seeks amendment and to atone for this first transgression. Such is an historical line of thought, for while the Christian feels that his present existence is associated with an incident which took place in olden times among the ancients, he also connects his life with an

event that will surely come to pass when he is so advanced that his whole being will shine forth, filled with that radiance which we designate as the essence of the Christ-Being.

Hence it is that during the world's development we find nothing in Christianity corresponding to successive Buddha-epochs coming one after another, as one might say, unhistorically, each Buddha proclaiming a like doctrine. Christianity brings forward but one single glorious event during the whole of man's earthly progress. In the same way as the Buddhist pictures the Buddha, seated isolated and alone under the Bodhi tree, at the moment when he was exalted and the great illumination came to him; so does the Christian visualize Jesus of Nazareth at that time when there descended upon Him the all-inspiring Spirit of the cosmos. The baptism of Christ by John, as described in the Bible, is as vivid and clear a picture as is the Buddhist's conception of the Illumination of the Buddha. Thus we have, in the first case, the Buddha seated under the Bodhi tree, concerned only with his own soul; in the second, Jesus of Nazareth, standing in the Jordan, while there descended upon Him that cosmic essence, that Spirit, symbolically represented as a dove, which entered into His innermost being.

To those who profess Buddhism, there is something about the Buddha and his works which is as a voice ever saying, — 'Thou shalt still this thirst for earthly existence, tear it out by the roots, and follow the Buddha — on to those realms which no earthly words can describe.' The Christian has a similar feeling, with regard to the life and example of Christ, for there seems to come forth an influence, which makes it possible for him to atone for that primeval deed, committed by ancient humanity. He knows that when in his soul, the Divine cosmic influence (born of that great spiritual world which lies behind this perceptual earth) becomes as great a living force as in the Christ himself, then will he carry into his future reincarnations the increasing realization of the truth of St. Paul's words: — 'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me'; and he will be raised more and more, ever upwards, to that Divine state from which he is now fallen. When such a faith is ours, we cannot help but be deeply moved, when we hear the story of how the Buddha, as he addressed his intimate disciples, spoke to them as follows: — 'When I look back upon my former lives, as I might look into an open book, where I can read page after page, and review each life in turn that is passed, I find in every one of these

earthly existences that I have built for myself a material body, in which my spirit has dwelt as in a temple; but I now know that this same body in which I have become Buddha will of a verity be the last.' Speaking of that Nirvana, into which he would so soon enter, the Buddha said: — 'I already feel that the beams ("Balken") are cracking and the supports giving way; that this physical body which has been raised up for the last time will soon be wholly and finally destroyed.'

Let us compare the above with the words of Christ, as recorded in the Gospel of St. John (ii. 19), when Jesus, intimating that He lived in a body which was external and apart, said: — 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' Here we have an exactly opposite point of view, which might be interpreted thus: — 'I will perform a deed which shall quicken and make fruitful, all that in this world is of God, and has come down to man from primeval times, and entered into his being.' These words imply that the Christian, during his recurrent earth lives must exercise his every faculty, in order to give truth to the affirmation: — 'Yet not I, but Christ Iiveth in me.' We must, however, clearly understand that Christ's reference to the rebuilding of the temple has an eternal significance and means that the Christ-power ever enters into, and is absorbed by, all who truly realize that they themselves must play a constructive part in the collective evolution of humanity. It is entirely wrong to speak of that event which gave rise to what we term the Christ-impulse, as though we anticipated its recurrence in some form during the further development of mankind.

The Buddhist, when he ponders in accordance with the true concepts of his creed, pictures the advent of several Buddhas, appearing one after another throughout recurring Buddha-epochs, all of which during the course of their earth lives had a similar character and significance. The Christian looks back to a single past event which is described as — The Fall of Man through Sin — while he points to its converse in the Mystery of Golgotha. He who believes that the Christ-event will at some later period be repeated, merely shows that he has not grasped the true essence of the historical evolution of mankind. History tells us that this idea has been frequently put forward in the past and it is likely that it will again reappear in the future.

The course of true history must always be dependent upon some single basic event. Just as the arm of a balance must have one point of equilibrium and the beam from which the scales hang one point of support only; so in the case of a true record of the evolution of mankind there must be some single circumstance to which its historical development (taken either backwards or forwards) ever points. It is as absurd to speak of a repetition of the Christ-event as it would be to assert that the beam of a balance could be supported and swing upon two points. That Eastern wisdom should hold to the belief that a number of similar spiritual personalities succeed each other at intervals, as it does in the case of the Buddhas, is characteristic of the difference existing between the Oriental cosmic conception and that which has sprung up among the Occidental countries, as the result of so much painstaking observation and thought concerning the course of evolution. The Western concept first began to take definite form at the time of the manifestation of the Christ-impulse, which we must regard as a unique circumstance. If we oppose the oneness and singular character of the Christ-event, we argue against the possibility of the true historical evolution of mankind; and to argue against historical evolution betrays a misunderstanding of genuine history.

We can, in its deepest sense, term that consciousness possessed by individual man of indissoluble association with humanity as a whole, the Christian consciousness. Through it we become aware of a definite purpose, underlying the course of all human evolution, and realize that here indeed can be no mere repetition. Such consciousness is an attribute of Christianity, from which it cannot be separated. The real progress which mankind has made during its period of development is shown in the advance from the ancient Eastern cosmic conception to the philosophic concept of modern times — from the unhistoric to the historic — from a belief that the wheels of human chance roll on through a succession of similar events to a conviction that underlying the whole of man's evolution is a definite purpose, a design of profound significance.

We realize that it is Christianity which has first revealed the true meaning of the doctrine of reincarnation. We can now state that the reason why man must experience recurrent earth lives is that he may be again and again instilled with the true import of material existence; with this object he is confronted with a different aspect of being during each of his incarnations. There is throughout humanity an

upward tendency that is not merely confined to the isolated individual, but extends to the entire human race with which we feel ourselves so intimately connected. The Christ-impulse, the centre of all, causes us to realize that man can become conscious of the glory of this divine relation; then no more will he only acknowledge the creed of a Buddha, who cries out to him: — 'Free thyself!' — but will become aware of his union with The Christ, Whose deed has reclaimed him from the consequences of that decadence, symbolically represented as: — 'The Fall of Man through Sin.'

We cannot describe Buddhism better than by showing that it is the after-glow of a cosmic conception, the sun of which has nearly set; but with the advent of Gautama it shone forth with one last brilliant, powerful ray. We revere the Buddha none the less, we honour him as a Great Spirit — as one whose voice called into the past and brought back into this earthly life, once again that mood which brings with it so clear a consciousness of man's connection with ancient primordial wisdom. On the other hand, we know that the Christ-impulse points resolutely towards the future, ever penetrating more and more deeply into the very soul of man; so that humanity may realize that it is not release and freedom that it should seek, but Resurrection that glorious transfiguration of our earthly being. It is in such a metamorphosis that we find the inner meaning of our material life. It is futile to search among dogmas, concepts and ideas for the active principle of existence; for the vital element of life lies in our impulses, emotions and feelings, and it is through these moods that we may apprehend the true significance of man's evolution and development.

There may be some who feel themselves more drawn toward Buddhism than toward Christianity; and we must admit that even in our time there is something about Buddhism which inspires a certain sympathy in many minds, and which is to a certain extent in the nature of a Buddha-mood or disposition. Such a feeling, however, did not exist with Goethe, who sought to free himself from the pangs which he endured owing to the narrow-mindedness he found everywhere about him, at the time of his first sojourn in Weimar. His endeavour in this respect was wholly due to his love of life and conviction that interwoven throughout all external being is the same spiritual essence which is the true origin of the Divine element in man. Goethe strove to achieve this liberation from distress through observation of the outer world, going from plant to plant, from mineral

to mineral, and from one work of art to another — ever seeking that underlying spirit from which the human soul emanates; the while he sought to unify himself with that Divine essence which manifests throughout all external things.

Goethe, when in converse with Schopenhauer regarding the influence of his thoughts and ideas upon his pupil, once said: — 'When your carefully considered and worthy conceptions come into contact with a wholly different trend of thought, they will be found at variance with one another.' Schopenhauer had established a maxim which, expressed in his oft-repeated words, was as follows: — 'Life is ever precarious, and it is through deep meditation that I seek to alleviate its burdens.' What he really sought was that illumination which would reveal and make clear the true origin [and intent] of existence. It was therefore only natural that Buddhist concepts should enter his mind and mingle with his ideas, thus causing him to ponder upon this olden creed.

During the progress of the nineteenth century the different branches of human culture have yielded such great and far-reaching results, that the mind of man seems incapable of adjusting itself in harmony with the flood of new ideas which continually pour in upon it, as a consequence of effort expended in scientific research; and it feels ever more and more helpless before the enormous mass of facts which is the unceasing product of such investigations. We have found this vast world of accepted truths to be wonderfully in accord with the concepts of Spiritual Science, but it is worthy of note that during the last century, although man's reasoning powers increased greatly nevertheless they soon failed to keep pace with the immense inflow of scientific data. Thus it was that just toward the close of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, man realized that he could not hope to understand and to master all this new knowledge by means of the human intellect alone; for everything about us is connected with, and extends into the cosmos and the world of spirit — and this outer realm is still beyond the limits of man's normal faculties of comprehension. He must, therefore, seek another way, some as yet untrodden path.

Hence it is that mankind has sought a cosmic philosophy, not wholly at variance with all those facts coming from the outer world which make inward appeal to the soul. Spiritual Science is based upon the

most profound conceptions and experiences of divine wisdom, and is ever ready to deal with all fresh truths and data brought forward by external science, to assimilate them, and throw new light upon their significance, showing at the same time that in all which has actuality in external life, is embodied the divine essence — the spirit. There are some people, however, who find the concepts of Spiritual Science inconvenient and unsuitable. They turn away from the world of reality, which demands so much thought and effort for its unfoldment, and, according to their own knowledge and personal ideas, seek a higher plane merely through the development of their individual souls. Thus we have what may be termed an 'Unconscious Buddhism', which has long existed and been active in the philosophies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. When an 'Unconscious Buddhist' comes into contact with true Buddhism then, because of indolence and inertia, he feels himself more 'at home' with this Eastern creed than with European Spiritual Science, which comes to grips with widespread facts, because it knows that throughout the entire range of reality the Divine spirit is ever manifest.

There is no doubt that the present sympathy and interest evinced with regard to Buddhism is due, in part, to feebleness of will and want of faith, faith, born of undeveloped spiritual knowledge. The whole essence of the Christian cosmic conception, which seems to have been in Goethe's mind, demands that man shall not give way to his own weak spiritual understanding and talk of 'the limitations of human knowledge', but feel that there is within him a something which will carry him above all illusion and bring him to truth and reality, thus freeing him for evermore from terrestrial existence. A cosmic conception of this nature may call for much patient resignation, but such is of quite a different order to that which shrinks before the contemplation of the limits of human understanding. Resignation, in the Kantian sense, implies that mankind is altogether incapable of penetrating the deep secrets of the cosmos, and its chief feature lies in the special acknowledgment of the feebleness of man's comprehension; but that of Goethe is of a different character, and is expressed in these words: — 'Thou hast not as yet come so far, that thou canst apprehend the Universe in all its glorious reality, but thou art capable of developing thyself.' Resignation of this kind leads on to that stage of growth and progress when man will truly be in a position to call forth his Christ-nature from within his being; he yields, because he realizes that the highest point of his mundane development has not

yet been attained. Such an attitude is noble and fully in accord with human understanding. It implies that we pass from life to life, with the consciousness of being, looking ever forward into the future in the knowledge that with regard to recurrent earthly existence all eternity is ours.

When we consider man's evolution, we find ourselves confronted with two modern currents of thought, each leading to a different cosmic conception. One of which, due to Schopenhauer, pictures the world with all its misery and suffering, as of such nature that we can only realize and appreciate man's true position when we gaze upon the works of the great artists. In these masterpieces we oft-times find portrayed the form and figure of a being, who through asceticism, has attained to something approaching to liberation from earthly existence, and already hovers, as it were, above this lower terrestrial life. Fundamentally, Schopenhauer was of opinion that in the case of a human being thus freed, retrospection concerning material conditions no longer exists and that herein lies the pre-eminent characteristic of such liberation. Hence, he who has thus won his way to freedom, can truly say: — 'I am still clothed in my bodily garment, but it has now lost all significance, and there is nought left about me which might in time to come recall my earthly life. I strive ever upward, in anticipation of that state with which I shall gain contact when I have at last wholly overcome the world, and all that appertains thereto.' Of such nature was the sentiment of Schopenhauer, after he had become imbued with those ideas and convictions, which Buddhist teaching has spread abroad in the world.

Goethe, on the other hand, led on by his truly Christian impulse, regarded the world after the manner of his character — **Faust**. When we cease to look about us in trivial mood, when we truly realize that all material works must perish, and death at last overtake the body, then with Goethe we can say: — 'If we but take heed and ponder concerning our earthly activities there will come knowledge born of experience, teaching us that while all those things wrought and accomplished which are of this world must pass away, that which we have built up within ourselves through toil and striving during our contact with the 'School of Earthly Life', shall not perish, for such is indeed everlasting.'

So with Faust we think not of how our mundane works may endure, but look forward to the fruits which they shall bring forth in the course of the soul's eternal life; thus are we carried far out and beyond the narrow confines of the Buddhist creed, into a world of thought which finds brief expression in those impressive words of Goethe:-

*'Eons cannot erase
The traces of my days on earth.'*

Notes for this lecture:

1. Bodhisattva (Sanskrit). A Bodhisatt, one whose essence is enlightenment, that is, one destined to become a Buddha. A Buddha Elect (*vide, A Concise Dictionary of Eastern Religion*, by Winternitz).
2. Bodhi Tree — Fig-tree (*Ficus religiosa*); known also as the Bo Tree. [Ed.]



IV. Moses

9 March 1911, Berlin

When we study the great historical individualities of the past, such as those who have already claimed our attention during these lectures, namely, Zarathustra, Hermes and Buddha, we are brought face to face with incidents and facts which are of interest to us as human beings, because we feel that our whole soul life plays a part in the collective evolution of humanity. It is only when we look back to those great spiritual characters of by-gone times, who have helped to bring about the conditions in which we now live, that we can truly comprehend our present circumstances.

With regard to Moses, however, whose personality we are about to consider, the matter presents a wholly different aspect; for here we have the feeling that there is no limit to that direct influence exerted by all those events connected with his name, which yet continue to affect the spiritual content of our souls. We still feel, in our very bones, as it were, the workings of those impulses which emanated from this great outstanding patriarch. It seems to us that Moses is even now a living force in our thoughts and feelings, and as if when we analyse our ideas and motives according to his doctrine and sentiments, that we are in truth arraigning and searching our very souls. It is for this reason that all that persistent tradition which is directly associated with Moses, seems to us more vivid, more actually present, than that which is connected with those other great personalities to whom I have referred. It is therefore in a certain sense, less difficult to deal with this outstanding individuality, for through the Bible we are all familiar with this mighty figure, whose influence has endured even to the present time.

Although the conscientious researches which have been conducted by science during the past ten years and more, have to a certain extent touched upon the surface and here and there thrown new light upon the history of Moses — in so far as it can be gleaned from the Bible — nevertheless, when we look more deeply into the matter, we

must admit that very little indeed has been altered with regard to the general impression which we have received from our own personal study of the Scriptures.

Whenever we refer to any matter connected with Moses, or to the great patriarch himself, we speak as if we were mentioning some subject well known throughout the widest circles; this fact somewhat simplifies the contemplation of the historical features. But on the other hand there are certain difficulties which arise, because of the manner in which the Bible tradition concerning Moses is expressed. This we at once realize when we call to mind the vicissitudes which accompanied the Biblical researches of the nineteenth century.

There is scarcely a single branch of human knowledge, or sincere scientific endeavour, even when we include the natural sciences, which claims in so high a degree our deep admiration and reverence, as do these investigations; and I feel that this point should be repeatedly emphasized. The industry, the discrimination, the devoted and unselfish scientific application, expended upon separate sections of the Bible, in order to educe from their character and style a definite knowledge of their alleged origin, is considered by those who have followed these researches closely as a work which has had no parallel during the nineteenth century.

All this investigation of the past hundred years has, however, a tragic side, for the further the researches were carried, the more did they tend to place the Bible beyond the reach of the people. Anyone who will consult the current literature concerning the results of these exhaustive studies can convince himself of this fact. The difficulty arose because the Bible was dissected and split up, particularly in the case of the Old Testament, in an attempt to show, for instance, that a certain passage occurring in one part of the Bible owed its origin to a different current of tradition to that of a passage in another part. Also, that during the course of time the whole subject matter had gradually become welded together, in a form which made it necessary for it to be first separated out in this scholarly manner, in order that it might be understood. Hence, in a certain sense, the outcome of these investigations must be looked upon as tragic, since they were fundamentally wholly negative in character and contributed nothing

toward the continuance of that vivifying influence which the Bible is capable of exerting, and which has lived in the hearts and souls of mankind for thousands of years.

That movement towards true spiritual development, which we have termed Spiritual Science, is chiefly concerned with constructive activities and is not interested in mere criticism, as is so often the case with other sciences. In our time its most important task is to bring about once again an accurate and proper understanding of the Bible, and in this relation it puts forward the following question: — 'Is it not essential that we should first penetrate into the very depths of the import and significance which underlies the whole character of the ancient Biblical traditions, and then, only after these are fully and clearly understood, inquire as to their origin?' Such a procedure is however, not easy, especially with reference to the Old Testament, and is particularly difficult in regard to those sections which deal with the great outstanding figure and personality of Moses.

We would now ask: — 'What is it that Spiritual Science has to say regarding the peculiar nature of those ancient Biblical descriptions?' It tells us that those external events which are associated with this or that personality or nation, have been chronicled in the order and manner in which they actually occurred, as viewed from the standpoint of external history. Following this method, the personality of Moses is so depicted that his experiences in the physical world are represented just as they took place in relation to space and time.

It is only when we have made a profound study of the Bible through the medium of Spiritual Science, that we realize that a Biblical description concerned with external happenings and experiences may become merged in one of quite another nature; and it is often with difficulty that we can distinguish this change in fundamental character. We are told, for instance, of journeys and other worldly events which we accept as such; then, all unnoticed, as the account continues, we find ourselves confronted with a graphic narrative of a wholly different order. It seems to us that a certain journey is represented as continuing from one definite place to another, and as if we were expected to look upon the account of events depicted in the latter part of the narrative in the same light as the external physical happenings described at the beginning. In reality, however, the latter part of such an account may be actually a figurative portrayal of the soul-life of the

particular personality to whom the story has reference. It then has no connection whatever with external worldly events, but depicts the soul experiences, struggles and conquests, through which this especial being is raised to a higher degree of soul development, greater enlightenment, a more advanced stage of activity, or to a mission concerned with the world's evolution. In such case, descriptions of outside events pass over without any noticeable change directly into pictorial representations, which although remaining similar in style and character, have absolutely no significance with regard to external physical happenings — but refer only to the inner experiences of the soul.

The above assertion will always remain 'a mere assertion' to those who are unable to utilize the methods of Spiritual Science and thus enter gradually and understandingly into the strange and unusual features associated with many of the graphic narratives found in the Bible; more particularly will this be the case with regard to those sections which deal with the patriarch Moses. When, however, we study this strange method of representation deeply, we notice that when at some certain point in a story the description of external physical events changes into one of soul-experiences, the whole style and fundamental character of the account alters, while a new element suddenly makes its appearance. If we ask ourselves: — 'How does it come about that we are able to perceive this change?' we can only answer that we realize it because of a conviction that comes to us from the soul. This curious descriptive method, which we have just characterized, lies at the base of ancient religious historical narratives, more especially when they are concerned with personalities who have reached a high standard of discernment and understanding of the soul's action and inner workings.

The further we advance, and the more deeply we become immersed in the study of Spiritual Science, the greater is our faith in this singular style of representation; but just because of the strangeness of this method it is, in some ways, far from easy to gain a clear comprehension of the true meaning of certain passages which occur in the graphic delineation of Moses. On the one hand, we have the Bible with its apparently straightforward narrative, but on the other, there are difficulties due to the curious way in which the account is

presented, when the subject matter is of an especially profound character. This fact has resulted in the customary interpretations being much too liberal in many cases.

When, for instance, we consider the conception of ancient Hebrew history, as advanced by the philosopher Philo, who lived at the time of the founding of Christianity, we realize at once that he endeavoured to portray the whole record of the old Jewish nation as if it were an allegory. Philo aimed at a figurative representation in which the entire history of this ancient race becomes a sort of symbolical account of the soul-experiences of a people. In so doing, Philo went too far, and for this reason: he did not possess that judgment and insight, born of Spiritual Science, which would have enabled him to discern and to know when the descriptions concerning external events glided into portrayals relative to soul-life.

As we proceed it will be realized that in Moses we have a personality who influenced directly the active course of human evolution, and whose mission it was to enlighten mankind concerning matters of the utmost import and significance. When we experience that deep sense, so pregnant with meaning, through which we become aware that his deeds even yet touch a chord within our souls, then do we feel that a full and clear comprehension of the Moses-Impulse is to us a necessity. We will, therefore, without further preamble, enter at once upon the question of his great Mission. The true object of his life's work cannot, however, be fully understood unless we presuppose that the Bible narrative was based upon actual and specific knowledge of a certain fundamental change in man's psychic condition, to which we have already referred when considering the individualities of Zarathustra, Hermes and Buddha. We then drew attention to the fact that during the course of evolution the soul-life of man has gradually undergone a definite modification, from a divine primordial clairvoyant state to that of our present-day intellectual consciousness.

I must once again bring back to your minds a statement made in previous lectures, namely, that in primeval times the soul of man was so constituted that during certain intermediary conditions between that of sleeping and being awake, he could gaze upon the Spirit-World, and that things thus observed, and which were truly of the

spiritual realms, manifested as pictures or visions; and it is these visions that in many cases have been perpetuated in the form of mythological legends of by-gone times.

In reply to the question: — 'How can the reality of this ancient clairvoyant consciousness be proved externally, and without the aid of Spiritual Science?' we would say that the answer is to be found in the results of certain precise and painstaking investigations which have been carried on even in our time, but which have not as yet received general recognition. We would point out that comparatively recently some of our mythologists during their researches into the origin of ancient mythical visions, legends, etc., which have arisen among certain separate and distinctive peoples, have been forced to assume the existence of an altogether different conscious state in order to account for these ancient myths and concepts.

I have often referred to an interesting book, entitled *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, by Ludwig Laistner, a mythologist who must be ranked as the most prominent among the modern investigators in this field of research. *The Riddle of the Sphinx* is regarded as one of the most important works of its kind. Laistner draws attention to the fact that certain myths appear to form a sequel to events typical of experiences in a dream world. He did not advance so far as the study of Spiritual Science, and he was quite unaware that he had in reality laid the foundation stone of a true knowledge and understanding of the Ancient Mythologies. We (annot, however, regard Myths and Legends merely in the light of transfigured typical dreams, as Laistner has done, but we must recognize in them the products of a by-gone condition of human consciousness in which man could apprehend the Spirit-World in pictorial visions, that later found expression in mythical imagery.

It is impossible to comprehend the old fables and legends, unless we start with the hypothesis that they were evolved from a different form of conscious state; and it is just because this basic assumption has been lacking that they are so little understood. This prehistoric soul-state has now given way to our present intellectual consciousness, which latter may be briefly characterized as follows: — We alternate between a condition of sleeping and of being awake. In our wakeful state we seize upon those impressions which come to us from the external world, through the medium of our senses; these ideas we

group together, combining them by means of our intellect. This material form of intellectual consciousness, which acts through our power of understanding and intelligence, has now superseded the ancient clairvoyant soul-state. We have thus characterized a particular episode of history, and presented it in the aspect which it assumes when we make a profound study of the evolution of mankind.

There is yet another factor which underlies the manner in which Bible narratives are expressed. It appears that a special mission was assigned to each nation, race and tribe in connection with the evolution and development of man; and that the ancient clairvoyant forms of consciousness manifested in different ways according to the capacity and temperament of the various peoples. It is for this reason that we find fundamentally among the mythologies and pagan religions of divers nations such uniformity of tradition concerning this old clairvoyant state.

We thus realize that we are not dealing with just one abstract idea, or unit, in this ancient conception of the world; for the most varied missions were assigned to Nations and to Peoples who differed very greatly from one another; and thus it came about that the universal consciousness found expression in many and varying forms. If we would indeed understand all that the evolution of mankind implies, then we must take into consideration the fact that it does not merely consist of a meaningless succession of civilizations, but that throughout the whole course of man's progress and development there is found interwoven both significance and purport. Hence we find that a certain order of conscious-state may reappear and be found active in some later civilization because, like a fresh page, or a new-born flower, it has something to add to that which has gone before; for the whole meaning and purpose of human evolution implies ever recurrent and successive forms of manifestation.

We can best understand the people of a nation from the stand-point of Spiritual Science when we realize that all races, be they Ancient Indians, Persians, Babylonians, Greeks, or Romans, had a definite mission to fulfil, and that each nation gave expression in some special and distinctive manner to that which was active and could live in man's consciousness. We cannot rightly comprehend these different peoples unless we are in a position to apprehend and to realize the nature of their mission from their individual characteristics. The whole

evolution of mankind proceeds in such manner that to each nation a certain time is apportioned and when this period draws to a close, the nation's work is done. It is as if the hour had struck, the seeds had brought forth their fruit, and the task was ended. It may, however, happen that with this or that race certain peculiarities of temperament, or natural disposition, corresponding to a former period may persist. In such a case this particular nation has, as it were, overpassed the appointed time when a new mission should be entered upon, and take the place of that which was before. Thus it is that certain singular and distinctive national traits may endure and become active at a later period, the while the objective course of human evolution substitutes some fresh purpose for that which was previously determined.

A course of events of this nature is especially noticeable with the Egyptians, and we have already become acquainted with their peculiar characteristics during the lecture devoted to Hermes. The Egyptians had been assigned a lofty mission in connection with the collective progress and development of humanity; and all that was embodied therein was perfected and fulfilled, while the seeds of that which was to follow had been laid in the Egyptian civilization. The people of this great nation, however, retained their original temperament and singular characteristics and were therefore not of themselves capable of formulating and undertaking a new mission. Hence it came about that the control and government of the succeeding community passed into other hands. The source out of which the fresh movement evolved was fundamentally Egyptian, but the mission itself was destined to assume a different character.

Here we note something akin to a change of tendency in the whole purport of man's evolution, and in order that we may understand the circumstances, it is necessary that we immerse ourselves deeply in the study of all that pertained to the growth and development of the Egyptian mission. When Moses had acquired all the knowledge and information possible concerning this matter, he pondered deeply and the souls of his people were stirred. It was, however, not his task to carry on the ancient Egyptian mission; he must evolve therefrom some entirely new plan which he might instil into the course of human evolution. It is because his concept was so mighty, so comprehensive and so penetrating in its nature, that the personality of Moses exerted so powerful an influence upon the whole history of mankind. The way

in which the Moses Mission was evolved out of the past evolution of the Egyptian people is even in our day of the greatest interest, while its example and study yet bear abundant fruit. That knowledge and understanding which came to Moses from the Egyptians, and which was enhanced through his contact with the lofty and eternal course of spiritual development has ever reached outward, until it has now become active in our soul-life.

Hence, the impression we have gained of Moses is that of a personality not directly dependent upon any particular period, or upon any special mission, for that wisdom which was his to impart to humanity. We regard him as one whose soul must have been stirred by those eternally surging waves of Divine influence, that ever find new channels through which to reach deep down into the evolution of mankind, so that man may be productive and bring forth goodly fruits. It is as if the ever-lasting germ of wisdom implanted in the soul of Moses, found its fitting soil, and ripened, in the light of that knowledge which came to him from the Egyptian civilization.

The Bible account of the finding of Moses enclosed in an Ark, shortly after his birth (Ex. ii. 5), is a symbolical description according to the ancient mode, from which we are to understand that in Moses we are concerned with a soul that drew upon eternal sources for the most lofty of those concepts which it proffered to humanity. Anyone who understands the singular form in which such religious narratives are developed, knows that this particular style is always indicative of some matter of deep significance. During former lectures of this series, we have learnt that when man desires to raise his capacity of apprehension to the higher level of the spiritual spheres he must pass through certain stages of soul development, during which he completely shuts himself off from the external world, and also from that ever wakeful call emanating from the lowest forces of the soul.

Let us suppose that we wished to express figuratively, that at birth some personality entering upon earth life came upon the world endowed with certain Divine gifts which would later raise him to great heights in his relation to mankind. We might well indicate this concept by developing a narrative telling us that it was essential that this being should, shortly after birth, pass through some material experience of such nature as to cause all his sense perceptions and powers of

external apprehension to be for a time entirely shut off from the physical world.¹ Viewed in this light the Bible story concerning the discovery of Moses becomes quite intelligible.

We read that the daughter of the Egyptian King Pharaoh [sent her maid to the river to fetch the Ark, in which was the child] and that she herself named him Moses — 'Because,' she said, 'I drew him out of the water.' (Ex. ii, 10.) Those who are aware of the true meaning of the name 'Moses', know that it signifies this act, as is indicated in the Bible. From this graphic narrative we are to understand that the daughter of Pharaoh, who is here symbolical of Egyptian culture, guided the influx of external life into a soul touched with the attributes of eternity. At the same time we find intimated in a wonderful manner that the imperishable message which Moses was destined to bring to humanity was as one might say, enfolded and lay within an outer shell encompassed and enveloped by the old Egyptian culture and mission.

Next follow descriptions of external events which occurred during the life-development of Moses; and we realize once again from the form in which they are presented, that they have reference to actual outer happenings. All that we read concerning the vicissitudes of Moses, especially where mention is made of his grief and distress over the bondage of his people in Egypt, may be regarded as an actual account of mundane events. As the story continues, it merges almost imperceptibly into a graphic portrayal of his inner soul-life and soul-experiences. This occurs at that place where it is stated that he fled away and was finally guided to a priest of Midian whose name was Jethro or Ruel. (Ex. ii, 15 to 20.)

Anyone having the knowledge and discernment necessary in order to discover the existence of a story of this nature underlying what, at first sight, would appear to be an ordinary spiritual narrative, would at once realize from the very names alone that the account changes its whole character at this point and passes over to a description of soul-events. We do not mean to suggest that Moses did not actually set out upon a journey to some temple sanctuary or abode of priestly learning; but rather that the whole narrative has been most ingeniously developed and told in such manner that external happenings are deliberately intermingled with the soul-experiences of the great patriarch. Thus do we find that all outer life-experiences

mentioned at this point are suggestive of the trials and tribulations against which Moses struggled in order to attain to a more exalted soul-state.

What, then, is the actual significance of Jethro? From the Bible we learn that he was one of those mysterious individualities whom we meet again and again when we study the evolution and development of the human race. Beings who stand supreme in having won their way through toil and effort to that lofty standard of knowledge and discernment which can only be acquired, slowly and gradually, through veritable experience of the soul's inner conflicts. It is in this wise alone that man may gain true understanding of those grand spiritual heights where lie the paths ever traversed by such exalted ones. Moses became, to a certain extent, a disciple of Jethro, and through this association his mission was destined to receive a direct impulse. Now, Jethro was one of those incomprehensible beings who withhold their innermost nature from the apprehension of mankind, though acting on occasion as teachers and leaders of men. In these days there is much doubt and incredulity regarding the reality of such mystic personalities, but that they have indeed existed becomes evident to every earnest student of the historical development of humanity.

The account of the experiences of Moses while a disciple of this great wise priest, opens with a description of his meeting with Jethro's seven daughters [in the land of Midian. Ex. ii, 15, 16] near-by to a well (a symbol betokening: — source of wisdom). Anyone who would comprehend the deeper significance underlying a graphic narrative of this nature must above all remember that mystical descriptions of every period have symbolically portrayed all such knowledge and power as the soul itself may display in the form of female figures — even down to **Goethe**, who in the closing words of **Faust**, alludes to the 'eternal feminine'. Thus in the seven daughters of Jethro, we recognize the seven human soul-forces, over which that priestly character ever exercised control.²

We must bear in mind that in those ancient times when man's consciousness was still quickened by the old clairvoyance, other views prevailed regarding the nature of the human soul and its various powers. The only way in which we can form any conception of this primordial consciousness is by starting with our current ideas as a

basis. We speak in these days of man's soul and its powers of thinking, feeling and willing, as if these forces were within us, contained, as one might say, in the very soul itself; and this concept is essentially correct, as viewed from the stand-point of intellectual consciousness. Primeval man, however, under the influence of his gift for clairvoyant vision, regarded the soul and its workings from a different aspect. He was not aware of any centralized system in this connection and did not look upon his powers of thought, feeling and will, as forces whose mid-point of activity is situated in the Ego and which determine the oneness and individuality of the soul, but regarded himself as wholly subservient to the Macrocosm and its several forces; while each separate source of energy within his soul seemed linked with specific and divine spiritual beings. This concept may be compared to one in which we might conceive our thought activities as prompted and maintained by some spiritual soul-power other than that which stimulates and influences the faculties of feeling and will. We would thus picture separate currents of spiritual energy as flowing inward from the Macrocosm, and activating our powers of thought, feeling and willing. Although in these days we form no such conception, it was thus that primeval man regarded his soul, not as a centralized unit in itself, but rather as a theatre in which the divine spiritual powers of the cosmos might unceasingly play their several parts. In connection with Moses, reference is made to seven such forces, which are conceived as ever active upon the stage of soul-life.

We have only to turn to **Plato** in order to realize that man's outlook upon the evolution of human consciousness changed and became in general ever more and more abstract and intellectual. Plato conceived 'Ideas' to be living entities, leading an existence such as in our time could only be thought of in connection with matter; while each separate soul-force is pictured as possessing an attribute which plays its part in the theatre of the soul's totality. Gradually the conceptions formed regarding the capacity of the soul became increasingly abstract while the Unity of the Ego assumed more and more its rightful place in man's concepts.

Strange as it may appear, in the medieval conception of the seven liberal arts,³ we can still recognize in abstract form characteristics typical of the symbolic representation of the seven active spiritual forces of soul-life in the seven daughters of the Midianite priest, Jethro. The manner in which the seven liberal arts were evolved and

brought to light was as a last dim echo (touched with a modern trend of thought) of that consciousness which recognized that seven distinct faculties persist, and are ever active in the scenes staged in the theatre of man's soul.

When we consider the above concepts, we begin to realize that while, from the spiritual standpoint, Moses was confronted with the collective aspect of these seven human soul-forces, nevertheless, his chief mission was to implant one particular soul-influence in the form of an impulse deeply and fully in the course of human evolution. This it was possible for him to do, because it lay in the blood and in the temperament of his people to manifest an especial interest in that outstanding soul-power, the activities of which have been felt right on down to our own time, and which it was his task to instil. We refer to that dominant soul-energy which unites all those forces, previously regarded as separate and detached, in one centralized and homogeneous bond of inner soul-life — the life of the true self — the Ego. We are next told that one of the daughters of Jethro married Moses; this means that within his soul one of these forces became especially active, so much so indeed, that owing to its influence it became for a long period a dominating power in human evolution, reducing all other soul-forces to a unified Soul-Ego.

Statements such as the above must be made with the greatest reserve, for in our present age mankind has no adequate faculty, or organ, wherewith he may realize that many Biblical descriptions which apparently represent external happenings are presented solely for the purpose of drawing attention to the fact that at the time at which the events portrayed took place, a particular soul was undergoing some experience of inner development; in other words, was especially concerned with, and attracted to, its individual mission. It is also apparent that one special attribute which the old Egyptians did not possess, namely, that inspiration which Moses drew from the human Ego-force at the mid-point of man's soul-powers was for him the criterion [to which he referred his judgment].

We can therefore with reason assert that the true mission of the ancient Egyptian nation was to found a culture based upon the practise and methods of primeval clairvoyance. All that is best of those things which have been handed down to us from the Egyptian civilization, has sprung from the singular nature of those peculiar

psychic powers, once possessed by the Egyptian priests and the leaders of the people. But the time came when with regard to the old Egyptian mission, one might say, that the cosmic clock had run down, and the call must go forth to mankind to unfold and develop those soul-forces which it was ordained should, for a long period, supersede that ancient passive clairvoyant condition in the future evolution of humanity.

Ego-consciousness, intellectuality, rationalism, reason and understanding, with their spheres of action in the external perceptual world were destined to replace the old clairvoyant consciousness in the human race yet to come. I have already stated how, in the future of mankind, the clairvoyant power, and the intellectual consciousness, will be found united. Even now, humanity is advancing toward a time when these two conscious states will be universally interwoven and co-active throughout the human race.

The most important element in human culture, regarded from our modern stand-point, received its first impulse through Moses; hence, that sense of persistency in connection with the Moses-impulse which still exists in our soul-life and power. To Moses was granted a certain capacity for intellectual thought and action, controlled by *reason* and *understanding*, and this ability [and his wisdom] were instilled into him in a singular and unusual manner; because all those concepts and ideas which came to him and were destined to manifest and bear fruit in some particular way at a later period, must first be implanted in a fashion conforming with the peculiar methods in vogue in those ancient times. Here we come upon a remarkable fact, namely, that later generations of mankind were directly indebted to Moses for their power of expanding and developing their understanding and intellect through the medium of their Ego-consciousness; so that they might reason and ponder upon the world, and gain enlightenment through inner intellectual contemplation while yet fully awake.

The manner in which a consciousness of intellectuality came to Moses must have been through flashes of intellectual awareness, similar in nature to the old clairvoyant manifestations. He was indeed the recipient of that first initial impulse toward the new order of reasoned judgment and understanding, while at the same time he possessed the old clairvoyant power, being in fact, under the influence of the last of its promptings. All that knowledge and enlightenment

which was acquired by later generations independently of clairvoyance was accessible to Moses through its aid. His understanding, his discernment and intuition in the sphere of pure reason came to him when his soul passed into that same clairvoyant condition which he had experienced when under the influence of the old Midianite priest. We have the incident of the burning bush, which glowed with fire of such nature that it was not consumed. In this case, the spirit of the cosmos manifested before Moses in an entirely new manner, which was beyond the clairvoyant knowledge of the Egyptians to explain.

Everyone who is acquainted with the essential facts knows that, during the course of development, man's soul reaches a point when the aspect of external objects gradually undergoes a change, so that they appear interwoven with that mysterious background of archetypes from which they emanate. The spectacle of the 'burning bush', so magnificently portrayed in the Bible, is recognized by all who are advanced in spiritual discernment as an instance of man's apprehension of the Spirit-World.

We now realize that the enlightenment which Moses received in clairvoyant form must have been of the nature of a new consciousness proceeding from the great spirit of the cosmos, that spirit which is ever active and weaves throughout the whole material world. Ancient peoples believed in a *plurality* of cosmic forces, these they conceived as operating in man's soul in such manner that the soul's power did not represent a unit, for the forces were manifold in nature, while the soul was regarded merely as the scene of their active expression. It was for Moses to recognize a cosmic spirit of a very different order — one that did not manifest as a soul-power owing its origin to divers spirit influences which, although exhibiting a certain similitude, find ultimate expression in varied form. That spirit of the cosmos, which it was ordained that Moses should apprehend, was of wholly other character, for its revelation can alone take place in the innermost and holiest mid-point of soul-life, the Ego. There works the spirit of the universe — in the place where man's soul is conscious of its very centre.

When the human soul feels that the Ego is linked with the weaving and the life of the spirit, in the same way as the people of old realized that their being was truly related to the cosmic forces, then can it apprehend those things which were first revealed to Moses through

his clairvoyant powers. And these revelations must be regarded as forming the cosmic basis from which came the great impulse he gave to mankind. That primal impulse enabling humanity through its reasoning faculties and understanding alone [unaided by the old clairvoyance], to associate and compare physical phenomena, and to recognize in them factors underlying all continuity in the material world.

In these days, if we consider the centre of our soul-life, it appears to be of extremely poor content, in spite of the fact that this content represents our most intense life experiences. Certain people, especially those of a highly gifted and talented character, as for instance, Jean Paul, have felt, sometime during the course of earthly existence, that they were actually confronted with their true centre of being. Jean Paul, in his autobiography, tells this story: — 'Never shall I forget an inner vision which I once experienced and which I have not as yet described to anyone. In this vision I was present at the birth of my true conscious self, and I clearly recollect both the time and the place of this occurrence. It was one morning when I was a very young child; I was standing in the doorway of our house, and as I looked toward the left, in the direction of the wood-shed, there suddenly came to me an inner vision flashed down as lightning from Heaven, of the words: — "I AM AN I" (Ich bin ein Ich) — and these words remained for a space shining brightly. In that moment, and in that place, my Ego had looked upon itself for the first time, and the gaze would endure forever. Illusion due to defect of memory is hardly conceivable in this case, since no outside incidents on topics could mingle extraneous matter with an event which could only take place in the secret and most holy seclusion of man's innermost being, and the very novelty of which caused minor details to be deeply impressed upon my memory.'

This 'secret and most holy seclusion' appears to be the most intense and powerful condition of our soul-life, but mankind cannot be so aware of this particular soul-state as of many another, for it is lacking in [conscious] plenitude. When man withdraws himself to this central point, then does he indeed realize that through those wondrous words — 'I AM' — so earnest and so forceful, but withal so meagre in actual word content, there ever resounds the dominant tone of his innermost soul-being.

That spirit from the cosmos, which Moses clearly apprehended as an homogeneous unity, is unceasingly active in that abode of 'secret and most holy seclusion'. No wonder, when this cosmic essence was first revealed to Moses that he cried out: — 'If I am appointed to the task of standing before the people in order to inaugurate a new civilization based upon the consciousness of self — who will believe me? — In *whose name* shall I proclaim my mission?' And the answer came: — 'Thou shalt say "I AM THAT I AM."' This profound asseveration signifies that the name of the Divinity Who reveals Himself in the 'secret and most holy seclusion' of man's nature, cannot be otherwise proclaimed than with words which designate the consciousness of self-being. In the phenomenon of the burning bush, Moses discerned the Jahveh, or Jehovah-nature, and we can well understand that from the moment when the name — Jahveh — broke in upon his consciousness as 'I AM', there came a new current, a new element into the course of human evolution, and which was destined from that time on to supplant the old Egyptian civilization. The ancient culture had merely served to develop the soul of Moses, in order that he might be in a position to truly appreciate and to cope with those most exalted personalities and difficult situations which it would be his lot to encounter during the course of his life experiences.

We next come to the conference between Moses and Pharaoh. It is easy to see that when these two came together, they could not understand one another. The account is intended to convey the idea that all those things regarding which Moses spoke proceeded from an entirely changed order of human consciousness, and must, therefore, have been quite unintelligible to Pharaoh, in whom the old clairvoyant Egyptian culture alone continued active. That such was the case, is evident from the way in which the records are expressed — for Moses spoke a new language. He clothed his speech in words which emanated from the Ego-consciousness of the human soul, and were, therefore, incomprehensible to Pharaoh, who could only follow the old train of thought.

Up to that cosmic hour, the Egyptians had had a mission to fulfil, based upon the powers of a by-gone clairvoyant conscious state — but the time allotted to that mission had passed. Henceforth, the race, if it should continue to live on, would still remain endowed with the same temperament and national characteristics which it had heretofore possessed. It had found no means whereby it might raise

itself and cross the sheer boundary which separated the old epoch from the new. But at this very time it was ordained that the Hebrew people would arise, and that Moses should point out a way. In remembrance of the events connected with the 'passing over' by Moses and his people from that period which was ended to that which was to come, there has ever since been celebrated The Feast of the Passover, and this festival should constantly remind us that it was *Moses* who was blessed with the understanding and the wisdom that made possible the transition from the old order of consciousness to the new. The Egyptians could not span this gulf, and while as the nation tarried, the waves of time swept onward. It is in the manner outlined above, that we must regard the relation of Moses to the Egyptians, and to his people.

The Hebrew race was by nature thoroughly adapted to receive that great enlightenment which it was the Mission of Moses to impart. What was its actual character? It was ordained that the old clairvoyant state should give place to an intellectual reasoning consciousness. It has been pointed out in previous lectures that clairvoyant consciousness is in no way connected with our external corporeal nature, and that it unfolds freely just at those times when man, through his soul training, has released himself from his external bodily instrument in order that he may be active and untrammelled in his soul-life. The intellectual consciousness is associated with the brain and the blood, and its means of expression lies in the human organism.

The continued spiritual development of that conscious state which had previously hovered, as it were, over the physical structure had, up to the time of Moses, been brought about solely through the relation existing between master and pupil; but it must now accommodate itself to a new condition in which it would be directly connected with, and confined to, the physical organism, and to the blood which would flow in the veins of the people from generation to generation. It was for this reason that the enlightenment which Moses was destined to give to humanity, so as to bring about an impulse toward an intellectual culture, could only be instilled into a nation in which the blood of the race would continue to flow vigorously throughout future generations, and therefore of such nature was the instrument chosen to receive the basal principles of the new cognitive faculty.

The new reasoning consciousness, the seeds of which were implanted by Moses, was not destined to live on merely in the spirit, for it had been ordained that the people thus chosen should be taken away from the Egyptian nation, in the midst of which they had been made ready, and that henceforth isolated and as a separate race they must develop through centuries to come those external methods and means which would in future form the basis of an intellectual culture, that should continue on throughout all coming ages.

We thus realize that the world's history is full of significance and purport, and that the spiritual element is closely related to all external physical agents. It is clear that the author of the Bible narrative is at great pains to present the account of the transition of the ancient Egyptian culture to that of Moses in its true light and meaning as an episode in the history of the world. We have, for instance, the story of the passing of the Children of Israel through the Red Sea. Concealed beneath this narrative lies a wonderful truth relative to the evolution of mankind, but which is only to be understood by those who clearly comprehend the whole nature of this incident.

In connection with the Egyptians, we find proof of that link which necessarily exists between the soul-powers and that which is termed the clairvoyant faculty. We obtain the clearest insight into this matter when we take the animal organism as our starting-point, but I am sure you will not assume that by so doing, I would suggest that man's nature resembles that of the animal kingdom. We must first imagine that the whole outlook and soul-life of the brute creation is dreamy and torpid, compared with the intellectual soul-state of man. Now, although primeval human clairvoyance most certainly cannot be directly compared with the soul-life of animals, from which it differs radically, nevertheless, we can clearly trace a definite relation between the instinctive existence and soul-life of the brute creation and that of the ancient soul-life of man. Although often exaggerated, there is a certain amount of truth underlying those stories which tell of animals leaving districts subject to earthquakes and volcanic disturbances, days before an eruption takes place. It has certainly happened, in some cases, that while human beings who regard and apprehend all things through the medium of their intellect have remained unmoved, the animals in the neighbourhood have been aroused. Anyone who has a knowledge of Spiritual Science knows that brute nature is so closely interwoven with all life in its immediate environment, that we

can, in a sense, assert that animals possess a measure of instinctive understanding, which through its rudimentary powers controls and regulates their existence. This faculty is no longer found in man, because he has developed a higher intellectual quality, through which he is able to form reasoned concepts and ideas concerning all things which come within his cognizance; but this very logical capacity has, in effect, torn asunder that close tie with Nature herself, which he once enjoyed.

We must picture that in primeval times man was the possessor of a similar instinctive cognition to that above mentioned, in connection with the old clairvoyant state and also in conjunction with his relation to the external phenomena of Nature — a kind of intuition — whereby the ancients were enabled to say: — 'Such and such events are about to occur, hence we must take certain steps to prepare ourselves in advance.' Just in the same way as some people, who are suitably constituted, raise themselves through striving of soul to a higher power of discernment and attain to an order of apprehension concerning matters connected with Nature for which no cause or reason can be assigned.

He who uses the forces of his soul and through its attributes and its virtues wins power to utter statements which are beyond the scope of his intellectual consciousness, feels uncomfortable when people come to him and say: — 'Why is that so? Give us proof of your assertions.' Such persons never realize that knowledge of this nature comes by quite a different path from that which is born of logical reasoning. It is a striking and pertinent fact that Goethe, when he looked out of a window could often predict, hours in advance, what kind of weather was in store. If we conceive faculties of this nature as existing among the ancients and manifesting in such a way that through direct contact with the Spirit-World, the people of old were enabled to be closely associated with creation and the Phenomena of Nature (but in a manner entirely different from that which is the case to-day), then, we can realize and picture at least one fundamental feature of the old clairvoyance relative to the practical conduct of life. In olden times mankind did not possess meteorological observatories, there were no weather-forecasts published in newspapers or in other ways, as there are to-day; but the ancients were endowed with a sense of perception which clearly foretold what would occur, and they governed their actions in accordance with the impressions received.

This was especially the case with the old Egyptians, among whom the faculty of sense-perception was developed to a very high degree. They had no knowledge of our modern science or of our analytical methods, but nevertheless they knew how to comport themselves so as to be in living harmony with the whole surrounding world. But because the cosmic hour had struck for the Egyptian culture, this faculty, once so prominent, fell into decadence, and the Egyptian people became ever less and less capable of understanding and dealing with the facts and realities of Nature, and could no longer foretell from the grouping and interaction of external elements and factors, what should be their attitude and mode of conduct. But humanity was now destined to learn how to investigate and to study the arrangement and interrelations of these external elements, and it was Moses who would impart the impulse, but the impulse that he gave came even then from his old clairvoyant consciousness.

While Moses and his people stood upon the shore of the Red Sea, he realized, through an understanding somewhat similar to our own, but which still unfolded clairvoyantly, that exceptional natural circumstances, namely, an unusual combination of an East Wind and ebbtide together with a channel-like passage, made it possible at the right moment, for him to lead the Israelites across shallow waters. This historical fact has been graphically portrayed in order that we may realize that Moses was indeed the founder of a new and universal mode of intellectual apprehension that is still active in our day, and through which mankind will once more learn to bring the practical affairs of life into harmony with the existing order of Nature, even as was done by that great patriarch.

The Egyptians were a nation whose hour was spent; they could no longer foretell what would come to pass. The power of the old instinctive faculties which were theirs in by-gone times had waned, and they found themselves once more in a position as in the past when a decision must be made. In by-gone times they would have cried out: — 'It is too late! We cannot now make the passage.' But that innate gift of discernment which they had so long enjoyed had all but vanished, and they knew not how to live in the new intellectual conscious state. Therefore they stood before the Red Sea helpless and bewildered, the old clairvoyant consciousness could no longer be their guide [they followed] and disaster overtook them. Here we find the new Moses-element in direct contrast with the old, and we see that

the ancient clairvoyant faculty had so far declined that it could no longer be relied upon; and because it was unsuited to the new age it was the forerunner of calamity.

When we look beneath the surface of such apparently external graphic narratives as the above, and come upon the matter which the narrator really has in mind, we find that the stories oft-times characterize great turning-points in the evolution of mankind; and we realize that it is no light task to deduce from the peculiar descriptions found in the ancient writings, the true significance of the various personalities mentioned, such for instance, as Moses in the circumstances we have just quoted.

It is clear from what follows later in the account that at that time when it had to be decided whether Moses should, or should not, lead his people to Palestine, he still relied entirely upon the old clairvoyance, and that in his case, his intellectual enlightenment was fundamentally dependent upon this faculty. It was because the blood that flowed in the veins of the Jewish people made them by nature especially suitable to the task of laying the foundation of the impending movement toward intellectuality, that it was ordained that they should be led forth and guided to the Promised Land. The knowledge and wisdom which Moses acquired through his clairvoyant powers sufficed to impart the necessary impulse — but could not be of itself of the new culture; for this new cultural faculty was destined to manifest in ways which would be the antithesis of the old order of clairvoyant consciousness.

From the Bible account it is evident that Moses felt that his call was merely to lead his people to a certain place; he was not to take them into the Promised Land; the last stage of the journey must be left to those who were destined to embrace the new order of intellectual development.

Although Moses was the prophet of the Lord, who manifests in our very Ego-being, we are nevertheless given to understand that it was only in virtue of his clairvoyant faculty that he could become conscious of the Mighty Word of the Great Spirit of the cosmos. When at last he was left to himself with the task of succouring his people, he fled to his tent in order that through his clairvoyant powers he might once more be in the actual presence of his God. Then it was that a Voice

said: — 'Because thou canst not carry out all that is betokened by those thoughts which come to thee with visions, henceforth must another be the leader of thy people.' The words of this decree shed a radiance around the great patriarch, for they implied that Moses with his clairvoyant faculty, was a prophet the like of whom would no more be seen in Israel. We are to understand that Moses was the last among the ancients to be endowed with the old order of psychic discernment. Henceforth would a form of intellection wholly independent of this gift spread its influence among all fitting peoples, and man's actions and cognition be based on power to reason and tradition alone. Thus might the Ego, the verity of which had already become recognized by those who had understanding of the fundamental factors of the new culture, be made ready that it might absorb a new principle.

It was through the Mission of Moses that mankind was first led to realize that the most positive feeling which man can experience of the absolute reality of the all-pervading cosmic Spirit, that Divine Principle which is ever active and interwoven throughout the whole earth, is centred in the 'I AM' — the very mid-point of the human soul. But in order that these two simple words may be fraught with the uttermost import, the 'I AM' must first store within itself full measure of a content that shall once again embrace the world. To compass this end necessitated yet another mission, which mission is expressed in those deeply significant words of St. Paul: — 'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in Me' (Gal. ii, 20). Now, Moses had brought humanity up to the point of establishing a true culture of man's Ego. This new-born intellection was destined to live on throughout the ages yet to be, a gift from above, a form of civilization, a 'receptacle', so to speak, for the coming content. It was essential that the centre of our being should first unfold in the bosoms of the ancient Hebrew people. Henceforth, would this divine 'receptacle' be filled with all that springs from a true understanding of The Mystery of Golgotha, and the events which took place in Palestine. Thus would the Ego receive its new content, which itself would be a creation of the Spirit-World. We can most easily recognize all that came of that fresh in-pouring, and that owed its origin to the preparation and development of the Hebrew people, when we refer to the book of Job. We cannot, however, rightly understand the wonderful tragedy therein portrayed, unless we take into account the peculiar characteristics of the Jewish race.

We are told that Job, albeit he was a righteous man who believed in his God was, nevertheless, convinced that the Almighty was actually the true source of all his afflictions. He experienced disaster after disaster to his property, his family, and his own person. So that the Lord appeared to manifest in such a manner that Job might well have doubted whether indeed the Great Spirit of the cosmos was really active in man's Ego. Matters went to such a length that Job's wife could not understand why her husband, in spite of all that had befallen him, should continue to trust in the Almighty. She therefore spoke to him in words of paramount import, thus: — '[Dost thou still retain thine integrity?) curse God, and die.' (Job ii, 9.) What is the underlying meaning of this significant allegorical tragedy, and of the words: — 'Curse God, and die'? It is here implied that, — If the God Whom you regard as being the very source of your existence visits you with sorrow and adversity, you may turn from Him; but of a verity death will be the lot of the one who would do this thing, for he who turns away from his God, places himself without the pale of the living course of evolution. The friends of Job could not believe that he had committed no transgression, for surely in the case of a righteous person should equity prevail. Even the narrator himself cannot make clear to us the justness of the circumstances, for he can only say that Job, who was thus stricken with misery and distress, nevertheless received compensation in the physical world for all that he had lost and suffered.

Throughout this deeply significant allegory as depicted in the book of Job there is, as it were, an echo of the Moses-consciousness; and in the story it is made clear that the Spirit brings to us enlightenment and ever manifests in man's innermost being. But during the course of earthly existence, the Ego must live in contact with physical things. Hence it is that there are moments of transgression in which man may weaken, and lose his feeling of unity with the vital source of life. From the Christ-Impulse, humanity has learnt that compensation for suffering and affliction is not to be sought in the physical world alone. We now know that in every case when man is overcome by bodily distress — in sorrow and in pain — then, if he but remain steadfast, he may indeed triumph over that which is material. For his Ego is not merely illumined by the ultimate source of all that is spread throughout space and time, but is of a verity so conditioned that it may yet absorb the mighty power of the eternal.

We find the same uplifting thoughts underlying St. Paul's words: — 'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. ii, 20). Moses had brought humanity so far that it could realize that all things that live and weave throughout the cosmos, manifest in deepest and most characteristic form in the Ego. Man may comprehend the world, if it be pictured as a simple unit proceeding from some great universal Ego centre. If we would indeed receive the eternal spirit within our being, then must we not regard temporal things; nor take heed only of the Jehovah-Unit hidden and beyond all that is of space and time; but look also to that spontaneous and glorious benefaction — The Christ-Source — which underlies and is concentric with all unity.

Thus do we recognize in Moses the personality of one who paved the way for Christianity; and we have learnt in what manner he instilled into humanity a consciousness of self, a consciousness which throughout the development of all future generations would be as a store-house to be filled with the substance of eternity; which means that it was yet to become a fitting receptacle replete with the essence of the Christ-Being. It is in this way that we picture the patriarch Moses in his relation to the progress and evolution of mankind. History ever reveals its deepest truths when subject to thought and reflection of the above nature.

In a previous lecture devoted to Buddha, we drew attention to the fact that from time to time some outstanding personality arises, through whose agency the eternal fount of wisdom springs once more into life, thus causing humanity to advance yet another step in its growth and development; and when we ponder upon the circumstances connected with this or that great figure, there comes to us a sense of his true relation to the collective evolution of mankind.

When we regard the development of the human race from this stand-point, we find that we are involved in its progress in a vital sense, and it is at once apparent that the Spirits of the cosmos have some fixed and definite purpose associated with our existence, the object of which becomes more and more discernible as life proceeds. It is through the earnest consideration of the example and works of lofty spiritual individualities, together with profound meditation concerning outstanding events in the world's evolution and the history of mankind, that we may gain that sense of power, confidence of soul and unswerving hope, through which alone we may take our proper

place in the totality of human evolution. If we regard the history of the world in this manner, we feel anew the beauty of Goethe's words, and we realize that the greatest benefit which can accrue to us through the study of universal history is the awakening of our enthusiasm. But it must be an enthusiasm which is not mere blind admiration and wonder, for it should prompt us to implant in our souls the seeds which are borne to us from the past, so that they may bring forth goodly fruits in the time yet to come.

The words of the great poet live again, in somewhat modified form, when, through the contemplation of those grand outstanding personalities and events of olden times we realize this glorious truth:

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*'The age is as a field in flower,
Where wondrous growth and life proceed;
Fresh buds unfold with every hour —
Lo! all is fruit and all is seed.'*

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Notes for this lecture:

1. The underlying suggestion here involved is, that the fact that it is necessary that the perceptual faculties be held in abeyance for the time being, indicates that this particular personality, already possessed other faculties of a spiritual order, which being thus freed would become operative. [Ed.]

2. The seven human soul-forces to which reference is here made, are those cosmic-influences which act through the soul in connection with the seven principles of man's organism. These 'seven principles' are as follows: —

(1) The Physical body. (2) The Etheric or Life Body. (3) 'The Astral Body. (4) The Ego or Body of Consciousness, which sets about transforming the first three by acting upon the psychic principles. Within the Ego is:

Within the Ego is:

(5) Atma. Spirit-man as transmuted Physical Body.

(6) Buddi. Life-spirit as transmuted Etheric or Life Body.

(7) Manas. Spirit-self as transmuted Astral Body.

The latter, Manas, is partly developed; but of Atma and Buddi there is merely a seed.

Vide, *Investigations in Occultism* by Rudolf Steiner. Published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, London and New York. [Ed.]

3. In the Middle Ages, the Liberal Arts (artes liberales) were considered to be seven in number, namely, music, grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy. Plato and Aristotle, distinguished between the practical arts, and the so-called liberal arts, which latter were concerned with progress of an ethical or literary character. [Ed.]



V. Elijah

14 December 1911, Berlin

The prophet Elijah shines forth as one of the most resplendent stars in the firmament of man's spiritual evolution, and that great illumination which he brought to humanity in olden times has endured even to the present day. The deeds, the characteristics, the greatness of this outstanding personality as portrayed in the ancient Biblical records, make the profoundest impression upon the hearts and feelings of mankind; but, nevertheless, this significant figure appears difficult of comprehension to external history. We are about to consider Elijah from the stand-point of Spiritual Science. Viewed in its light, we find in the very nature of his being an indication that the most important causes and motives underlying the circumstances connected with earthly existence during man's evolution are not merely dependent upon those ideas that may be consciously apprehended, and the results of which can be recognized externally as forming a part of life's history; for we learn that those very impulses which move us to actions of greatest import are born within the confines of the soul.

In order that this truth which sheds so great a light upon the world's history may become clearly apparent to our spiritual vision, we need only recall the fact that Christianity owes its foundation, for the most part, to that profound psychic incident experienced by St. Paul [Saul], which found outward expression in 'The Vision near Damascus' ('Ereignis von Damaskus'), Acts. ix, 3. No matter how much we may argue concerning the reality and nature of this external happening, it cannot be denied that the true origin of Christianity is intimately connected with what then took place in the soul and spirit of that great Apostle and righteous founder of the Christian Faith; and the knowledge and enlightenment which came to him was passed on to mankind through the medium of his flaming words and self-sacrificing deeds. In many other cases it can be proved that primary causes and impulses underlying events which happen during the historical unfoldment of human existence, cannot be identified with normal external occurrences, for their inception may oft-times be traced to the hearts and souls of mankind.

We are now about to consider an example of this very nature in connection with the personality of Elijah and the period in which he lived. Since, however, my lecture must of necessity be both brief and sketchy in character, although treating of a subject covering so wide a field, the question as to how far the matter presented will elucidate and provide new evidence concerning the progress of man's historical evolution in this special instance must be left for your further consideration, but your thoughts should at all times be guided by the deep promptings of the soul. The object of my discourse is not merely to supply information concerning the personality and significance of the prophet Elijah, its true purport is at the same time to present an *example* of the manner in which Spiritual Science weighs and regards such matters and, in virtue of the means at its disposal, is enabled to shed fresh light upon facts connected with the growth and development of mankind, which have come to our knowledge through other sources.

With this end in view, we shall employ a special method in dealing with our subject. In the first place, statements that are the result of the investigations of Spiritual Science, and have reference to the personality and significance of Elijah, will be as independent as possible of all connection with the Bible as a source, and such references will only occur when they seem essential in connection with names and descriptions. We shall therefore endeavour to portray all pertinent events first as they actually happened and later draw attention to the manner in which they are depicted in the ancient Biblical records. The occurrences will be set forth just as they are revealed by the researches of Spiritual Science, which researches have formed the basis of the various portrayals presented both in the lectures of this series and in others of previous years. A large number of my audience who, through long years of experience with the methods of Spiritual Science have gained confidence in its power and proved substantiality, will accept from the very first all that I propose to bring forward, and regard it as entirely trustworthy and as the result of conscientious investigation; and this will be the case, even though my subject must of necessity be treated in a somewhat sketchy manner, because an exposition involving detailed proofs would require many hours for its complete presentation. To those of my audience who have had no such experience as I have mentioned, I would suggest that they look upon all that is said concerning the authentic historical narrative that I am about to unfold, as if it were in

the nature of an hypothesis, underlying which is a substratum of positive evidence; and I am certain that if they will but do this, and make a reasonable and understanding attempt, in moderation and without prejudice to obtain the required evidence, that all my statements will ultimately receive entire confirmation.

What now has Spiritual Science to say concerning the personality and significance of the prophet Elijah and his period? To understand this we must go back in thought to those ancient Hebrew times when the brilliant epoch that marked the reign of Solomon was passed, and the kingdom of Palestine was enduring many and varied forms of privation. We must recall the troubles of the Philistines and other similar incidents, and transport ourselves in mind to those days when all that formerly constituted a united and centralized monarchy was already divided into the separate kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and King Ahab, who was the son of Omri, reigned in Samaria. Here we have found an opportunity of introducing Biblical names, but we have done so merely for the sake of clarity and corroboration as will often be the case as we proceed.

Between King Ahab, or rather between his father and the King of Tyre and Sidon, there was a close friendship and a sort of alliance had been formed; this compact was further strengthened by the marriage of Ahab with Jezebel, a daughter of the Royal House. I am making use of these names as they are familiar to us from the Bible, and in order that my subject may be more easily understood. We are looking back into an age when that ancient clairvoyant gift which was in general a spiritual attribute of man in primeval times had by no means entirely disappeared among those people who had still retained the necessary and fitting disposition. Now, Queen Jezebel was not only endowed with this gift, but her clairvoyant powers were of a very special order; these however, she did not always employ in ways which were destined to promote that which was good and noble. While we look upon Jezebel as a kind of clairvoyante, we must regard King Ahab as a man who only under exceptional circumstances evinced a faculty in virtue of which the hidden forces of his soul could break in upon his conscious state. In olden times such manifestations were much more in evidence and more widely spread than is the case in these days. There were occasions when Ahab himself experienced visions and

presentiments, but never to any marked extent, and they occurred only when he was confronted with some special matter connected with human destiny.

At the time to which I refer, a rumour had spread throughout the land that a remarkable spirit was abroad. In reality, this was none other than he who, in the Bible records, bears the name of Elijah. Few there were among those living, as one might say, in the outer world, who knew precisely in what place the personality that bore this name might be found — nor did they know in what way, or by what means, he exerted so powerful an influence upon contemporaneous people and events. We can perhaps best describe the situation by saying that throughout the widest circles any reference to this mysterious being, or even the mention of his name was accompanied by a thrill of awe, and because of this it was generally felt that this spirit must possess some singular and hidden attribute of greatest import. But no man knew rightly, or had indeed any idea, in what way this unusual quality might manifest, or where it might be sought. Only certain isolated persons, whom we might term initiates, had true knowledge of what was really taking place, and they alone knew where, in the physical world, they might find the outer reality of the actual individual who was the bearer of this mysterious spirit.

King Ahab was also ignorant concerning these matters, but nevertheless he experienced a peculiar feeling of apprehension, and a kind of dread overcame him whenever mention was made of that incomprehensible being, regarding whom the most extravagant notions prevailed, as was only natural under the circumstances. Now, Ahab was that King of Samaria who through his alliance with Tyre and Sidon, had introduced into the ancient kingdom of Palestine a certain religious order which held to outer forms and ceremonies, and found expression through external symbolism — in other words a species of heathenism. Such information concerning the individuality of Elijah as came to the followers of this pagan form of worship must have created in them a strange and peculiar feeling of fear and dismay. For it was evident from what they heard that the Jahveh-religion, as it may be termed, had now indeed come down to them from the by-gone days of the ancient Hebrew people, and was once more active. There was still a belief in One God — in One Great Spiritual Being in

the cosmos, Who rules over the superperceptual realm, and Who by means of its forces makes His influence felt, and affects both the evolution and the history of mankind.

It was further realized that the time was approaching when there would be an ever greater and more significant understanding of the Jahveh-Being, among those who were the most advanced and perfect of the descendants of the old Hebrew race. It was well known that in truth the religion of Moses contained the germ of all that one might term the Jehovah-Religion, but this fact had been grasped by the nation in a manner more or less after the fashion of a people yet in a stage of childhood or early youth.

The old faith with its upturned vision toward a supersensible God may only be described by saying: — 'It can be likened to nought else than to an awareness of contact with that which is invisible and superperceptual, which comes to man when he indeed apprehends and realizes his own true Ego' — and it was this consciousness of the supersensible which had descended upon the people. But the concept which they had formed, as far as they could form any concept at all, was as we might put it, based upon an attempt to picture to themselves the workings of the God Jehovah, as conceived from their experiences of the external phenomena of life. In those days it was the custom to say that Jehovah acted with regard to humanity, in such a manner that when all nature was luxuriant and fruitful, it was a sign that He was rewarding mankind and showering benefits upon the nation. On the other hand, when the people suffered from want and distress brought about by war, scarcity of food, and other causes, they cried out that Jehovah had turned his face away and was consumed with anger.

At that time about which we are speaking the nation was enduring the miseries caused by a period of dearth and starvation, and many turned aside from the God Jehovah, because they could no longer believe in His works when they saw how He treated mankind, for there was a terrible famine in the land. If, indeed, we can speak of *progress* in connection with the Jahveh-conception, then the progress destined to be made by these ancient Hebrew people can be characterized in the following manner: — The nation must henceforth form a new Jehovah-concept embodying the old thoughts and ideas, through which must flow a fuller and a higher order of human

understanding, so that all might say: — 'No matter what shall take place in the outer world, whether we live in happiness or are beset with sorrows and privations, we must ever realize that such external events are in no way an evidence of either the wrath or the benevolence of Jehovah. True devotion to God and a proper comprehension of the Jahveh-concept implies that mankind shall at all times gaze upward unswervingly toward the invisible Deity, uninfluenced by the contemplation of outer happenings and things, or the apparent reality of material impressions. And even though we meet with the direst want and affliction, nevertheless, through those inner forces alone which dominate the soul, man shall come to the sure conviction that — HE IS.'

This great revolution in religious outlook was destined to be consummated and wrought through the power of the prophet Elijah [and, as will be seen later, his spiritual force operated at times through the medium of a chosen human personality]. When it is ordained that some great momentous change shall be brought about in the concepts of mankind, as was the case in Elijah's day, it is necessary in the beginning that there be certain fitting personalities at hand in whose souls can be implanted the germ, so to speak, of those things which it is ordained shall later enter into the history of mankind. The manner in which the seed thus laid finds befitting expression, is ever that of a new impulse and a new force.

If you will not misunderstand my meaning, I would say that it was decreed in accordance with the preordained fate of the nation, that the individuality known as the prophet Elijah should be the chosen one whose soul should first grasp the Jehovah-concept in the form which I have described. To this end it was essential that certain singular and very special forces be called up from the hidden depths of his soul — deep-seated powers as yet unknown to mankind, and unguessed at even by the teachers of that time. Something in the nature of a holy mystical initiation of the highest order, through which might come the revelation of such a God, must first take place in the innermost being of Elijah. It is therefore of the utmost importance, in order to describe in characteristic manner the way in which the Jahveh-concept was instilled into the minds of the people, that we should presently gaze into the soul of that particular human personality in whom the Spirit that was to impart the primary impulse was incarnated, or embodied — that man, who through the nature of his Divine initiation became

imbued with all the latent forces of his soul. Forces so vital to one who would strike that first deep fundamental note, which would call forth and make possible the coming Jehovah-conception.

Such [great spiritual] personalities [as Elijah] who are chosen to experience within the soul the first stimulating impress of some momentous forward impulse, stand for the most part, isolated and alone. In olden days, however, there gathered around them certain followers who came from the great Religious Schools, or Schools of the Prophets as they were called in Palestine, and which by other nations have been termed Initiation or Mystery Sanctuaries. Thus we find the prophet Elijah, if we would use this name, also surrounded by a few earnest disciples, who looked up to him in reverence as one exalted far above them. These disciples realized to some extent the true nature and significance of Elijah's mission, even though, because of their limited spiritual vision, they were unable to penetrate deeply into the soul of their great master. [Now at that time strange events had begun to take place in the land] the people, however, had no idea where the mysterious personality might be found who had brought them about. They could only say: — 'He must be here, or there, — for something unusual is happening.'

Hence it was that there spread abroad what we might term a sort of rumour (if the word is not misused) to the effect that HE, a prophet, was actually at work, but no man knew rightly where. This uncertainty was due to the exercise of a definite and peculiar influence, which could be exerted by all such advanced spiritual beings as are found among outstanding seers. Viewed in the light of our modern times it is probable that such a statement may appear somewhat grotesque, but those who are acquainted with the singular characteristics of that by-gone age will find it in no way fanciful or extravagant.

All truly exalted spiritual personalities, such as Elijah, were endowed with this specific and highly penetrative quality which made itself felt now here, now there. Not only was the activity of this potent influence manifested in feelings of awe and dread, but there was also a direct positive action, through which it entered little by little into the souls of the people. It there operated in such manner as to cause them to be unable to tell, at times, just where the external form of some great spiritual personality might be found. But the true followers and disciples of Elijah knew well where to seek him, and were further quite

aware that his outer individuality might perchance assume a wholly unpretentious character, and come to light in connection with some quite lowly station in earthly life.

It is remarkable that at the time about which I am speaking, the actual bearer of the spirit of Elijah was a close neighbour of Ahab's, King of Samaria, and the possessor of a small property in his immediate vicinity; but Ahab had no suspicion that such was the case. He sought everywhere for this singular being whose presence was felt so mysteriously throughout the community, and whom he regarded with feelings of awe and wonder, even as did his people. He entirely failed, however, to take into consideration the simple and unassuming land-owner who lived so near him, and gave no thought as to why he should, at times, absent himself, nor where he went on these occasions. But Jezebel [being clairvoyant] had discovered that this unobtrusive personality had actually become the external physical embodiment of the spirit of Elijah; now the knowledge she had thus acquired she did not impart to Ahab, she kept it to herself regarding it as a secret, for reasons which will become apparent later. In the Bible this particular character [upon whose innermost being Elijah's spirit worked] is known by the name of Naboth. We thus see that according to the investigations of Spiritual Science we must recognize in the Naboth of the Bible, the physical bearer of the spiritual individuality of Elijah.

It was in those days that a great famine came upon the land, and there were many who hungered. Naboth, in certain ways, also experienced want and distress. At times such as these, when not only does hunger prevail, as was assuredly the case in Palestine, but when on every side there is a feeling of infinite pity for those who suffer, the conditions are especially favourable for the entry of the latent soul-forces into one already prepared through destiny or *karma*. It is alone through these hidden powers of the soul that man may raise himself to the level of such a mission as we have outlined.

Let us clearly picture what takes place deep within the being under such circumstances, and thus gain an understanding of the manner in which Naboth's soul was affected. In the initial stage there is an inner progressive change or enfoldment, marked by an important period of self-education and self-development. It is most extremely difficult to describe those inner experiences of the soul which tend to raise it to

greater spiritual heights, while the personality is becoming imbued with the forces by means of which it shall be enabled to look upon the world of spirit. The power of Divine spiritual vision must next be called into being, in order that there may come therefrom the wisdom necessary to the inception of all vital impulses destined to be implanted in the stream of human evolution. A verbal description is here the more difficult because never once have those who have undergone an experience of this nature, especially in olden times, come to such a state of apperception that they could outline their impressions in a precise and lucid manner. What actually happens may be stated to be somewhat as follows: — The clairvoyant development of the soul is accomplished through different stages. In the case of a being such as Naboth, it would naturally occur that his first inner experience would be the clear apprehension of the following definite concept: — 'That spiritual power which it is ordained shall descend upon humanity, will now shine forth in me, and I am its appointed receptacle.' Next would come this further thought: — 'I must henceforth do all that in me lies, in order that the force within my being may find true and proper expression; and that I may acquire those qualities that shall fit me to cope with every form of trial and experience that may come upon me. Thus shall I know how to impart the power of Divine-Impulse to my fellow men, in proper fashion.'

It is in this way that the spiritual and clairvoyant development of a personality such as I have described must go forward — step by step. When a suitable predetermined stage has been reached, then follow certain definite signs which are noticeable and manifest within the soul. These are also of the nature of inner experiences; they are neither dreams nor visions, for they owe their origin to, and are dependent upon, the soul's actual growth and unfoldment. Pictorial images appear; these indicate that inner progress has now so far advanced, that the particular personality in question may reasonably believe that his soul has indeed acquired new powers. These images, taken alone, have not necessarily much connection with the reality of those experiences through which the soul is passing. They are merely symbols, such as may come during the sleep state, but in a certain way they are typical symbols, similar to those which occur, under certain conditions, when we have very distinct and positive dreams. For instance, a person suffering from palpitation of the heart, may, during sleep, be under an illusion that heat is emanating from some glowing source, as, for instance, a hot stove. In like manner when the

soul has gained this or that special clairvoyant power, then will come corresponding definite experiences in the form of visionary manifestations.

Now, in the case of Naboth, the first event of the above nature brought with it a full realization of all that is implied in the following words: — 'Thou art the chosen one, through whom it shall be proclaimed that man may still believe in the ancient Jahveh-God; and that he must hold fast to this faith, even though it outwardly seemeth that because of the sore tribulation which has come upon the land, the current of life's happenings be set against such trust. Mankind must now rest in peace till times may mend — for albeit it is the will of Jahveh the God of old to come with affliction, nevertheless shall man again rejoice — but he must be ever steadfast of faith in the Lord God.'

It was evident to Naboth that this proclamation which should come through him, was undoubtedly the expression of a true and unswerving force, carrying a conviction which lay deep within his soul; and this experience stood out vividly, as something more than a mere vision. Then it was that before his soul there arose an image of God Himself, in that form and manner in which it was within his power to picture Him, and the Presence said: — 'Go thou to King Ahab, and say unto him; In the God Jahveh must ye have faith, until such time as He may again bring rain upon the earth.' In other words, until the conditions should improve. Naboth realized the nature of his mission; he knew also that henceforth he must devote himself to the further unfoldment of that power of soul, through which he might apprehend and interpret all that was yet to be presented to his spiritual vision. He then resolved that he would eschew no sacrifice, but as far as in him lay, share in the sufferings of those who were exposed to the greatest measure of want and starvation, during that period. Thus it came about that Naboth also hungered; but he did not seek thereby to rise to a higher spiritual state. Such a procedure, I would mention, is most certainly not to be recommended as a step toward higher spiritual knowledge and understanding. He hungered because of an impulse that made him desire to suffer even as others. Not only did he thus want to share in the common fate, but it was his earnest wish to take upon himself a measure of adversity, greater than that endured by those around him.

The soul of Naboth was given over to unceasing inner contemplation of that God who had revealed Himself to him in the manner described, and his thoughts were ever concentrated upon this Deity. The Spiritual Science of our time would say that throughout his meditations he devoted himself entirely, and of his own free will, to holding this divine concept in the very centre of his soul. That he acted rightly in so doing was made clear to him by a sign which came during an inner vision. This vision was again more positive than any of merely dreamlike character; for an image of that God who dwelt within his soul appeared before him, and it was full of life, and a voice said: — 'Abide in patience — endure all things — for He who feedeth mankind and thee also will of a surety provide that which thou needest; but thou must ever hold to a true faith in the soul's eternal life.' In this vision, which was of greater pictorial reality than any before, it appeared to him [whom we may now, under the singular conditions which prevailed, term *Elijah-Naboth*] that he was led by a hermit to the brook which is called Cherith, where he concealed himself and drank of the waters of the brook so long as any remained; and that he was nourished, so far as the conditions prevailing at the time permitted, by food which the Lord provided. It further seemed to him during the vision, that through the special mercy of God this nutriment was brought by ravens. Thus did [*Elijah-Naboth*] receive confirmation of the verity of the most important among those inner experiences which he was destined to encounter. It was next ordained that [*Naboth*] should pass through a more advanced stage of development in relation to the activities of the hidden soul-forces — and we know that he endeavoured to immerse himself yet more deeply (as we would now explain it) in that condition of intensive contemplation which lay at the foundation of his spiritual progress, the character of which we have already described.

This state of profound meditation fraught with inner-life experiences, assumed the following form — Naboth pondered thus: — 'If thou wouldest indeed become worthy of that mission which shall shine in upon mankind because of this wholly new concept of God's image, then must thou change utterly the nature of thine inner being, even to the most profound of its forces, so that thou art no more as thou hast been. Thou shalt subdue that soul which dwells in thee, and through those deeper powers which abide therein bring to thine inner Ego a new life, for it may no longer remain as it now is. [Thou must uplift its quality.]' Under the influence of thoughts such as these [*Naboth*]

worked intensively upon his soul — ever striving within — that he might bring about this essential transformation of his Ego, and thus become worthy to stand in the presence of that God who had revealed Himself before him.

Then came to [Elijah-Naboth] yet another experience which was, however, only in part a vision. But because it was not entirely of the nature of an inner soul-happening, there being other content, it must be regarded as of less spiritual significance. It is ever the pure inner workings of the soul that are of truest and greatest import. In the vision, it appeared to him that his God, who had again manifested, set him upon a journey to Zarepath (I Kings, xvii, 9), and in that place he met a widow who had a son and he there saw represented, or personified, as it were, in the fate of this widow and her son, the manner and way in which he was now to live. It seemed to his spiritual sight that their food was well-nigh spent, and even that which they had was about to be consumed, after which they would die. Then it was that he spoke to the widow as in a dream, as in a vision, using in effect those same words which, day by day, and week by week, throughout his solitary meditations, he had repeated over and over again to his own soul: — 'Fear not, — from that meal which remaineth, prepare the repast which must be made ready for you and your son, and for me also. In all that may yet come to pass trust alone in that God Who doth create both joy and sorrow, and in Whom we must ever abide in faith.'

In this dreamlike vision it was clearly impressed upon [Elijah-Naboth] that the barrel of meal would not become empty nor would the cruse of oil fail; for the oil and the meal would ever be renewed. It is worthy of note that at this point his whole soul-state which had become, so to speak, fully developed and perfected with regard to his individual character, expressed itself in the vision in such manner, that it seemed to him as if his personality went to live in the upper part of the house which belonged to the widow. But in reality the inner truth was that his own soul had, as one might say, risen to a higher level and achieved a more advanced stage of development.

It next appeared to [Elijah-Naboth], again as in a vision, that the son of the widow lay dead. This we must regard as merely a symbolical representation of the fact that [Naboth] had overcome, and slain, as it were, the Ego which had been his up to that time. Then it was the

subconscious forces in his soul cried out: — 'What wilt thou do now?' For a while [Elijah-Naboth] stood helpless and perplexed; but he was able to regain his self-control through the medium of that power which had always lived and flowed within his innermost being, and to plunge even yet more profoundly into the consideration of those conditions which now called for such deep and earnest contemplation. It then happened that after the widow's son was dead, she reproached him. This signifies that his subconscious spirit reproached him, in other words, aroused in him a misgiving of this nature: — 'My old Ego-consciousness has now left me — what am I to do?' In the description given of these events it is stated that he took the child unto himself and plunged unhesitatingly still further into the depths of his soul, and we are told that power was vouchsafed to him through which he brought the dead son once more to life. Then did he gain more courage to stimulate and quicken the new Ego, which was now his, by virtue of those qualities which were in the Ego that he had lost.

From that time on [Elijah-Naboth] continued to develop and mature the hidden forces of his soul, so that it might acquire that inner strength necessary to come before the outer world and utter those words which all must hear. But in the first place and above everything, to stand before King Ahab and bring to a crisis the matter which must now be decided, namely, the victory of the new Jehovah-concept as opposed to those beliefs that the King himself accepted, and which, owing to the weakness of the times had become generally acknowledged among the people.

Now, it came about, that while Ahab was making a round of his empire, anxiously observing the signs of want and distress that the personality [whom we have called Elijah-Naboth] approached him; and no man knew from whence he came, certainly the King had no idea. And there was a strangeness in the manner of his speech which affected the soul of Ahab, who was not, however, aware that this man was his neighbour. More strongly than ever did the King experience that feeling of awe and dread which had always come upon him when reference was made to that great spirit known in the Bible as Elijah the prophet. Then it was that the King spoke and said: — 'Art thou he that troubleth Israel?' And Elijah-Naboth replied: — 'No, not I, but thou thyself it is who bringeth misfortune and evil upon the people, and it must now be determined to which God they shall turn.'

So it came to pass that a great multitude of the tribe of Israel assembled upon Mount Carmel in order that final judgment should be made between the god of Ahab and the God of Elijah. The decision was to be brought about by means of an external sign; but such a sign as all might plainly discern and clearly understand. To enter into details concerning these matters at the present time would, however, take us too far. It was arranged that the priests and prophets of Baal, the name by which the god of King Ahab was known, should be the first to offer a sacrifice. The people would then wait and see if the performance of certain sacrificial rites (religious exercises in which the ecstatic priests, through the medium of music and dancing, worked themselves up into a state of singular ecstasy) would lead to any communication or influence being imparted to the multitude. In other words, the people were to judge whether or not, in virtue of inherent divine powers possessed by the priests any sign was vouchsafed of the might and potency of their god.

The sacrificial beast is brought to the altar. It is to be decided if in truth the priests of Baal are endowed with an inner force, such as would stir the multitude. Then Elijah-Naboth raised up his voice and said: — 'This thing must now be determined — I stand alone while opposed to me are the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. We shall see how strong is their hold upon the people, and how great is that power which is in me.' The sacrifice is performed, and everything possible done in order to transmit to the multitude a potent influence from the priests — that all should believe in the god Baal. The ecstatic exercises are carried to such lengths that the hands and other parts of the body are cut with knives until the blood flows, so as to increase still further the awesome character of the spectacle evoked by these followers of Baal, under the frenzied stimulus of the dancing and the music. But behold! there is no sign — for Elijah-Naboth is there, and the spirit within him is at work.

In words all insufficient of expression, one might say, that while Elijah-Naboth stood thus near at hand, he caused a great spiritual power to flow forth from his being, so that he overcame and swept away all things which were opposed to him. In this case, you must not, however, imagine to yourselves the exercise of any kind of magic.

Elijah-Naboth then prepares his sacrifice. He makes an offering to his God, using the full force of his soul, that soul which had passed through all those trials which we have already described. The sacrifice is consummated, and achieves the fullness of its purpose, for the souls and the hearts of the people are stirred. The priests of Baal, the four hundred and fifty opponents of Elijah are driven to admit defeat. *They are destroyed in their very souls by that which they had desired, killed, as it were, by Elijah-Naboth — for Elijah-Naboth had won the day!*

The above events were in some ways similar to those that I have endeavoured to portray in my book entitled *Mysticism and Modern Thought*. While speaking of *Johannes Tauler*, it is there related that for a considerable period during his life he was known as a remarkable and trenchant preacher, and that at one time he gave himself up to a particular form of training; after which, upon his return to the pulpit, he exercised upon one occasion such an extraordinary influence upon his congregation, that we are told some forty persons collapsed and were as if dead. This signifies that their innermost beings were touched, and that they were overcome by the sympathetic action of a special power emanating from that great divine. With such an example before us, we need no longer imagine that the Bible account concerning Ahab and Elijah is a mere exaggeration, for it is at all events entirely confirmed by the researches of Spiritual Science.

What follows as the natural outcome of all these events? I have already described the character and peculiar nature of Jezebel. She was quite aware of the fact that the man who had done all these things was their neighbour, and that he was to be found living close at hand, that is, when he was not mysteriously absent. Now, what did Elijah-Naboth know and realize from that moment? He knew that Jezebel was powerful, and that she had discovered his secret. In other words, he felt that henceforth his outer physical life was no longer safe. He must therefore prepare for death in the near future; for Jezebel would certainly compass his destruction.

Now, King Ahab went home, and as related in the Bible, told Jezebel about those events which had taken place upon Mount Carmel;¹ and [Spiritual Science tells us, that] Jezebel said: — 'I will do unto Elijah that which he did unto thy four hundred and fifty prophets.' Who could understand these words spoken by Jezebel [and reflected in the

second verse of the nineteenth chapter of the First Book of Kings]² were it not for the investigations made by Spiritual Science, in whose light their meaning seems almost self-evident. [As a result of these researches it is quite clear, and this point has always been obscure, why it was that Jezebel brought about the death of Naboth, when in reality she sought to destroy Elijah. From Spiritual Science, however, we realize that she sent her threatening message to *Elijah*-Naboth, because in virtue of her clairvoyant powers, she knew full well that the physical body of Naboth was in truth the bearer of Elijah's spirit. (Ed.)]

It now became necessary for Elijah to form some definite plans whereby he could avoid being immediately done to death as a result of Jezebel's revenge. He must at once arrange, that in case of this event happening, his spirit could still continue to carry on his teachings, and exert its influence upon mankind. Thus it came about when next he held commune with his soul, and while in a state of intense inner contemplation, that he questioned himself thus: — 'What shall I do that I may find a successor to fulfil my mission in this physical world, should my death indeed be brought about through the vengeance of Jezebel?' Then behold! a new revelation came to him, in which his inner vision was directed toward a certain quite definite personality, to whom Elijah-Naboth³ might pass on all that he had to bestow upon mankind — this personality was Elisha. You may think it possible that Elijah had previously known Elisha, whether such was the case or not is a matter of little importance. What is of moment is the fact that it was the Spirit that pointed to the way, and that he heard through an inner illumination these words: — 'Initiate thou this man into thy secrets.'

We are further told, with that clarity which it marks the statements of Spiritual Science concerning ancient religious records, that Elijah-Naboth had a very special mission to fulfil; and that the Divine element which was about to descend upon Elisha, would be of the self-same Spirit as had heretofore been predominant in Elijah. Now it was in Damascus that Elisha was to be sought, and in that place he would receive this great spiritual illumination, which would come to him in the same way as that glorious Divine Light which flowed in upon St. Paul at a later period. But soon after Elijah had chosen his successor the vengeance of Jezebel fell upon him. For Jezebel turned the thoughts of her lord toward Naboth, their neighbour, and spoke to Ahab somewhat after this fashion: — 'Listen thou unto me, this

neighbour is a pious man, whose mind is filled with ideas concerning Elijah. It would perhaps be well to remove him from this vicinity, for he is one of the most important of his followers, and upon him much depends.'

Now the King knew nothing whatever about the secret which surrounded Naboth, but he was quite aware by this time that he was indeed a faithful adherent of Elijah's, and gave heed to his words. Jezebel next urged Ahab to try and induce Naboth to come over to his side, either by methods of persuasion or, if necessary, by exercising his power of kingly authority. She said: — 'It would be a great blow to the schemes and projects of this man, Elijah, if by any means it were possible to draw him away from his intents.' Jezebel knew quite well, however, that all her talk was the merest fiction; what she really desired was to induce her lord to take some kind of definite and effective action. For it was not this particular move in which she was interested; her mind was bent upon a plot which was to follow: hence the advice which she tendered was of the nature of a subterfuge. After Jezebel had spoken in this manner to Ahab, the King went to Naboth and held converse with him; but behold, Naboth would not regard what he said, and replied: — 'Never shall those things come to pass which thou desirest.'

In the Bible the position is so represented that this neighbour of Ahab's is described as possessing a vineyard which the King coveted, and sought to acquire. According to this account (I Kings, xxi, 3), Naboth said to Ahab: — 'The Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.' In reality, however, the actual inheritance to which reference is here made was of quite another kind to that which Naboth declined to surrender; nevertheless, Jezebel used this incident as the foundation of her revenge. She deliberately proffered false counsel, in order that the King might be discountenanced and then angered by Naboth's refusal. That such was the case becomes evident when we read that passage in the Bible (I Kings, xxi, 4), where it is written: 'And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.' Think of that! Merely because the King could not obtain a certain vineyard in his neighbourhood, he

refused to eat! We can only begin to understand such statements, when we are in a position to investigate the facts which underlie them.

It was at this point that Jezebel took definite steps to bring about her revenge. She started by arranging that a feast be given to which Naboth should be invited, and at which he was to be an especially honoured guest (I Kings, xxi, 12). Naboth could not refuse to be present; and at this feast it was planned that he be afforded an opportunity of expressing himself freely. Now, Jezebel was truly gifted with clairvoyant insight; with the others Naboth could easily cope, with them he could measure forces; but Jezebel had the power to bring ruin upon him. She introduced false witnesses, who declared that Naboth did deny [blaspheme] God and the King'. It was in this manner that she contrived to compass his murder; as is related in the Bible (I Kings, xxi, 13). Henceforth the outer physical personality of Elijah was dead, and no more seen upon the face of the external world.

Now, because of all that had happened the deep forces in Ahab's soul were stirred, and he was, as one might say, confronted with the grave question of his destiny, while at the same time he experienced a strange and unusual foreboding. Then Elijah, whom he had ever regarded with feelings of awe, appeared as in a vision and revealed to him plainly how the matter stood. Here we have an actual spiritual experience, in which Ahab was accused by the spirit-form of Elijah (subsequent to his death) of having virtually himself murdered Naboth — this Naboth-Elijah. The connection with the latter personality he could but dimly realize; nevertheless, Ahab was definitely termed his murderer. In the Bible we can read the dreadful words which fell upon his soul during that awe-inspiring prophecy, when the spirit-form said: — 'In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine' (I Kings, xxi, 19); and then came yet another dire prophetic utterance: — 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel' (I Kings, xxi. 23).

We now know that these predictions belonged to a class which finds ultimate fulfilment. For subsequently when King Ahab went forth to battle against the Syrians, he was wounded and his blood ran out of the wound into the chariot, and so he died; and when the chariot was being washed dogs came and licked up his blood (I Kings, xxii, 35, 38). Later on, after a further course of events had made Jehu ruler of

Jezebel, Jezebel was seen as she stood at a window, and she was seized and thrown down, and dogs tore her in pieces, and actually devoured her before the walls of the city (II Kings, ix, 30 to 37). I have only touched lightly upon these matters, because our time is short and they are of no special importance to us just now. You will find that the subject I am about to consider is of much greater moment.

He whom Elijah-Naboth had elected to be his successor must henceforth develop and perfect his inner being, even as he himself had done; but this spiritual unfoldment was brought about in other fashion. For the pupil it was in some ways less difficult than it had been for his teacher; since all that power which Elijah-Naboth had acquired through constant upward striving was now at his disciple's disposal, and he had ever the help and support of his great master. Elijah-Naboth influenced Elisha in the same way as the individualities of those who have passed through the portals of death may at times act upon humanity, namely, by means of a special form of spiritual activity emanating directly from the spirit-world. The divine force which thus descended upon Elisha was like in nature to that glorious inspiration which Christ Jesus Himself gave to His disciples after His resurrection. Elisha's subsequent experiences were directly related to this divine power which continued to flow forth from Elijah, even after his death, and to affect all who might give themselves up to its potent influence. With Elisha, his experience was such that the living form of his great master appeared before his soul, and said: — 'I will go forth with thee out of Gilgal.'

At this point I shall quote the Bible literally, where it says (II Kings, ii, 1): — 'And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.' Now, Gilgal is not a place or locality, and it is not intended in the Bible that it should be taken as such. The word Gilgal merely signifies — The act of moving in a circuitous path while revolving, as in waltzing [Herumwatzung]. This technical expression refers to the roundabout course of the soul's life during those periods in which it is incarnated in the flesh, and passes from one physical body to another; that is the true significance of 'Gilgal'.

It need cause you no surprise that the results obtained through Spiritual Science show that Elisha, in virtue of soul experiences gained through inner contemplation and absolute devotion, was enabled to be in the actual presence of Elijah in a higher state or world. This was made possible, not because of the forces latent in his physical nature, but through those more exalted powers which he possessed. While Elisha was thus uplifted the steps which he must take toward his soul's development were pointed out to him by the spirit of Elijah, who constantly drew his attention to the difficulties which he would encounter in the path which he must follow. The way led upward and onward, step by step, to a stage where he would first feel himself unified with that divine spirit, ever flowing forth from his great teacher — Elijah.

The names, apparently referring to places which have been chosen [in the Bible at this point such as Beth-el and Jericho (II Kings, ii, 2, 4)], are not to be taken as designating localities, but in their literal sense, signifying conditions of the soul. For instance, Elijah says: — 'I will now take me to Beth-el.'⁴ This statement was made to Elisha in a vision, but to him it was more than a mere vision. Then, again, as if counselling him, the spirit of Elijah spoke and said It were better to remain here';⁴ the true significance of which is as follows: — 'Consider whether thou possessest the strength to go with me further'; [referring to the spiritual path]. The vision then continues with an incident in which we again find something in the nature of an exhortation and warning. All the sons of the prophets who were his colleagues in the spirit stood about Elisha and cautioned him, and those who were initiated into the mystery and knew that at times he could indeed ascend to the higher regions where the spirit of Elijah held converse with him, admonished him, and said: — 'This time thou wilt not be able to follow Elijah' — 'Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day?' (II Kings, ii, 3). And his answer to those about him was: — 'Hold ye your peace.' But to the spirit of Elijah he said: — 'As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.' Then Elijah spoke again and said: — 'I must now go upon my way to Jericho' [(II Kings, ii, 4.) 'Tarry here I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho.']. Once again this dialogue is repeated [and the word Jordan is introduced. (II Kings, ii, 6)], after which Elijah asks: — 'What dost thou truly desire?' The reply which Elisha gave is recorded in the Bible, but in such a manner that we have to drag out its proper meaning, for it is rendered incorrectly. The

words are these: — 'I pray thee let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me' (II Kings, ii, 9); the actual answer, however, was: — 'I desire that thy spirit shall enter and dwell, as a second spirit within my soul.'

Now, the essence of Elisha's request as understood by Elijah was somewhat as follows — Elisha had asked that his soul be stirred to its very depths and quickened, so that he might awaken to a full consciousness of its true relation to the spirit of his master. It could then of its own powers bring about enlightenment concerning spiritual revelation, even as had been the case during the physical life of his great teacher. Elijah spoke again and said: — 'I must now ascend into the higher realms; if thou art able to perceive my spirit as it rises upward, then hast thou attained thy desire and my power will enter in unto thee.' And behold it came to pass that Elisha saw the spirit of Elijah as he 'went up by a whirlwind into heaven' (II Kings, ii, 11), and the mantle of Elijah fell down [upon him]; which was a symbol denoting the spiritual force in which he must now enwrap himself. Here, then, we have a spiritual vision which indicated, and at the same time caused Elisha to realize that he might now indeed become the true successor of Elijah. In the Bible (I Kings, ii, 15) we read: — 'And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The Spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.' This passage points to the fact that the Word of the Lord had become so mighty in Elisha that it was filled with the same force which the sons of the prophets had experienced with Elijah; and they realized that the spirit of Elijah-Naboth did in truth live on in the being of Elisha.

In previous lectures I have described the methods employed by Spiritual Science, and as we proceed they will be yet further elucidated. The foregoing account gives expression to its testimony regarding the actual events which took place in Elijah's time, and also concerning the impulse to humanity which flowed forth from that great prophet and his successor Elisha. An impulse which ever tended toward the renewing and uplifting of the ancient Jahveh Faith.

It is characteristic of that ancient period, that incidents such as we have portrayed and which could only be understood by the initiated, were represented to the mass of the people (who were quite incapable of comprehending them in their true form) in such a manner

as to render them not only intelligible, but at the same time to cause them to work upon, and to influence, the soul. The method to which I refer is that of parables or miracle stories. But what seems to us so truly amazing, in the highest spiritual sense is, that out of such allegorical narratives there should have been evolved an account like that relating to Elijah, Elisha, and Naboth, as told in the Bible.

Now, in those days it was the custom to use the parable form, when speaking to all who could not understand or realize the supreme glory of the impulse which had come from the souls of these Great Ones; spiritual beings who of themselves must first undergo many inner experiences deep hidden from man's external vision and apprehension. Thus it came about that the people were told, as may be gathered from the Bible, that Elijah lived in the time of King Ahab, and that during a period of famine the God-Jahveh appeared before him and [as Spiritual Science tells us] commanded him to go to the King Ahab and say to him: — 'As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew or rain these years, but according to my word' (I Kings, xvii, 1). The account in the Bible continues as follows: — 'And the word of the Lord came unto him saying: — Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.' (I Kings, xvii, 2, 3, 4.) These things came to pass; and when the brook was dried up, God sent Elijah to Zarephath (I Kings, xvii, 9); and 'in the third year' he was commanded to set out and appear before King Ahab (I Kings, xviii, 1) and to cause the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal to be called to a final decision (I Kings, xviii, 19). I have previously referred to all this, when presenting the facts as obtained through Spiritual Science.

Next comes a wonderful picture of the events that actually took place on Mount Carmel (I Kings, xviii, 20 to 39), and which happenings I have described. Then follows the story of how Naboth (who was in reality the bearer of the spirit of Elijah) was to be robbed of his vineyard by Ahab; and of how Jezebel brought ruin upon him (I Kings, xxi, 1 to 14). From the Bible account alone, we cannot understand how Jezebel could have possibly accomplished the destruction of Elijah in accordance with her threatening utterance to King Ahab (see [this passage](#)), namely: — 'I will do unto Elijah that which he did unto thy four hundred and fifty prophets'; for the story

tells us that she merely compassed the death of Naboth. As a matter of fact, however, she actually brought destruction to the being in whom dwelt at that time the spirit of Elijah; a point which would undoubtedly escape the notice of any ordinary Biblical student — for in the Bible it merely states that Elijah ascended into heaven (II Kings, ii, 11). Now, if, as is intimated in the Bible, Jezebel's desire was — to do unto Elijah as he had done unto the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal — she certainly accomplished her end and brought about his ruin in a most remarkable manner!⁵ I would here state that there are some graphic portrayals relative to the dim past which can only be rightly understood when illumined by that bright radiance which flows from the deep sources of spiritual research.

It is not possible in a single lecture to bring forward further evidence and proofs concerning these matters. If, however, those among my audience who may still feel that they cannot look upon the pronouncements of Spiritual Science as other than sheer hypotheses, would but criticize without prejudice, and set about comparing the various statements made with facts obtained through the medium of external science, I should feel entirely satisfied. Although it is true that if spiritual methods of research are not employed, we cannot hope to reach final and positive conclusions, nevertheless, it will be found that the verity of Spiritual Science is confirmed by the results of orthodox scientific investigations, and the proper exercise of the individual intelligence.

When we study the personality and period of the prophet Elijah, it becomes clear that the impulses and primal causes which underlie and bring about human events, are in no way limited to those occurrences which are outwardly apparent, and therefore find a place in the records of external history. By far the most important and significant happenings connected with man's existence have their actual origin, and are matured as regards a primary stage, within the confines of the soul. The outcome of this fundamental process next finds expression in the outer world, ever spreading its influence further and further among the people. Although in these days it is inconceivable that a mysterious personality such as we have portrayed, and known only through rumour, could dwell in our midst in the guise of a simple and homely neighbour without all the facts becoming known, in olden times such a circumstance was undoubtedly possible. We have learned

that throughout all human evolution it is precisely those forces which are of greatest power and intensity that operate in obscure and secret fashion.

From what has been said it is clear that through the influence of the prophet Elijah, man was raised to a higher spiritual level and became more and more imbued with Jahveh thoughts and concepts. We also realize that the life and deeds of that great patriarch, when viewed in the proper manner, must be regarded as forming an epoch of supreme import to humanity. Further investigation and research will assuredly prove that [by means of the methods of Spiritual Science] a new light has been thrown upon the momentous happenings of a bygone age, and on the events which ultimately led to the founding of Christianity. We know that through realities of this nature, born of the Spirit-World, we can draw nearer to an understanding of those fundamental forces and impulses which have been ever active during the evolution of mankind, and therefore appear to us of such great significance and moment. Then with enhanced knowledge we shall realize that, even as these basal factors have operated in remote antiquity, so must they continue to work on in our present period. Never can we read the deep secrets of the life which is around us, if we have no clear concept of the inner nature and purport of those singular events which have taken place in the dim and distant past.

External history, which is garnered solely from the outer world, does not enlighten us concerning things of greatest and most vital import. It is here the words of **Goethe** so fittingly apply — words which, if but read with a touch of deeper meaning, become as a call to humanity urging mankind to profound inner spiritual contemplation. For it is thus that man may enter upon that quest which alone can spring from the soul's most hidden depths, and learn to apprehend the Divine Spirit which is, and abides, in all nature.

The wonderful example of the prophet Elijah and his period, as it shines forth in our spiritual firmament, stands as an evidence of the truth of Goethe's words, which in slightly modified form, are as follows: —

*History will not permit that veil to be withdrawn,
Which hides her secrets from the light of our new day.
That which she chooses from thy spirit to conceal,
Canst thou ne'er wrest from parchment script, nor canst
thou say,
What message lies secreted 'neath those mystic signs,
Inscribed on bronze, or fashioned deep in stone or clay.*

Addendum

In the above lecture, which was delivered in Berlin in 1911, it will be noticed that in some cases the name Elijah-Naboth is found in places where Elijah only is mentioned in the Bible. The reason for this apparent inconsistency becomes at once evident, when we take a general view of the circumstances and singular relation which existed between Elijah, Naboth, and what we might term a duality of being as expressed in Elijah-Naboth. Let us therefore briefly consider the events portrayed in the order in which they took place.

At the time of Ahab, the Hebrew people were for the most part, so far sunk in materialism that there was danger, not only that disaster would overtake them, but that the actual course of the spiritual evolution of mankind might be hindered; and the matter had gone to such a length as to call for Divine intervention. Hence it was ordained that Elijah, whom we must regard as a truly exalted spirit, should descend upon the earth, and that his mission would be to turn the hearts of the people once more to Jehovah, and to determine upon his (Elijah's) successor. This mission we may look upon as being accomplished in four stages.

At first the spirit of Elijah worked in mysterious ways, for he appeared among the people now here, now there; and no man knew from whence he came. In those olden days the masses were oft-times moved in matters concerning religious thought by engendering feelings of awe and wonder, and by so doing Elijah established a definite and powerful influence among the minds of the Community. He thus prepared the people to witness that sign of the spirit which it

was decreed should be vouchsafed. Only through some great manifestation of Divine force could the nation, in that material state into which it had fallen, be brought back to Jahveh, the ancient God of the Hebrews.

In the second stage of Elijah's mission we come upon the simple land-owner, Naboth. In order to create the utmost possible impression at the time when the supreme revelation of spiritual power should take place, it was essential that a multitude be present, but for this thing to happen it was necessary to gain the consent of the King. Now Naboth lived near to Ahab, and might on occasion obtain audience with him, and in this manner could aid Elijah in the maturing of his plans. Elijah therefore so worked upon the innermost soul of Naboth, that he became 'the bearer of his spirit' and did according to his word. Thus did Elijah's spirit find expression through the outer form of Naboth and bring influence to bear upon the King, that all should be made ready for the people to be gathered together when the moment was at hand for the sign to be given. It is the dual state of Naboth's being while the spirit of Elijah was dominant and worked within him that has been termed, *Elijah-Naboth*.

Now, Ahab was not truly clairvoyant and had no suspicion of all that had occurred. On that occasion when he met Elijah-Naboth and said to him: 'Art thou he that troubleth Israel?' (I Kings, xviii, 17), he thought it was only Naboth who was speaking, and that it was he who would turn the people against the gods of Baal; for Ahab at that time merely knew of Elijah through indefinite rumour. But it was the voice of Elijah the prophet speaking *through* Naboth that answered the King — it was Elijah-Naboth that spoke. It is because the ancient writer who portrayed this incident did not realize the singular spiritual and clairvoyant conditions, and therefore did not fully understand the circumstances, that the name of Elijah alone appears in this, as in other Bible accounts connected with the events which took place in those days.

We find a similar difference in the names occurring in the description of the happening on Mount Carmel, when the people were assembled in order to judge between Jehovah and the gods of Baal. It was then that the third stage of Elijah's mission was fulfilled. In the lecture it states that it was Elijah-Naboth who was present on the Mount, and that it was he who 'won the day', but the Bible narrative tells us that it

was Elijah himself who overcame the prophets of Baal. The reason for this apparent inconsistency can be seen from the following considerations.

It was Elijah-Naboth, who when all had come, stood forth and said: 'This thing must now be determined — I stand alone while opposed to me are the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal.' But Elijah, who was granted special spiritual powers at that moment, so ordered the matter that while the King saw before him merely the outer form of the man Naboth, the people were impressed with the spiritual being and personality of Elijah. In the Bible, the narrator realized the circumstances *as the multitude had apprehended them*, and therefore spoke only of Elijah, being unaware that at that time, Naboth was 'the bearer of his spirit'.

Jezebel was not present at Mount Carmel, because she was conscious that she could not cope directly with Elijah. Already through her clairvoyant powers she was cognizant of all that had come to pass, and she knew full well that the spirit of the great prophet would be all-powerful in that place. In other words, she clearly understood that if she went to the Mount she would there have to do with Elijah-Naboth, and not merely with the simple land-owner. She thought, however, that if she could but compass the physical death of Naboth, she might put an end to Elijah's influence.

Next came the fourth stage of Elijah's mission. He must seek a successor, and that before Jezebel brought about the death of Naboth, for when the outer form of Naboth should be destroyed, Elijah must return to the Divine Spirit-realms. At that point in the lecture (see [this passage](#)) where it states that Elijah communed with his soul and asked this question: 'What shall I do that I may find a successor to fulfil my mission in this physical world, should my death indeed be brought about through the vengeance of Jezebel?' he is referring to the material death of Naboth and to the possible premature ending of the impulse he had wrought.

Further, we are told that Spiritual Science states: 'That Elijah-Naboth had a very special mission to fulfil; and that the Divine element which was about to descend upon Elisha, would be of the self-same spirit as had heretofore been predominant in Elijah.' And, 'it was in Damascus that Elisha was to be sought ...' In the Bible (I Kings, xix, 15, 16) we

find these words: 'And the Lord said unto him [Elijah], Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus ... and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-Meholah shalt thou anoint to be a prophet in thy room.' The actual command to seek out Elisha was given in a vision to Elijah, as is indicated both in the lecture and in I Kings xix, 12, 13. Spiritual Science, however, tells us that it was *Elijah-Naboth* who made the journey. And this is quite comprehensible when we realize that in Elijah-Naboth, Elisha in virtue of his advanced spirituality would know and commune with the spirit being of Elijah. Here again it is for reasons similar to those already advanced, that in the Bible the name of Elijah, only, occurs, while in the lecture Elijah-Naboth is mentioned.

In all such cases it will be found, if we but look deeply into the matter, that the statements of Spiritual Science are, in truth, not in any way at variance with those things which are written in the Bible. [Ed.]

Notes for this lecture:

1. 'And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.' (I Kings, xix, I.)
2. This verse is as follows: — 'Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the Gods do unto me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time.'
3. See **Addendum** to this lecture.
4. Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Beth-el. (II Kings, ii, 2.)
5. In this lecture it has been previously stated (see **this passage**) that, through Elijah–Naboth, the prophets of Baal were 'destroyed in their very souls by that which they had most desired'. Now Elijah longed that his spirit might continue active in the being of Naboth, and it was this very wish that caused Jezebel to set about his ruin, and thus, as it were, to 'destroy' Elijah 'in his very soul'. It was not merely physical death, to which Jezebel referred when she sent her message to Elijah, as mentioned in the Bible, saying: 'So let the gods do to me, and more

also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time,' (I Kings, xix, 2), but to a kind of spiritual death, which would break for ever that mysterious and sacred union between Elijah and Naboth, which it was her aim to sever. She knew quite well in virtue of her clairvoyant powers, that she could only hope to accomplish this end, and — 'destroy Elijah in his very soul' — by bringing about the material dissolution of Naboth, the bearer of Elijah's spirit. Thus we find, that if we read Jezebel's message anew, in the light thrown upon it by Spiritual Science, its purport becomes at once intelligible. [Ed.]



VI. Christ and the 20th Century

25 January 1912, Berlin

It cannot be denied, even by those who have made only a slight study of spiritual life, that the subject chosen for our consideration to-day has aroused an interest in the widest circles, and we might add, that this desire for knowledge is of a scientific character. On the other hand, there seems to be an ever increasing tendency toward the formation of a world-philosophy, in which such questions as are associated with the name of Christ find no true and proper place.

A previous lecture that I gave some few weeks ago in this building under the title, '*The Origin of Man (link 404)*', and a continuation of the same, upon '*The Origin of the Animal World*' (delivered in the Architektenhaus) will doubtless have made clear to you a point to which I shall now again draw your attention. In every age, including the present period, the general conceptions and sentiments concerning such fundamental questions as '*The Origin of Man (link 404)*' and others of a similar nature, including those relative to that Being to Whom the name of Christ has been given, are directly rooted in, and dependent upon the accepted concepts of some prior age.

We have already seen while considering various matters connected with man's origin, that as a matter of fact, those theoretical ideas and conceptions which have sprung from the general mode of thought prevailing in our time are fundamentally at variance with the actual results of scientific research. On the other hand, it is just in this relation that we find the conclusions arrived at through the medium of Spiritual Science, which traces man's origin back to spiritual forms, and not merely to that which is external and physically perceptible, are in full harmony with the results obtained in the field of Natural Science. Perhaps nowhere do we find this want of accord so marked between that current cosmic concept, which is so general in the thoughts and hearts of the people of our day, and that which science has been constrained to adopt, as in the case of the Christ-conception. This divergence may well be due to the fact that the questions involved belong to the greatest of all those concerning the cosmos. However, since the coming of the Christ-Movement into the world's

history, man's power of conception concerning the Christ-Being and the form which it has taken, has ever been such as was best adapted to a particular period, or as one might say, was best suited to that section of humanity which was occupied with such thoughts.

During the first centuries which followed the advent of Christianity into the world's history, we realize in connection with a certain trend of ideas and spiritual tendency which has been called Gnosis [a term denoting a higher spiritual wisdom claimed by the Gnostics], that grand and mighty concepts were formed with regard to that Being whom we term The Christ. We find, however that the universal acceptance of these exalted gnostical conceptions continued for only a relatively short period as compared with that idea of The Christ which was, as one might say, generally approved and spread among the people, and later became the essence of the Church movement. It will be enlightening to consider briefly those lofty Christ-concepts which were evolved in the form of gnostical conceptions during the first centuries of the Christian era — not, be it understood, because Spiritual Science would seek to cloak those ideas which it has to put forward with regard to The Christ beneath a mantle of gnostic notions; such an assertion could only be made by those who because of the immaturity of their development in the field of Spiritual Science, are wholly incapable of truly differentiating between the nature of the various events and conditions which are met with in spiritual life.

In many ways the concepts of the Spiritual Science of to-day, which will be recapitulated in this lecture, extend far beyond the ancient gnosis of those early Christian times; but this very fact makes it the more interesting that we should at least touch upon these old spiritual conceptions. There are many different points of view in connection with this by-gone higher wisdom, and various degrees of light and shade in that olden spiritual trend of thought, and we will draw attention to one of its most important aspects and which harmonizes best with the teachings of Spiritual Science in our time. During the first few centuries of the Christian era, this ancient gnosis put forward the most profound ideas concerning the Christ-Being — momentous indeed in relation to that enlightenment which came with the dawn of Christianity. This higher spiritual wisdom maintained that the Christ-Being was eternal, and not alone associated and concerned with the evolution and development of humanity, but with the surrounding world of the cosmos taken in its entirety.

When considering the question of the Origin of Man we found that we were taken back to a form of humanity which floated or hovered, as it were, entirely in spiritual heights and which was not yet familiar with, nor embodied in, an outer material covering. We have seen that during the process of the earth's evolution, mankind, starting from a purely spiritual state, gradually changed into that of a lower and denser form which we now call man; and that owing to the materialistic outlook of the present theory of evolution, which merely follows man's earthly history backwards, his beginning has been traced to external animal forms. Spiritual Science, on the other hand, leads us directly to previous states which approach ever nearer and nearer to the immaterial soul, and finally points definitely to a spiritual origin.

The old gnosis sought the Christ-Being in that region in which mankind hovered before he had assumed his material existence, and where he felt himself surrounded alone by spiritual life and spiritual reality. If we understand this ancient gnosis rightly, then must we look upon it from the gnostic point of view, that when man had so far developed as to have reached a point when his Etheric Body should be enclosed within a material covering in order that he might take part in the general course of physical evolution, there remained behind in the purely spiritual realms what might be termed a by-gone companion of man or 'alter ego', in the form of an element of the Christ-Being, which did not descend with him into the physical world. Further, according to this conception, mankind was destined to undergo a process of continued development in the material plane, and it was his mission to show evidence of achievement and progress. Hence, according to the gnosis, this Christ-Element continues to dwell in the spiritual realms while mankind undergoes his period of material evolution, so that during the whole time of man's earthly history, the Christ-Being is not to be sought in that region to which man is related as a physical perceptual entity, but alone in the realms of pure spirit.

That particular period which we call The Birth of Christianity, the ancient gnosis considered of especial import in the evolution of mankind upon Earth. It was regarded as that glorious moment when the Christ-Being entered the physical perceptual world in order to give an impulse to spiritual activity, for man had of himself retarded the soul's development after he had descended upon the material plane. The gnosis looked upon primeval man during the very beginning of his

evolution as a spiritual being bound to a world in which The Christ was *then* active, and it considered that He *again* descended upon our earth, where already for a long space humanity had been undergoing material evolution, at that particular period from which we now reckon our time.

The question now arises — How did the ancient wisdom actually look upon this descent of a purely spiritual being into the evolution of humanity? It was regarded in the following manner: — According to the gnosis, an especially highly developed human individuality to Whom historical research has given the name of Jesus of Nazareth, had achieved such exceptional spiritual maturity that at a particular period definite soul conditions had come about, in virtue of which this singular personality had the power to absorb certain Divine qualities and wisdom from the Spirit-World, which up to then no man could acquire. From this time on, so the gnosis states, the soul of this especially selected personality felt itself sufficiently advanced to surrender to the indwelling of that Divine Being, Who up to that moment had had no part in the actual progress and development of humanity — namely, The Christ. That event which took place on the banks of the Jordan when Jesus of Nazareth was baptized by John, and which is recorded in the Bible (Mark i, 9 to 11), was regarded by this ancient gnosis as a manifestation of the entering of the Christ-Being into the course of human evolution. The gnosis further declared that some very singular spiritual condition had been engendered with regard to Jesus through this sacred baptism, which event we may consider as wholly symbolical or otherwise.

We can obtain an idea of what underlies this gnostic concept if we pursue a line of thought somewhat as follows: — We begin with a realization of the fact that if we carefully observe the lives of other people, using those methods of thought which lead us to the very depth of the soul, and not the superficial mode so general in our time, we shall often find in the experience of such persons moments fraught with epoch-making events, when they feel that they stand at a turning-point in their lives. A situation of this nature may arise through some deep-lying sorrow or other trial of earthly origin. Then indeed they may say: — 'That which has now befallen me differs from all my previous experiences, for it causes me to look upon myself as a man transformed.' Certain it is that in the case of many people there occurs

at times something in the nature of a crisis, such as might be described as an awakening and renewing of special and distinctive forces of soul-life.

If we imagine an experience of the above kind as representing in very imperfect and elementary manner an inner event similar to that which the gnosis regarded as having taken place at the time of the baptism of Jesus in Jordan (St. Mark i, 9), we can then readily conceive an entirely different form of happening hitherto unknown in connection with human existence, and quite unlike any which may break in upon men's souls and is born merely of earthly trials and vicissitudes. That Divine power and supreme spiritual quality which flamed up in the soul of Jesus of Nazareth manifested in wholly new indwelling attributes, and therefrom arose a Godlike inner life shedding fresh light upon all forms of human culture quickened by its example. It was that Divine Essence which entered into the innermost being of Jesus of Nazareth — that glorious and most Holy Spirit creating in Him a new-born life, that the ancient gnosis termed THE CHRIST.

The gnosis clearly realized that through The Christ there had come to mankind something in the nature of a new impulse, an impulse differing utterly from any that had been before. For all that Godlike stimulating power which was brought forth and unfolded in Jesus during the three years subsequent to His baptism by John was such as had never up to that time found place in the evolution of humanity. The gnosis states quite definitely that we must not consider a particular man [Jesus of Nazareth] as The Christ [as is oft-times done], but that we must realize and look for The Christ in the Divine Spirit which manifested IN Jesus, through those sublime and singular qualities that were latent within his innermost being.

We have characterized this ancient spiritual wisdom concerning The Christ in the above manner, in order that it may be easy of comprehension. In the example previously cited of a special turning-point occurring in the life of a human soul, we have an instance at least in some ways analogous to the Christ-Event expressed in its most elementary form. It is especially difficult for mankind in these modern times to realize that circumstances of fundamental historic significance are directly connected with this outstanding incident, and which are of such momentous import as to form what might be

termed the true centre of human evolution. When we compare this gnostical concept with various statements of Spiritual Science brought to your notice during these lectures, we find that it has in truth, no matter how we regard the facts, not only a grand and glorious conception of the Christ-Being, but it also evinces an exalted idea of *man's* being, for it regards him as involved in an impulse, coming directly from the spiritual realms, and brought to bear upon the actual course of his historic growth and development. It is therefore not to be wondered at that this ancient gnostical conception was unpopular. Anyone who has obtained even a slight insight into the circumstances connected with the progress of mankind during the early centuries of the Christian era and onwards, the existing state of the human soul and the various conditions of social life at different periods, must at once admit that such concepts imply a loftiness of sentiment that was certainly not destined to find favour among the people. In order to appreciate this point we have only to consider the spiritual life of the present day.

Whenever conversation turns upon any idea similar in character to this ancient higher spiritual wisdom, the majority of people at once say: — 'That is all an abstraction, a purely visionary notion — what we want is reality, something which directly affects our actual material life.' Thus it is that even in our time mankind for the most part regards the old gnostical conception, as outlined, merely in the light of a wholly abstract impression. Humanity is still far from experiencing the feeling of greater satisfaction which comes of spiritual thought, and of realizing how much more true is the substantiality of all that underlies those spiritual concepts to which we may raise ourselves, than is that of things which most men regard as perceptual, concrete, and as having absolute reality. If it were otherwise we would not find, as is the case in the arts and professions, that man is ever urged toward what may be touched and seen, while all that is of the spirit, and calls for inner upliftment of the soul for its apprehension, is pushed aside and regarded as abstract and visionary.

It is not possible in a few words to explain just how the popular conception of the Christ-Being evolved in the minds of the people. But it may be said that an echo of the true Christ-Concept, which pictures a Divine Being incarnate and abiding in the man Jesus of Nazareth, has lived on through the centuries side by side with that simple idea of Jesus, which looks upon Him as born in marvellous manner and as

ever approaching mankind with divine tenderness and love; a theme which is developed even in the story of his childhood. In this concept we find Jesus of Nazareth hailed by humanity as its loving Saviour. And it is in that holy sense and feeling evoked by the deeds of this beloved Redeemer that we find a dim echo of the ancient gnostic Christ-Concept. During the whole course of what we might call the external history of Jesus, there is found an upturned vision which realized the presence of some great secret truth, some awe-inspiring mystery, which even as Jesus walked the earth endowed His personality with superhuman attributes. And this superhuman quality has been termed The Christ. Further, we find that as time went on humanity became ever less and less capable of understanding that bold concept, The gnostic Christ, and this ever-increasing inability of comprehension has continued even up to the present day.

Already in the Middle Ages we note, that Science only dared to reason concerning that which is external and directly apparent to the senses, or about those things which it conceived as lying beyond our sense-perception in a kind of world governed by natural laws. It did not feel itself called upon to probe into those factors and influences which have entered into and played their respective parts in man's evolution, in the form of noble and uplifting spiritual impulses. Thus it was that in the Middle Ages, questions concerning the origin and evolution of man in which the Christ-Impulse made itself felt, became solely objects of belief. This spiritual faith, however, continued on among the people from that time, side by side with all that was regarded as Science and absolute knowledge, but which took heed only of the lower order of cosmic matters and events.

At this point it is of interest to note, that from the sixteenth century onward, this twofold method of thought has ever more and more tended toward a crisis, and for the reason that mankind was always prone to direct and confine his powers of cognition to the perceptual world alone, and to assign all matters of spiritual origin and dependent upon spiritual progress and evolution to the category of mere dogma.

We cannot, however, enter upon this subject at the present time, for it is more essential that I now draw your attention to the fact that in the nineteenth century the course of development led mankind to a point where, as one might say, all true conception of The Christ was wholly lost, at least to a very large proportion of the people. But,

nevertheless, we must admit that among a small section of the community the ancient gnostic concepts still lived on, and were yet further developed after a manner which we might regard as bringing about a deeper insight into the Christ-Impulse. In the case of the majority, even among the scientific theological circles, there was a general renunciation of the true Christ-Concept. An attempt was made to centre all in the personality of Jesus of Nazareth, and to look upon Him as One possessed of singular attributes, and especially chosen because of His profound and all-embracing comprehension of the laws and conditions of human evolution, and the Divine inner nature of mankind — but even so, to be considered as a *man* — although a man transcendent in all things. Thus it came about that in those days in place of the old Christology, there grew up what might be called a mere Jesus-life-research. The results of this mode of thought and study became ever more and more incredible, when considered in the light of all those Divine qualities which dwelt within the being of The Chosen One, Jesus of Nazareth. For according to these investigations Jesus was to be regarded as One specifically selected as endowed with supreme and unique spiritual attributes, but nevertheless possessed of human individuality.

The crowning point in this class of conception is reached in such works as that entitled *The Nature of Christianity*, by Adolf Harnack, and other similar attempts in the direction of what we have termed Jesus-life-research, and which have appeared in many and varied forms. For the present, however, it is only necessary to merely draw attention to the results obtained from deep and earnest study along these lines, and since this subject is the most modern of any with which we are concerned we can do so very briefly. We would say that the methods employed during the nineteenth century in order to authenticate historically those events which occurred at the beginning of the Christian era, have led to no actual positive conclusions.

It would take us much too far to enter into any kind of detail respecting this particular trend of thought; but anyone who will make a careful investigation into the results achieved in modern times in this connection, will know that an endeavour has been made to apply the ordinary methods of external research, to prove that the personality of Jesus of Nazareth actually lived at the beginning of our Christian spiritual life. Now this attempt to demonstrate the existence of Jesus by such historical means as may be applied in other cases has merely

led to the following admission: — 'It is impossible to confirm the personality of Jesus of Nazareth by external material methods.' But it by no means follows that the negative assumption, which claims that Jesus never lived, is thereby proved. These material investigations have simply shown that we cannot employ the same historical means in order to verify the life of Jesus of Nazareth, as may be used to demonstrate the existence of Aristotle, Socrates or Alexander the Great. But that is not all, for of late this field of inquiry has led to serious difficulties being experienced in quite another direction.

It is only necessary to refer to such works as those by William Benjamin Smith, published by Diederich of Leipzig, to realize that the result of painstaking and exact research into Biblical and other documentary records relating to Christianity has again revealed the fact that [in many instances] these venerable documents cannot be referring to those matters to which, during the greater part of the nineteenth century, it was generally supposed they had reference. A special attempt was made to reconstruct the life of Jesus of Nazareth from the results of philological investigations into these ancient chronicles; but in the end it was found that in the very writings themselves there was evidence of an underlying significance of quite a different nature from that which appeared upon the surface. It became apparent that in spite of every effort to picture the life of Jesus by employing the most carefully chosen and exact methods, the Biblical records, those Christian documents wherein mankind feels itself upon a firm and truly Christian foundation, hardly mention Jesus of Nazareth as a human being. External science is thus driven to the following statement: — 'The ancient records scarcely ever allude to Jesus of Nazareth as a man, they refer to Him as a God'; and again to this remarkable anomalous assertion: 'It is an error to believe that any proof may be found in the original Christian documents of the existence of Jesus of Nazareth as an actual human personality. Rather do we come to the conviction that what the evangelical and other olden sacred writings state is, that in the very beginning of the Christian era was a Deity, and only when we recognize this fact, does all that is written in these aged chronicles become of true significance and import.'

Now is not this all very extraordinary? According to the investigations of our period, when we allude to Jesus of Nazareth, we must speak of a Deity; but this same period and same line of research admits of no

reality in this God or purely Spiritual Being. How, then, does present-day science regard The Christ? He is looked upon as a visionary creation, a mere ideal concept which insinuated itself into the history of mankind, and was called into being by a folk fantasy born of mental impulse. According to the latest investigations in this field, The Christ is to be regarded not as a reality, but as a kind of imaginary god. To put it plainly, we would say: — Modern scientific research is brought face to face with something for which it has absolutely no use; for what can it do with a God in Whom it has no faith? External science has merely proved that the Bible records speak of a Deity, but it knows of naught else to do with this Deity, than to ascribe to Him a place in the category of visionary concepts.

We will now compare the attitude of external Science as characterized above, with what Spiritual Science has to say upon the matter. At this point I should like to mention a book entitled *Christianity as Mystical Fact*, of which I am the author. The fundamental idea underlying this work has been but little understood. I have therefore endeavoured to set forth its object more clearly in a preface to the second edition. My intention was to show that the history of mankind — World History — is not complete in that picture which we can generally obtain from external history and external documents, and for this reason: — Throughout all human evolution spiritual impulses are at work, spiritual factors are present, and these we must attribute to the agency of spiritual beings. If with this concept we compare the whole nature and method of the historic world-conception put forward by **Leopold von Ranke** and others, we can only say: — The highest point to which the Science of History has as yet reached is, that it actually speaks of *historical ideas* as if they were subject to the intrusion of abstract impressions coming, as one might say, from without during the course of human evolution and the development of Nations and of Peoples. That is the utmost extent of general belief in this direction. But 'ideas' are not what historians consider them to be, and do not develop force and exhibit power. The whole process of human evolution would be lifeless and spiritless if it proceeded merely historically, and if it were not that those ideas which enter into the souls of mankind are the expression of invisible and supersensible impulses, which rule and govern the whole field of human growth and development. Behind all that is revealed in this external progression, there still remains something which can only be unveiled by those supersensible means at the disposal of Spiritual

Science, where the methods are applicable to things which are beyond the powers of our sense-perception. Attention has already been drawn to this subject in a previous lecture, and we shall again refer to it at some future date.

I could demonstrate to you how the Christ-Impulse entered historically into the evolution of humanity in such manner that it proved itself to be an actual continuation of that self-same influence which played its part in the spiritual development of mankind in the by-gone days of the ancient mysteries; the actual nature of which is even yet but little understood. A true comprehension of all that was accomplished in pre-Christian times by the olden mysteries in connection with the laying down of spiritual foundations for the development of nations and of peoples can only come, when, through the methods of modern Spiritual Science, man has gained an understanding of that particular form of development through which the soul is transformed into an instrument capable of apprehending that Spirit-World which lies behind all things material and perceptual. In these lectures I have many times referred to transformations of this character.

We now know that mankind, who in these days is in a sense confined and only interested in the immediate experiences of his intimate soul-life, may verily raise himself above his present state and assume a more perfect form of soul-being which can live in the Spirit-World, even as the human counterpart lives in the physical world. Through the study of history in the light of Spiritual Science, we learn that the possibility of thus raising the soul-being to spiritual heights through a process of purely intimate individual soul development, has come about gradually during the evolution of mankind, and was not known in primeval times. Whereas the soul may now through its own effort and measures rise freely, and while still possessed of its individual quality acquire the power of spiritual discernment, in pre-Christian times such was not the case; for the soul was then dependent upon an impulse born of certain modes and procedures, which were a part of the rites performed in the Sanctuaries of the Mysteries.

In my book entitled *Christianity as Mystical Fact*, I have presented a somewhat detailed account of those ancient rites which were conducted by the priests in connection with the soul. These

ceremonies took place in the various Temples of the Mysteries, as they were then considered to be, but which in this lecture we will regard more as Temples assigned to spiritual instruction. What actually took place in these sanctuaries may be briefly outlined as follows: — By means of certain methods and observances the soul was freed from its bodily covering, and it was made possible for it to remain for a time in a condition similar to, though in many ways differing from, the ordinary sleep-state.

When we consider the sleep-state in the light of present-day Spiritual Science, we look upon it that while the human frame remains quiescent and sleeping, the actual centre of man's Etheric Being is situated outside the recumbent figure, and that during such state the power of the true inner essence of this etheric nucleus is so low that unconsciousness supervenes, and the nucleus becomes, as it were, enveloped in darkness. The methods employed during these ancient mystic rites in order to affect the human soul were as follows: — Through the influence of certain advanced personalities, who had themselves passed through similar mystical initiation, a species of sleep-state was first induced. This was of such nature that the inner forces of the soul were thereby strengthened and intensified. When a certain stage was reached the soul left the body, which was then in a condition of deathlike sleep, and for a time entered upon a psychic existence, a kind of sleep-life, during which it could look upon the Spirit-World with full consciousness. While this sleep-life continued, the soul was able to realize its true position as an inhabitant of the spiritual realms. When, in due course, the soul was brought back once again to ordinary mundane conditions, there came to it recollections of all those things which it had observed and experienced while freed from the body. It was then that it could [while active within the human form] come before the people and stand forth as a prophet, bringing to them proofs of the existence of a Spirit-World and of an eternal life to come. In those olden days it was in the manner above indicated that the soul was enabled to take part in the life of the spiritual realms; and in the mysteries were found the canons to which it must submit, and for a long period, in order that the supreme spiritual leaders in the ancient Mystery Sanctuaries might bring about the final consummation of the soul's desire.

We will now ask this question: — Whence came those ancient standards of human conduct which have been passed on by peoples spread throughout the world during the course of man's evolution; and those flashes of spiritual enlightenment proclaiming his Godlike origin and the eternity of the soul? The answer comes through Spiritual Science; from it we learn that this olden wisdom originated with those who had themselves undergone initiation after the manner we have outlined. There is a reflection of these primeval moral precedents, manifested in strange and curious fashion, in connection with Myths and Legends and various graphic portrayals of the past; for in these very fables we find depicted many of the same experiences which came, as if in a living dream, to the initiates in the Mystery-Sanctuaries. Indeed, we first begin to understand Mythology rightly, when we regard the forms and figures there presented, as pictorial representations of things which appeared to the spiritual vision of the Initiates during the time of their participation in the secret rites. If we would establish a relation between the mythological conceptions of olden times and the religious teachings of an earlier age, we must hark back to the ancient mysteries and ponder upon all that lay concealed therein, deep hidden from a profane external world. Mysteries revealed to those alone, who, through severe trials and unswerving observance of that secrecy and restraint imposed upon all, had truly fitted themselves to take part in the dark ceremonies of initiation. We cannot, however, at this point enter into the actual circumstances which led to the close veiling of the mystic rites performed in that now remote grey past. But when we turn our gaze backward and follow the course of spiritual development in pre-Christian times, we realize that it was ever in the dim obscurity enshrouding the inscrutable observances of that by-gone age, that man's soul unfolded and was strengthened.

The souls of men were not so fully developed in the past that they could of themselves and of their own efforts rise upward and enter the realms of the spirit, while merely dependent upon their immediate powers and unaided by the ministrations of the temple priests. In my book, *Christianity as Mystical Fact*, I have pointed out that even while external history ran its course a change was taking place; and it has there been my object to show how the whole plan and design underlying human evolution was such, that when the turning-point was reached which marked the birth of Christianity mankind was already prepared to enter upon a new era. This change had come

about because of all that man had experienced and absorbed through repeated reincarnations, and through knowledge gained from initiates concerning the Spirit-World. From then on he would have the power of upliftment to spiritual heights within his own innermost soul, which could henceforth rise of its own effort, free from all external influence and unaided by those means which it was the custom to employ in the by-gone days of the mysteries.

According to the views which we now hold, the most outstanding event that came to pass in Palestine, in connection with the spiritual progress of mankind was the final perfecting of the soul, so that it should be fitted for what we might call Self-Initiation. This ultimate consummation had been approached gradually and the necessary preparation had extended over possibly hundreds of years; yet the end came just about the very time when that special turning-point was reached which marked the beginning of the Christian era. The soul was then so far perfected that it was ready for self-initiation, during which act it would be merely guided by those having knowledge of the true path and of the trials that must be endured; henceforth self-initiation might be achieved without external aid rendered by Temple priests, or by leaders having understanding of the mysteries. And further, through the founding of Christianity all those other rites and observances which were performed time and time again in the innermost sanctuaries of the Temples, memories of which are still preserved in Legends, Myths and Mythologies connected with folklore, are found to have a place in that Grand Plan which underlies the world's history.

If we would indeed understand the Gospels, we should ask ourselves the following question: — 'What experiences were essential to a candidate for initiation in the days of the ancient Persians or Egyptians, who desired so to uplift his soul that it might gaze directly upon the Spirit-World?' Injunctions concerning such matters were clearly set forth and formed the basis of what we might term a Ritual of Initiation. These commands and instructions covered a time extending from a certain event designated by some as The Baptism, and by others as The Temptation, up to that moment when the soul was led forth and blessed with a true discernment of the spiritual realms. When we compare such Initiation Rituals with the most important statements contained in the Gospels, then (as I have shown in the book to which I have just referred) we find that in the Gospels

there appear once again detailed narratives concerning ancient initiation ceremonies, but here the descriptions have reference to that great outstanding historical character, Jesus of Nazareth. It further becomes clear that whereas in previous times an Initiation Candidate was raised to spiritual heights in the seclusion of the Temples of the Mysteries, Jesus of Nazareth, because of the course which history had taken, was already so far advanced that He not only remembered His experiences in the Spirit-World and thus brought enlightenment to humanity, but He became unified in spirit with One, to Whom no earthly being had as yet become united, namely, The Christ-Being. Thus we find a great similarity between the narrative of the spiritual development of Jesus of Nazareth up to that moment when The Christ entered into His soul and during the following three years when He drew inspiration and wisdom from this Divine source, and the descriptions of the wonted course of the ancient forms of initiation.

In the accounts which tell us of all the trials and experiences which Jesus of Nazareth underwent in those olden days, we find the events connected with His initiation clearly marked by the magnitude and Godlike nature of the spiritual facts which underlie the historical descriptions. This is especially noticeable in the Gospel of St. John. While in previous times countless aspirants had taken part in the sacred rites, they had only advanced to that point when they could testify as follows: — 'The spiritual world is a reality, and to such a world does the human soul belong.' But when it came to pass that Jesus was Himself initiated, He became actually unified and at one with the most significant and outstanding of all spiritual beings ever remembered by former initiates; and it was toward this supreme initiation that the ordered plan underlying all ancient forms and ceremonies had its trend.

Thus do we behold The Mystery of Golgotha emerging from those secrets which were hidden in the dark mysteries of the past, to take its place in that grand design so fundamental to the world's history. As long as man refuses to believe that in a certain locality and at a definite time Jesus of Nazareth was blessed with Divine initiation, and imbued with the spirit of The Christ in such manner that this Almighty influence could stream forth and act as an impulse upon all future generations — just so long will he remain unable to realize the true import and meaning of the Christ-Impulse in its relation to the evolution of mankind. When through the study of the basic principles

of Spiritual Science the reality of great spiritual events such as we have portrayed is admitted, then will first dawn a true comprehension of all that has come to human evolution through the advent of the Christ-Impulse; and we shall no longer degrade the Gospels by discovering in them four separate rituals of initiation in which matters and circumstances concerning Jesus of Nazareth are hidden away and mysteriously concealed. When we come to understand these things rightly we shall realize that everything which followed as a result of the event in Palestine, held a deep significance for all later periods in human evolution.

Now, although what we may term man's deepest life-centre has always been, so to speak, near at hand, nevertheless this very life-centre was something the awareness of which had not up to the time of that great happening really penetrated into the consciousness of mankind. It was ordained that through The Mystery of Golgotha men's eyes should be opened and a new era entered upon, in which it would be realized that in the life-centre, the Ego, there manifests an element which is common to both individual man and the entire cosmos.

If we would know in what manner that great and vital change which was wrought in the world's history by the coming of the Christ-Impulse, is regarded when viewed in the light of Spiritual Science, then we must first realize that: — Man, in respect of his being, consists of a Physical Body, an Etheric or Life Body, an Astral Body, and deep within and underlying all is the veritable Ego¹ — that true I, which continues on from incarnation to incarnation. Now, an awareness of the presence of this ultimate centre of life broke in upon man's consciousness last of all. So that in pre-Christian times he had no thought of its existence. Even as the Physical Body is directly united and in contact with the Physical World, and the Astral Body with the Astral World, so is man's deepest life-centre, the Ego, born of that Spirit-World which passeth man's uttermost understanding. Hence, that great message which Christianity and the Christ-Impulse brought to mankind may be thus expressed: — Seek not the Deity and the Godlike primordial principle in the Astral Body, but in man's innermost being, for there abideth the true Ego.

Previous to the advent of Christianity man would exclaim: — 'My soul is indeed rooted in the Divine. It is the Divine quality alone which can extend the vision and bring unto me true enlightenment [through the

powers of those who have a deeper knowledge of spiritual matters].'
But now he is learning to say: — 'If thou would'st truly know where thou canst unveil the profoundest depths of all that is Divine and active throughout the world; then look of thyself within thine Ego, for therein lieth the channel through which cometh unto thee the Word of God. His voice will break in upon thy conscious state if thou but rightly understandest that because of the Mystery of Golgatha, the powers which are of God have entered into mankind; and if thou wilt but realize that then indeed was a glorious initiation truly consummated — to stand forth as a grand historical event. But especially does God speak unto thee, if thou but exaltest thyself and makest thy soul to be as an instrument, able and fitted, to apprehend that which is of the spiritual realms.'

Before that supreme act came to pass at Golgatha, the way of those who would enter upon the life of the spirit, lay through the deep mysteries of the Temple Sanctuaries. The actual awakening of the Divine consciousness which speaks through the Ego is the very essence of the Christ-Impulse; and the growth and development of the ancient Initiation-Principle paved the way and made it possible that this great impulse should come to humanity. During the whole future course of evolution, because of the Mystery of Golgatha, there will enter into men's souls an ever-increasing clarity of understanding and discernment of the Divine Spirit to which man is so truly united. That same Holy Spirit which even now speaks through the Ego, when man has indeed freed himself from all earthly conditions and circumstances.

He who can understand the Gospels from this point of view will realize the wonderful evidence of racial development and preparation for those coming events which were brought about in the past by the powers of the Spirit-World. It will be apparent that throughout the ancient Hebrew evolution, mankind was ever being made ready to hear the voice which would later speak through the deep centre of man's being, the Ego-centre; even as the spirit of the old Hebrew race spoke to Judaism. But the people of other nations had heard no such voice, for they were only conscious of the Divine Spirit as it held converse with the soul in the case of those who were truly initiated.

It had become clear to Judaism that the evolution of mankind is a continuous process of development and progress, and that deep within man's Ego there dwell those mystic forces which appertain to his innermost being. Hence the Jew became conscious of this thought: — 'When as an isolated personality, a part of the ancient Hebrew race, I look back upon the course of man's evolution from the time of Abraham, and realize that Supreme Deity who has ruled over all things from generation to generation, there comes over me a vague undefinable feeling that everything which is Divine and of that Holy spiritual power which has fashioned the individual qualities of mankind, lives in me.' It was in this way that the separate members of the old Hebrew race felt that they were united and at one with Abraham — their father. But Christianity definitely states that all such thoughts and conceptions concerning the Godlike qualities in man are lacking in completeness and fail to picture him in his most perfect form; even though he believe within himself that — 'I AM THAT AM'. A true realization of those Divine attributes and forces which are active deep within mankind can only come when there is a clear apprehension of those things which are of the spirit and lie beyond all human generations.

Therefore if we would give the above words their fuller and truer meaning we should say: — Before Abraham, was the I AM. This implies that man's Ego is eternal; and that in the beginning was the same Godlike element which has continued on throughout all generations and will be for evermore. To this the Hebrew would add: — 'Look not upon that which fadeth away and is of man's material being, but regard only the Divine Essence which has lived and flowed in the blood of all descendants of Abraham, who was indeed our father. See to it that ye shall know and discern this Holy Spirit in each one of God's children. But seek it not in the bond which uniteth brother and sister, but in that which abideth in each one of you and cometh to the light when man, in very solitude, shall know himself in his innermost soul, and cry out, I AM.'

Christ Jesus uttered words of similar intent and which we must interpret in like manner; with one modification they are as follows: — 'If any man come to me, and forsaketh ['Hate', see Luke xiv, 26] not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple:² We must not regard the significance of the above passage as in any way

conflicting with the just claims of relationship and child love, but rather as indicating that The Christ had brought into the world that Principle of Divine Spirit which each individual man, *because he is man*, may find if he but seek steadfastly in the very centre of his being. It was because of this transcendent deed that, henceforth, mankind would enter into ever closer contact with the very heart of Christianity. Then would this most sacred principle rise up supreme, and while overcoming all diversity and error, bring about the realization of that universal quality which all may discern who but look deep within.

The Gods of old were national gods — gods of the peoples — and had relation to certain racial peculiarities. We still find something of this nature in the East among the Buddhists. But the God who stands revealed through Christianity is One who will raise mankind above all human discord and divergence, and lead him on to that which he truly is, because he is indeed MAN. He who would gain knowledge of the fundamental character of the Christian Doctrine must necessarily regard those spiritual powers and impulses which have guided supreme events in world history as *realities* [he cannot aver that all was begotten of mere chance actions and purely human mental activity]. He must break away from previous concepts of what is basic and of primary historic import; for happenings which have long been so regarded are in reality but upon the surface of the world's actual growth. Underlying and controlling all human progress and development are beings far above man's normal powers of sense-perception who are just as real as is the animal and the man in our material world. Supreme and preeminent among those spirit mentors who govern and direct the growth and development of mankind is THE CHRIST — that Christ, who, according to the ancient gnosis, was active in the body of Jesus of Nazareth during a period of three years.

Once again do we realize that Spiritual Science has attained to a concept and an understanding that enables it to throw light upon matters which have already claimed the attention of external science. The latter has been forced to admit that [in respect of The Christ] we are not merely concerned with a man, but with a Divine Being who, while He ruled and gave guidance must, nevertheless, in a certain sense, be considered as active within the man, Jesus. Here, however, we come upon a situation with which external science is unable to cope. Spiritual Science, on the other hand, leads us to the direct

contemplation of beings thus acted upon and made subservient to divine spiritual powers, in the manner indicated, and regards such states as of actual occurrence; hence it can approach this sphere of modern investigation in a proper and logical manner. An amazing feature of twentieth-century spiritual development will be that external science will recognize and acknowledge that the concepts of the nineteenth century were in error, in so far as an attempt was then made to reduce the life of *Christ* Jesus to a life of Jesus of Nazareth only. Further it will be found that the final result of all research in this field will prove that in *Christ* Jesus we are concerned with a God; and when any science proclaims this truth it is a sign that it has begun to follow the true path. Spiritual Science would merely add that if mankind once admits the verity of the above statement, it may go forward ever assured that it is upon a certain and absolute foundation. The concept expressed in the above assertion is certainly in direct opposition to that material monistic cosmic conception, which has been formed in modern times.

In two of my previous lectures to which I have already referred, namely, '*The Origin of Man*', and '*The Origin of the Animal Kingdom*', we have seen that Spiritual Science was in complete accord with the actual facts brought to light by external Science. We would here say that in the matter we are now considering, Spiritual Science is again disposed to associate itself with the results of conscientious scientific research; but where there is doubt and divergence, it will be found that external Science will fall short of that goal which may be reached through the methods of Spiritual Science. In these days man regards human life and human understanding, as they appear to him in the physical world, as if they were irreconcilable with a closely associated and actual outer spiritual realm. He further believes that at the uttermost, man's greatest fault can only lie in forming wrong conceptions of the material world, or in doing something which is looked upon as detrimental or malicious, and which does not conform with outer and apparent progress.

It is the custom at the present time in connection with the existing cosmic concept, to seek the origin of phenomena only in that which is close at hand; and it has become more and more clear the further man penetrates into spiritual life, that a point has now been reached with regard to this method where a complete change in ideas has become necessary. Both natural science and history have come to a

stage where there is a definite scepticism concerning all spiritual matters, and these external sciences are now merely employed in collecting and associating outer perceptual facts, wholly regardless of that underlying spiritual reality which may be apprehended in all phenomena capable of sense-perception. One might almost say, that our present period has reached a point where scientific thought must be reversed, and assume a directly opposite attitude. The soul, through its constant inner striving, will in the end lead ultra materialism and ultra materialistic monism to adopt a concept, which as yet has played but a small part in man's ideas concerning the cosmos. But in future investigations into the origin of things there will enter thoughts and ideas, so far, not generally accepted.

In my two works, *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* and *Truth and Science*, I have explained that man has been compelled to assume that the position in which he finds himself relatively to the world, is not his true position; and that he must first undergo a development of inner-life so that he may recognize reality in natural phenomena, in order to be able to place himself in just and ethical relation to such phenomena. Further, in the mind of man there must dawn a clear understanding of the fundamental idea in redemption in addition to mere apprehension of causative factors in life. It will be a task of the twentieth century to gain general acceptance of the concepts pertaining to Redemption, Deliverance and Reincarnation, among the external sciences. The position which man has himself assumed as expert and judge of the world does not represent reality; for he can only arrive at true concepts after he has freed himself from his present false ideas, risen to a higher standard of thought, and overcome those barriers which cause him to view all things in distorted and unreal form — such a consummation would be Perceptive-Redemption.

Moral-Redemption comes about when man feels that the position which he occupies in his relation to the world is not his veritable standing, and when he realizes that he must seek a path leading over those obstacles which tower above him, blocking the way to all things appertaining to his true place in life. Concepts of the soul's rebirth upon a higher plane, will yet be evolved from the wonders which come to light through the investigations of natural science, and the results of historical research. Man will then know, if he pictures the world as in a photographic image and conjures forth a vision of the scientific and historic progress of mankind, that this vision does not represent

the material world alone, for underlying all human advancement there is clear evidence of a mighty spiritual plan of earnest training and development. He will no longer believe that the world as depicted by science is a mere physical creation, for he will realize that God's laws are ever operative in such manner as to bring about his gradual unfoldment. If only natural science would extend its sphere of action beyond a mere portrayal of the perceptual world and rightly educate mankind, so that the human soul might break away from a position which is untenable, and rise to a state which would permit of its rebirth into a more exalted life — and if man could but know how glorious would then be the freedom from that restraint which ever hinders his upward progress, he would indeed have developed within himself those things fundamental to a true world concept of the Christ-Impulse. He would realize that he has power to look back into the grey mists of the past, to a period to which we have often referred, when his true being dwelt in a purely spiritual realm, later to descend into the material world that he might there of his own effort further his growth and advancement. Then would mankind understand the reason why it became imperative, that at a certain definite period in earthly progress a complete change of thought, a reversal of ideas, be brought about; he would know that it was in order that all might be empowered to tear themselves away from those false deceptive material concepts, which have entered so deeply into man's consciousness. It is the Christ-Impulse which has checked man's fall, and has saved humanity from being utterly immersed in those things which are but of the material world [and have neither value nor reality].

With respect to the evolution of humanity, The Christ is to be regarded objectively as the [Divine Principle] which is the source of our experience of a sacred power and quality entering the soul when reborn, and freed of all those primal transgressive tendencies which seek to find expression when man is associated with external earthly progress. It is this most holy essence, flowing in upon the world, which is indeed that manifestation we know as The Christ.

If the twentieth century would but regard the glorious realities of man's inner life in a serious light it would understand the Christ-Event, and no more be in conflict with the concept and verity of those happenings which take place during the soul's rebirth into a higher sphere. Spiritual Science would then prove that the same actual

principles underlie all historic progress and development, as obtained in the case of external natural phenomena and occurrences. With regard to man's ideas concerning the cosmos, he has fallen into that very error which finds expression in the words of Schopenhauer: — 'The world is my own conception.' This statement implies that we are surrounded by a universe of colour, sound, and so forth, dependent entirely upon the action of the eye and other sense organs for its being. But if we seek to comprehend the world in its totality, it is not true to say: — 'All colour has existence only in virtue of the physical constitution of the eye.' For the organ of sight would not be there, if the light had not first conjured it into being. If, on the one hand, it is true that the sensation of light be determined by the eye's structure, then, on the other hand, it is equally true that the eye has been created by the light through the sun's action. Both of these verities must therefore be involved in one incomprehensible reality. Thus do we realize the truth underlying Goethe's words, when he says: —

'The eye must thank the light for its being.'

From animal matter the light has brought forth a corresponding instrument suitable to receive its impressions. Thus has the eye formed itself in the light, so that it may be sensible of its touch in order that the illumination which is within may meet and blend with the rays which come from without. Even as the eye has been fashioned through the light's action, and apprehension of the latter comes through the agency of this organ of vision, so was the fulfilment of man's inner Christ-Experience and rebirth of soul, brought about by that supreme Christ-Event — The Mystery of Golgatha.

Spiritual Science tells us that before the advent of the Christ-Impulse, such inner experience could occur only under the stimulus of an external influence wrought through the agency of the mysteries, and not as is now the case, through a form of self-initiation induced within man's very being.

There is a certain similarity between the relation of the colours and the light waves to the eye, and the profound mystery of the inner Christ-Experience; for as the eye apprehends the bright radiance of

the light, so in man's deepest being does he become conscious of the Divine Essence — The Christ. That his soul can rise up, and of its own effort transcend all previous limitations, is now possible because the resplendent sun — that grand Mystery of Golgotha — has shed its glorious rays upon the world's history. If it were not for that supreme objective event, and the objective Christ, there could be no such mysterious subjective inner experience as will enter into the life of mankind during the twentieth century, to be regarded earnestly and from a truly scientific stand-point.

The twentieth century will see the dawn of those conditions necessary to a veritable understanding of the Christ-Impulse. It will be proved how absolute was its reality as a Divine centre of spiritual radiance, shining forth with a light which awakens an inner realization of that great truth reflected in Goethe's words: —

*'Who overcomes himself, doth conquer that dread power
Which holds all beings closely bound —'*

Now, because of that spiritual bond between man's latent capacity to overcome self, The Mystery of Golgotha, and the glorious Christ-Impulse, it follows that only by thus conquering can man know his being as it truly is, and knowing, he will henceforth regard his earthly nature as a quality from which he must be wholly freed. Further, he will realize that the attainment of a true standard of conduct and all genuine cognition and discernment can alone come to one who has sought and found redemption. It will be through an understanding of inner salvation that mankind will at last learn the true meaning of the concept of redemption as related to life's historic evolution.

Finally, we would say, that during the twentieth century there will spread abroad a great illumination which will bring to humanity a clear comprehension of the Christ-Impulse, and this new knowledge will be in complete accord with the significance of Goethe's fuller message: —

*'Who overcomes himself, doth conquer that dread power
Which holds all beings closely bound — and he shall rise.
First dawns the glorious truth in that glad hour;
That truth by which, through Christ, mankind shall gain
God's prize.'*

Notes for this lecture:

1. See lecture on Moses; footnote 2.
2. What is here implied is that the longing to be at one with the Christ Spirit which came into the world through Jesus of Nazareth, should be so intense that each of His disciples must be ready to sacrifice all ties of human love so that he may devote his life and being to the absolute service of THE CHRIST Who manifests within. Judging from the context the word 'Hate' which is in Luke xiv, 26, would appear to be of doubtful origin. [Ed.]



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