

The Lectures of Rudolf Steiner

Concerning the Publication of a Pamphlet by an Evangelical Theologian

GA 255b

Preface

This lecture was translated using the [DeepL](#) and [Google](#) translators and [dict.cc](#), an online English-German dictionary. Much care has been taken to ensure as much accuracy as possible. I translated each paragraph independent of the surrounding content and made 1-1 comparisons of each translator. Where the translation in each output was questionable, I broke the paragraph down into sentences and sometimes phrases or single words (as you can see in the notes, which are mine).

Where certain phrases or sentences could not be resolved to clarity by the above means, I took liberties through my experience with Dr. Steiner's lectures and books i.e. his translated works to contemplate what he meant to say and made appropriate edits or insertions. These I have demarcated [in brackets]. Where I could not comfortably resolve a question of the translated phrase, I left it 'as is.'

The title of this lecture was fashioned by me.

This lecture is a wonderful example of how Dr. Steiner, when he felt it necessary, defended with balance, conviction and precision the criticisms by other "learned" types of his Anthroposophy. The entirety of [GA 255b](#) deals specifically with the opponents of Anthroposophy and to date (September 2023) these lectures are not available in English (excepting, of course, this lecture of November 16, 1919).

It is my opinion (only) that a lecture like this, concerning the defense of his work, is important to understand in light of all that Dr. Steiner accomplished for humanity in such a short lifetime. Not only did 'herr Doktor' exhibit incredible energy and stamina in all he sought to accomplish, he also stood firm in the defense of his work. I am personally indebted to him for how what he left us has changed my life.

-anthony

Hostilities Against Anthroposophy

Dornach, 16. November 1919
(Five days after the end of World War One)

My dear friends! The last considerations will have drawn your attention to the position which spiritual-scientific cognition has to take in the spiritual development of mankind. There is much to be said about this question; we will have to talk about it in the near future. However, it is sometimes necessary to point out the obstacles that come from the spiritual life of the present against what must be done in the interest of the further development of mankind. And so, in today's discussions — by picking out, I would like to say, typical things — I will have to acquaint you with such thoughts as are quite common today against the spiritual science meant here. In doing so, I will try to characterize for you the nature of such inhibiting thoughts.

It is already the case that, since spiritual science has been given more consideration by this or that side in recent times, the voices are also increasing which aim not only to put everything possible in the way of this spiritual science, but also to trample it underfoot, so to speak. You only have to consider that a spiritual movement in our time, as long as one has the possibility to call it a sect, is little contested. However, it would be a great convenience on our part if we were to think about what inhibitions arise today also in the same way as we were accustomed to think in the time when this spiritual science was practiced in smaller circles as if it were sectarian. Sectarianism has never been to my own taste; but in view of the habits of thought and feeling and will of the present day, it is extremely difficult to get out of sectarianism, because it is almost a matter of course that the individual seeks points of contact for the progress and development of his soul where he can find them out of spiritual knowledge. But then, of course, comes the outer life, in which one fears nothing so much as the possibility of bumping into something here or there, and then, to a large extent, the will that has been fought out in the quiet chamber of the soul fades away when it is a question of coming out in public.

There are so many opposing views written today that I can only pick out a few typical ones, and I am referring to a brochure that has just been published, "Rudolf Steiner as Philosopher and Theosophist", by a professor in Tübingen, Dr. Friedrich Traub, who has formed his opposing remarks from the evangelical-Protestant feeling of the present. The peculiarity that confronts us with such things in the present is something that can be linked to considerations that have been cultivated here by me in the last time and also in these days. It must be remembered again and again that a really prosperous cultivation of a spiritual-scientific movement absolutely requires the acquisition of a completely unclouded sense of truth and a conscientious pursuit of truth in the contemplation and treatment of the things of the physical world. That "wisdom can be sought only in truth", my dear friends, should not be an insubstantial motto of our movement, it should point to something quite essential.

Now it is a peculiarity of our time, first of all, that people tend very easily to retouch^[1] what happens, to retouch it in some way. There is certainly a lot of unconsciousness in such retouching, but the one who strives for truthfulness towards things must also try to eliminate unconscious retouching from his life. It is a question of the fact that when one remembers things, one must strive to recall them in their true form. It is so strange how even in our circles it happens again and again — it must be said — that things are told, things of the ordinary physical plan, which one can then pursue and there is nothing at all about them, which completely vanish into thin air. These are things that really should be taken with a greater seriousness than they are commonly taken. Then, however, it is a question of observing certain things in the intercourse of people among themselves, which are necessary if social life is not to flow into absurdity altogether.

You see, some time ago there had to be a severe reprimand in Stuttgart — Dr. Unger did that at the time — that a theologian gave a lecture about my anthroposophy and mixed a lot of personal things into this lecture. Theologians should actually be people with a sense of truth. This personal information was borrowed almost completely from the brochure of the well-known ex-anthroposophist — one is used to such word formations today — Max Seiling. Well, the theologian in question, who wants to be a researcher, i.e. a scientist, said, among other things, that these things have not yet been refuted in public. — Well, my dear friends, if you wanted to disprove everything that comes from such a side, it would be a work that would be equal to boys throwing dirt at you in the street and then you would get into a scuffle with the boys, wouldn't it. So, too, regarding the rebuttal. But it is up to the testimony of a man who wants to be a scientist to reprove the following.

The person who claims something has the obligation to follow up the sources of the evidence, i.e. not simply to repeat it, but to check the sources first. For example, where would you get in historical research if you considered everything you read up somewhere as real history and didn't feel obliged to really check the truthfulness of the sources. It is not the one who is thrown at that has the obligation to refute the allegations, but the one who repeats them, who uses them to characterize them, would have the obligation to investigate such a thing before repeating it. And this gentleman, who is also allowed to call himself a university professor in external social life, must be made to understand that such a person who works scientifically without examining the sources documents himself before the world by this fact in such a way that he can never be taken seriously scientifically in the future, with respect to anything at all.

You see, such things have to be said so decidedly today because these things should be pursued in public, because people really have to be tested today for their impulse to tell the truth. One would have to investigate whether anyone who is in public life takes the truth seriously or not, that is, whether he feels obliged to use the sources of truth for everything he claims to consider. It is not enough for someone to say they are saying something in good faith; this belief is worth nothing for the assertion of a public judgement. Only the scrupulous examination to which anyone who makes any assertion is obliged is of value. If one got used to this in private, personal life, it would not be able to occur in such a context as the one I have characterized. And when it does, it's a symptom that in everyday life today it's common practice to make blind claims about something, without scrupulously sticking to checking the sources for any claim. This is something that needs to be said quite generally.

Well, my dear friends, I shall have to begin with something that seems extraordinarily trivial, with something that, for my sake, many of you might consider trivial and say: Well, things like that don't really matter, little mistakes like that, you have to forgive them. — Nevertheless, it is precisely the — I would like to say — unscrupulous way in which someone often deals with small things that shows how he deals with big things. You see, the pamphlet I was talking about that says in the introduction, in the foreword:

This document — originally a lecture at the course organized by the Evangelical Union and held in Tübingen in August 1919 — endeavors to describe and assess Steiner's world of ideas as clearly and objectively as possible.

— this writing also contains some biographical information, and this biographical information begins with:

Steiner was born in 1861 in the Hungarian border town of Kraljewitz.

Well, my dear friends, if the man were to open any handbook — which he would be obliged to do — and go to Kraljevec on Mura Island in Hungary, he would find that it is an appalling little dirt hole^[2] of a hamlet we are talking about. All you have to do is look it up. You may find it insignificant and trivial, but in research it depends on accuracy, in research it depends on exact love of truth, and if someone does such things in trifles and does not feel obliged to research the truth, there is really already nothing to be given to his trifles. Then it goes on:

But he is still not Hungarian, but German-Austrian

And so on. Then it says:

The intellectual atmosphere in which he grew up is that of an enlightened Catholicism, which explains why he was inwardly distant from the ideas of German Protestantism.

Well, my dear friends, where did the man get that? He couldn't have obtained it from a reasonable source, because I truly did not grow up within an enlightened Catholicism, but grew up without Catholicism, even without enlightened Catholicism, in fact in a way of thinking which corresponds quite well to — I would like to say — the most radical scientific way of thinking of the sixties and seventies of the last century. One would like to believe that such a man knows nothing at all about what happened in the last third of the last century, otherwise he would not be able to find anything of enlightened Catholicism in my writings. Then just one more sentence of this sort:

He studied natural science and mathematics in Graz and Vienna and later switched to philosophy.

My dear friends, I was in Graz for the first time at Hamerling's funeral in 1889, long after I had finished all my philosophical studies. I have never seen the Graz University or a Graz college from the inside.

You may find all this, as I said, trivial, you may say that these are such small oversights that one can forgive. No, my dear friends, one cannot treat the one who wants to be a researcher in this way, but one must look at the exact truth. If someone claims such things out of I don't know what kind of imagination, then one must also be clear about the fact that there is actually not much to hold on to from what he otherwise brings forward.

But I've now studied what the man could have actually thought, how he could have found out that I had studied in Graz — I studied in Vienna — how does he come up with something like that?

Yes, you see, my dear friends, if you imagine: here is the Styrian Mura, so here is the Mura Island, Großmurschen, there is the very small village Kraljevec, Csaktornya is in front of it, then Kottori. Well, if here is Graz, here is about Vienna. Now the man said: How did Steiner come from Kraljevec to Vienna? Of course via Graz (see Figure 1). — There seems to me to be no other possibility to assert these things. But you see from this, my dear friends, how it actually stands with the way of thinking of [one] who may call himself a researcher out of our social circumstances.

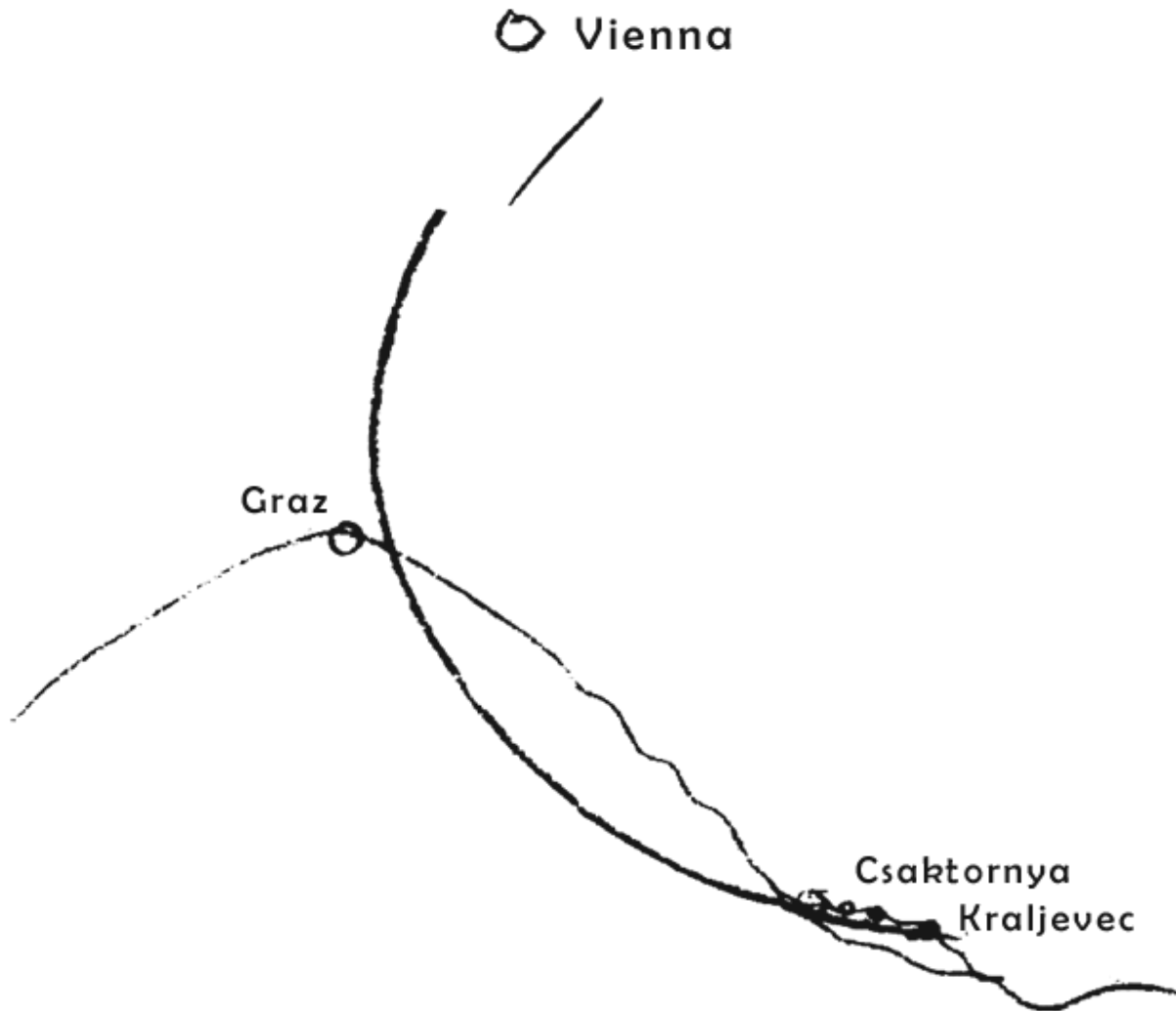


Figure 1

Traub's brochure is divided into two parts. The first part deals with "Steiner's Philosophy", the second with "Steiner's Theosophy". Well, one has not exactly reason to believe after the experiences of life that Protestant theologians understand much about philosophy on average; but if someone writes about it and makes the claim to be taken seriously at least in theology, then there should be the possibility with him, when he writes about the "philosophy" of a personality, to touch at least the main thing somehow; it should be somehow emphasized what is essentially important. The whole thing, how he treats my philosophy here, is basically first a statement that some witty remarks are in my "Philosophy of Freedom", but then it culminates in the following sentence, which is written there:

But then there are also parts that are quite obscure and that leave the reader perplexed.

I believe it in the case of the pastor or professor Traub that he is helpless in the face of many things; however, it seems to me that it would be his duty in this respect to consider whether the helplessness could not come from his state of mind. After all, what the good Lichtenberg said a long time ago still applies today: If a book and a head collide and it sounds hollow, it is not necessarily the book that is to blame.

Now you see, if one stoops so far as to say:

So there is a conceptual ambiguity here with Steiner, which is fatal for the justification of his point of view.

— he would at least have to try to somehow grasp the point of view that is important. Perhaps it could have helped Mr. Traub quite a bit if he had made an effort to follow things conscientiously. However, among the writings he has read for the characterization of my philosophy, he only cites the "Philosophy of Freedom" and "World and Life Views in the 19th Century" from 1901; he mentions these books, thus already not "Truth and Science", which could have helped him very well not to face the "Philosophy of Freedom" quite so helplessly.

But the main point of the matter — it's as if Pastor Traub were really at a loss about the matter — to find out this main point, that would be the most important thing. This central point is that both in my book "Truth and Science" and in my book "The Philosophy of Freedom" a consciously anti-Kantian point of view was formulated clearly and unequivocally. And what is important here is that I have shown that one cannot face the physical outside world in the way Kant and all his followers did, so that one simply accepts it and asks questions : Is it now possible to penetrate deeper into them or not? — What I wanted to show at the beginning of my career as a writer was that the outer sensory world, as it presents itself to us, is a mere illusion, is therefore half a reality, because we were not born into the world in the way that our relationship to the outside world is a finished one, but that our relationship to the outside world is one that we ourselves have to complete when we think about the world, when we experience this or that about the world appropriately. So when we acquire knowledge about the world in the broadest sense, only then do we come to reality.

That is the fundamental error of philosophizing in the 19th century, that the world of the senses is always simply taken as finished. One has not become aware that the human being belongs to true reality, that what occurs in human beings in the form of thoughts separates itself from reality when the human being is born into reality, that reality is at first hidden, so that it confronts us as an illusory reality; and only when we penetrate this illusory reality with that which can come to life in us, do we have the full reality before us. With this, however, everything would be characterized philosophically from the outset, from the point of view of a certain theory of cognition, which in turn would later form the basis of my anthroposophy. For it has been attempted from the beginning to prove that the world of the senses is not a reality, but that it is an illusory reality, to which must first be added that which man brings to it, which lights up in his inner being and which he then works out. The whole of Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy basically assumes that one is looking at a finished reality and that one can then ask the question: Can one then recognize this finished reality or can one not recognize it? — But it is not a finished reality, it is only half a reality, and the whole of reality only comes about when the human being comes along and pours into reality what is dawning in his innermost being. If one were to characterize in this way what is given in my "Truth and Science" and what then leads over from this "Truth and Science" to the "Philosophy of Freedom", then one would see that the thinking which is necessary to establish anthroposophy has already been characterized philosophically by me according to its core points.

It is interesting that Traub says:

Anyone who speaks of moral freedom cannot, one would think, do so without taking a position on the fundamental question of "freedom and causal natural necessity". There is as good as nothing about this question in this whole book.

With this interjection "as good as" you can of course mean anything. But if one disregards it, then one would like to ask: Did the man open the book first in the middle and read only from the middle to the end? In the first chapter, in connection with Spinoza, there is talk about how one has to understand the idea of freedom in contrast to natural causality. To the extent that it is deemed necessary within such a book, this very question is the starting point. Thinking like that of Professor Traub overlooks this however.

Concerning the "Riddles of Philosophy" you only need to read what I said at the beginning of that admittedly daring introductory chapter, that it was necessary to let the whole course of the philosophy of mankind work on you, in order to write these few pages, which are to characterize the course of the philosophical thinking of mankind in the period of seven to eight centuries. If you read this, then you will ask yourself: What does such a gentleman actually want, when he then says:

But these points of view...

— he means those developed in these pages —

... are so indeterminate and fluid, and coincide so little with the content they are meant to summarize, that one gets the impression of a schema that has been arbitrarily imposed on the content, not of an order that grows organically out of the material.

This is precisely what has been shown, how the order grows organically out of the material, and every single chapter gives us the opportunity to show how what he calls a schema grows out of the real empirical consideration of the material. You can say anything for such people — they then say everything possible that comes to mind at the moment.

But the most beautiful things in this writing, my dear friends, are sentences like this one:

Therefore, it would have been of the greatest importance if he had formed a clear and unambiguous concept of science in his philosophical period. Is spiritual science a factual science like natural science and history? Is it a standard science like logic, ethics, aesthetics? Or in what other sense is it a science? Nowhere does one receive satisfactory information about this.

Well, my dear friends, what is the basis of such a sentence? First of all, the gentleman in question has the deep-rooted concepts of factual science and standard science in his head. At least that's what he learned from his compendia in the course of his life, that there are norm sciences and factual sciences. The fact that these old concepts are crumbling in relation to spiritual science is something he should first learn. But he judges what he should find his way into according to the concepts he has acquired. No wonder they don't fit into these terms.

For example, the following is cute. He says:

A third example. For Steiner, all the "riddles of philosophy" ultimately boil down to one thing: soul and world. How must the world be conceived so that the soul has space in it? But this problem is rather vague. The term "soul" is ambiguous. Is the soul meant as the psychological, the epistemological, the ethical-religious subject?

Firstly, I would like to know from where he took this problem. Yes, my dear friends, soul is meant as soul, as the real soul. The fact that in the course of time considerations have been made in the compendia, which can be called epistemological, which can be called psychological or which can be called ethical-religious, does not imply the nonsense that one should say: I consider the relation of the ethical-religious soul to the world, or I consider the relation of the epistemological soul to the world, or I consider the relation of the psychological soul to the world. It is very difficult, you see: If one wanted to refute such stuff, one would have to deal with something that one can touch. But you can't actually touch such things, they flutter away under your hands.

Of course, the evangelical theologian is most interested in what I thought about the concept of God at the time when my philosophical writings were written. Now, my dear friends, when one writes something, it is not a matter of writing about everything possible, from all possible points of view, but of writing from the points of view that are just in question according to the content of the writing in question. I never had occasion in these times, in which my "Philosophy of Freedom" and also the earlier and some later ones were written, to deal in any way with the theological question about God and the world. So it is a strange criticism if one does not see that in such a context as the "Philosophy of Freedom" is, neither a personal nor a super-personal God can be found. It is about the treatment of matter, about the treatment of substance.

Now you see, people who don't care about the main things are naturally particularly well fed — because Traub missed the really important thing, the definition of man's relationship to reality, so far that he didn't even see this point, that he hasn't even the slightest idea that that's the main thing — it's always a feast when secondary things can be emphasized. It should come as no surprise to anyone that from the point of view, also from the anthroposophical point of view, from which I have to start, only one harsh judgment can be made about everything that is confessed Christianity of one shade or another in the present, that a harsh Judgment must be made about everything that is vague notions of the hereafter. For those who understand the nerve of anthroposophy, this core of anthroposophy shines back on what I had to assert philosophically.

The point is that, no matter how far one penetrates into the spiritual worlds, one has to imagine this world as a unified world, so that everything that is spirit must be sought at the same time in material existence. The greatest damage has happened in our more recent development of the world view of mankind because people have repeatedly wanted to point out what is direct experience to an indefinite, vague hereafter. This hereafter is supposed to become a [type of] this world, something really present here, through spiritual contemplation. Therefore I had to epistemologically fight against

all vague notions of the hereafter and in particular had to put aside everything that from the religious denominations of the present time and again wants to cultivate this vague notion of the hereafter. Precisely in order to gradually ascend to a real understanding of Christ, I had to present everything that actually obscures the real Christ impulse as something to be rejected by future humanity.

For it must be clear that the manner in which a distinction is made between revelation and external science in modern times, under the protection of theological tendencies in particular, is of great harm to our spiritual development. It is therefore not surprising that ordinary Christianity was rejected by me during my philosophical period, for ordinary Christianity is to be rejected precisely for the sake of Christ himself. But for those people who cling to words everywhere, who never look at things in context but always cling to words, it is easy for them to discover apparent contradictions that have been taken out of context. Of course, this is extremely easy for those who never care about the words, but always about the matter.

And so you can take up a sentence like the one I said in 1898:

We want to be fighters for our Gospel, so that in the coming century a new generation may arise that knows how to live, satisfied, serene and proud, without Christianity, without a view of the hereafter.

Or a little earlier:

It is only worthy of man that he seeks the truth himself, that neither experience nor revelation should guide him. Once this has been thoroughly recognized, then the revealed religions will have run their course.

This is something, my dear friends, which of course, if you take the literal content of it, can very easily, terribly easily, lead to the construction of contradictions. The conscientious individual would, of course, examine the context in which these words were used. For the pastor or professor Traub, however, this is something dangerous, because his Christianity, his belief in the hereafter is definitely affected.

You see, with this I have approximately demonstrated to you the wealth of thoughts with which my philosophy is characterized by Professor Traub. For other thoughts are not to be found much in the writing. Everything that matters is overlooked. That I speak of intuitive thinking in the "Philosophy of Freedom" is indeed noticed by Professor Traub, but he cannot imagine anything under intuitive thinking, because he finds that thinking is merely formal in nature, that is, it is actually empty. Yes, my dear friends, it is impossible to talk to such a person, because he has not acquired the simplest concepts, which one could gain, for example, in mathematics right at the beginning, because if they give mathematics only a formal, not a substantial thinking, then I would like to know how one could ever understand something like the Pythagorean theorem. If one wanted to take all content from experience, one would never understand something like the Pythagorean theorem, which presupposes that a thinking full of content meets the outer sense experience, which then, so to speak, comes along with the intuitive thinking, as it is characterized in the "Philosophy of Freedom". That then already the development of this thinking, the ascent of this thinking into the spiritual world is given, that would be something to be emphasized when characterizing my philosophy. Well, after all, one cannot presuppose that such a gentleman will find that out.

Then he goes on to characterize what he calls "Steiner's theosophy." He has read "How does one acquire knowledge of the higher worlds?". In it he first finds worthy of recognition some ethical principles that are given. But then he indulges himself, as is actually a matter of course with him, according to his whole attitude, then he indulges himself in it — yes, how shall I put it? — not to understand and to emphasize sharply that he does not understand what astral body, life spirit, etheric body and so on is.

It is difficult, ...

— he says literally —

... to get a reasonably understandable picture of these components of the human being.

Well, he agrees with me that I demand of anyone who has common sense that he should be able to examine things from the standpoint of common sense. Of course, Professor Traub has common sense — according to his own opinion. But, my dear friends, it is a peculiar way of approaching such things with his thoughts when he finds, for example, in "Theosophy" that there is often talk of the number seven, and when he then says:

Should the regularly recurring number seven really be "seen" — this critical question cannot be suppressed even here in the presentation? Can one rid oneself of the suspicion that one is looking at an artificial scheme that is arbitrarily grafted onto things?

If he understood anything, he would know that it is no more an artificial scheme than if one looks at the rainbow and says there are seven colors in it, or if one looks at the tone scale and says there are seven tones in it and the octave is the repetition of the prime and so on. But, my dear friends, not even in a positive sense is such a thing approached by him, but the question is simply raised:

Can one rid oneself of the suspicion that one is looking at an artificial scheme that is arbitrarily grafted onto things?

Why then such a question, if one does not go into it to examine the matter! The whole methodology is something quite impossible.

I would not speak so harshly about this book, my dear friends, because in my opinion, the author's limitations are to blame for the way the book is, not exactly the bad will — that is clear from the content. But according to the expressions that the man uses, it is already justified that one uses equally strong expressions. I will take care not to use stronger expressions than those used in the book against my "Philosophy" and my "Theosophy". The way of thinking of this gentleman is indeed a very peculiar one. You see, he has understood how I, for a certain affirmation — you know, I try to affirm everything in the most different ways — how I, for a certain affirmation of the idea of

reincarnation, of the idea of the repeated earth lives, reach for such an example as Schiller, who, with his genius, did not, after all, realize everything that he carried in himself, what he carried in himself from father, mother, grandfather, grandmother and so on, and that if one does not want to assume that those qualities which Schiller could not have inherited with his blood were born out of nothing, one comes back to a kind of earlier existence.

You know I don't present such things as evidence, but one collects these things because they can be combined to prove something. Yes, how does Professor Traub deal with this example? He says:

In earlier times there must have been a soul related to the poet, a prehistoric Schiller, so to speak, who died unnoticed and unrecognized and then embodied himself in the historical Schiller in 1759. Admittedly — to include this critical remark right here — a hair-raising logic! Otherwise the explanation consists in tracing the unknown back to the known. Here, however, the unknown, Schiller's becoming, would be traced back to something even more unknown, the reincarnation of a prehistoric Schiller. It's not logic, it's gimmick.

My dear friends! One can declaim for a long time that explanations consist in tracing back the unknown to the known. Well, my dear friends, I would like to know first how one does that. How does one get to the unknown? It must first become known; but then one would at the most — if one were to trace the unknown, the apparently unknown, which must first become known — then one would at the most have to trace the known back to the known! So, the "hair-raising logic" seems to me to lie more on the other side. But if this is also often declaimed, that one should trace back the unknown to the known, in order to give explanations, then I would like to ask first: Why does one explain this at all? One could stop at the known. But in truth it is not so. Just go through all the explanations that are offered. Explanations are always based on the search for something that is not in front of us for what we have in front of us. In practice, the exact opposite of what is methodically demanded here by Professor Traub is true. The fact that the old objections come up again, that one does not remember earlier incarnations, is not surprising, but it is interesting that it is written here:

The return to this earthly world is said to be necessary for man to enable him in a future life to right the wrongs he has done to his fellow men in the present life. But, one has to ask, how is he supposed to attack that? He doesn't even know which of his current fellow human beings he hurt in a previous life.

Yes, my dear friends, I have certainly never said anything similar, even remotely similar, about the average person. But it is really not at all a question of whether a person A, who is standing there in the present and facing a person B, whether he now says to himself: This person B, I lived with him in the year 202 AD; I did him an injustice, now I have to do this and that to make things right. — With this presupposition, Herr Professor Traub can only imagine that karma, that fate, takes place. Yes, my dear friends, but it is not at all important that person A makes these observations, because karma is set up in such a way that he makes up for what he did wrong in the previous life, from what was in his of the soul, even without knowing it, without first reflecting on it. The only thing that has to be said is: When Professor Traub says he doesn't know which of his current fellow human beings he hurt in a previous life and how he can make amends — he does it but he just does it without his knowing it. Such gentlemen completely lack the most obvious thoughts.

Well, my dear friends, what is one to do with such a claim? Of course one can believe that this evangelical gentleman does not like explanations like the one I gave about a passage in the Bible: "Whoever eats my bread tramples me underfoot" or something similar. He expressly affirms that he cannot imagine anything at all under the "spirit of the center" of the earth. But then comes a series of extraordinarily cute remarks. You see, I have emphasized from various points of view that the incarnation of the Christ Being in the man Jesus of Nazareth is not just an earthly but a cosmic event. So what happened, be it in the great historical context, be it in the soul of the man Christ-Jesus, is not to be regarded merely as an earthly, telluric event, but as an event that affects the cosmos. It is a matter of lifting the event of Golgotha out of the merely earthly sphere, into the world sphere, and I have emphasized this again and again in all possible variations.

Yes, my dear friends, after Professor Traub has been horrified by the two Jesus boys, which he is allowed to do, he comes to say the following cute sentence, which is too beautiful to be passed over:

According to Steiner, however, the death on the cross is a purely cosmic event. Anyone who could have followed the development of the earth from a distant planet through the millennia would have seen not only the physical but also the astral body of the earth, and this astral body would have shown the same lights, the same forms, the same colors for thousands of years. But at a certain moment that would have changed. "Other forms appeared, other lights and other colors shone — that was the moment when the blood flowed from the wounds of the Redeemer on Calvary. It was not a human but a cosmic event."

That's what I'm told, he even quotes that verbatim. But then he says:

Not a trace of an ethical appreciation of the death on the cross! The astral body of the earth shines with other lights and other colors, appears in other forms. The Christ-I, the sun regent, passes over to the earth, and in the spirit of the earth one now sees the sun-I, the Christ-I. Can these purely cosmic occurrences be added to the moral deeds of the historical Jesus? Aren't the two processes, the cosmic one and the ethical one, too heterogeneous to be regarded as parts of an example of addition? One could object that the ethical act of Jesus could be accompanied by cosmic effects, just as such are linked to the death of Christ in the Pauline epistles. But with Steiner it is not the case that one could distinguish between an ethical act and its cosmic effects. One hears nothing at all about an ethical act, but only about cosmic processes. But then the two interpretations of the death on the cross are mutually exclusive. This cannot be an ethical act and at the same time a purely cosmic event.

Yes, my dear friends, what am I to understand by that? That the event of Golgotha took place on earth is nowhere denied by me. I didn't say it happened on the sun or the moon. Well, it's a telluric event anyway. The fact that Traub reverses this into the assertion that I understand the event of Golgotha as a purely, that is, only a cosmic event — that is basically a strong act! From Kraljevec the way to Vienna goes through Graz! This is the contorted thinking in small, insignificant things. This twisted thinking, which one often doesn't want to find fault with in small, insignificant things, is

something that also shows up in big things. For anyone who feels obliged to conscientiously read what Professor Traub claims to have read will never be able to claim that I said that the Christ event was a only cosmic event.

Well, I can only single out a few. The description of Atlantis naturally causes him pain again, and he feels particularly badly touched when I say that the Atlanteans thought in pictures and that people now think in concepts.

The Atlantean thought in pictures. And when an image appeared before his soul, then he remembered so many similar images that he had already experienced. After that he established his judgement.

Professor Traub then says:

The Atlantean also judged in this way; but how a judgment without a concept is supposed to be possible remains obscure.

Yes, my dear friends, for straight thinking, concepts are formed after judgments. If one had to have concepts in order to judge, few judgments would be able to come about. So this is something that really shows a very crass philosophical ignorance.

Well, I don't want to talk about the fact that he can't understand what is spiritually similar to the sensation blue as I describe it; I also don't want to talk about the fact that he says:

A spiritual color is a contradiction in terms.

— because he constructs arbitrary concepts of a spiritual color. I only want to speak of the fact that it is said by me again and again that one can follow everything with common sense, even what is directly observed, if you just allow yourself to overcome comfort and, to a certain extent, observes that that which is written in "How does one attain knowledge of the higher worlds?" stands.

In a length that is striking for the brevity of the remaining statements, Professor Traub now explains that on the one hand faith in authority is demanded, on the other hand, however, one should examine oneself. In particular, he harshly rebukes when one says that, after all, other things in the world are also accepted in good faith, for example, that even people who have not been to America believe the American travelers that it looks like this there. — Well, of course it is cheap to say that in America, there also live people, animals, plants and so on, which one also knows from Europe. I don't want to dwell on that, I've talked about it many times; but I would like to draw your attention to the logic of this gentleman. On page 34 reads the cute sentence:

I can verify those truths learned in school.

— so he says.

Of course, most people will have no reason to do so; but the general possibility is there. I may have to become a historian, physicist, or chemist in order to be able to test independently. I cannot verify theosophical truths unless I am clairvoyant, I can only control them in negative terms.

That is literally true; to test a chemical truth one must want to make up his mind to become a chemist. There is nothing wrong with that. But Professor Traub continues:

On the other hand, I cannot verify the theosophical truths unless I am clairvoyant.

Yes, you see, of course I cannot verify theosophical truths unless I want to become a clairvoyant, just as one cannot verify chemical truths without becoming a chemist; he himself cites this as proof. But while he considers it his right to become a chemist if he wants to verify chemical truths, he certainly does not want to become what one has to become to verify theosophical truths. Strangely enough, he turns out to be extraordinarily demanding on this side. After all, the fact that one or the other can check and then confirm is not enough for Professor Traub. He says:

It is not enough for theosophists to say that the results of spiritual scientific research have already been verified by a large number of people. The question is whether they have been checked by me or can be checked, and apart from the formal-logical criticism I have to answer in the negative.

That's logic, isn't it! But this logic increases, my dear friends. After all, he says, when it comes to chemical truths, ordinary scientific truths, it doesn't matter that everyone checks them, because they aren't as important as spiritual ones, and historical truths aren't that important either. And there is the following cute sentence again:

On the contrary, we must demand that individuals stand up for themselves when it comes to questions of world view and do not simply accept what others tell them to do. If I ever found myself in a position where I had to risk something big on a truth learned in school — for example, on the fact that Alexander the Great destroyed the Persian Empire or that Hannibal crossed the Alps — I would come to the complete conviction that there is no life in such a truth or bliss, I would no longer content myself with accepting someone else's authority, but would do everything to gain independent certainty about those things.

Yes, I would like to know how he actually does it, I would like to know how he wants to gain independent certainty about the event of his own birth, which is certainly also extremely important for his earthly life! So these things are written out of the mere rattling of words, which are by no means accompanied by any [logical] thoughts.

From our current circumstances, these are youth educators! This raises the issue of judging everything possible.

Now I would like to read you a sentence of mine, my dear friends, which you will know, which I am not reading here for any personal reason, but because something quite peculiarly strange appears to me in the way Professor Traub cites the sentence:

In its entirety, spiritual science will not intervene directly in any religious creed, in the field of any religious creed. It can never want to create a religion. Therefore, in the circles of the spiritual-scientific world view, the most diverse religious denominations will be able to live together in deepest peace and fullest harmony and strive for knowledge of the spiritual. ... Nobody needs to be turned away from their religious life by spiritual science in any way. Therefore one cannot say that spiritual science as such is a religious confession. It neither wants to create a religious confession, nor does it want to change people in any way with regard to what they have as their religious confession. Nevertheless, it seems as if people were thinking about the religion of the anthroposophists. In truth, one cannot speak in such a way, because all religious denominations are represented within the Anthroposophical Society, and none of them will be prevented from practicing their religious denomination in the fullest, most comprehensive and most intensive way.

These sentences are from me. They are in "The task of spiritual science and its construction in Dornach". Professor Traub quotes them, and he concludes with the following sentence. I will read it out, I do not know whether I am clever enough to recall the following sentence in the right way. He concludes with the sentence:

These sentences, which at the same time give a certain impression of Steiner's ugly and un-German style, reveal his opinion: Anthroposophy as such is not a religion.

Yes, I have to admit that I wanted to judge the ugly style of Traub's writing — well, I don't want to pass judgment on it, because after all it's a matter of taste, but when I've read so much criticism about [my style of writing] and then see that judgments are formed [of it] in such a way, then that seems almost as irrelevant to me as the content.

Now I just want to acquaint you with a few sentences from the last part of the book, which speaks of the relationship between Anthroposophy and Christianity. It says:

2. Christianity is a historical religion. Theosophy has no history. The first sentence cannot be justified here, only explained. It means not only that Christianity has a history and goes through a historical development, but also that its validity as truth is bound to history. If one deletes the evangelical history, the whole of Christianity is left up in the air. And what about the other statement that theosophy has no history? Of course he does not want to say that theosophy has no history. It has a very long history. They are all old acquaintances that one encounters when one looks around in the theosophical literature. What is Steiner's Christology but a new form of Gnostic Christology? Also his anthropology and cosmology have their parallels in the history of religious and philosophical thinking. Especially the doctrine of reincarnation and the idea of transmigration of souls, which is not

identical with it, but related to it, run through the history of religions in always new forms. In this sense also theosophy has its history. It is without history insofar as it does not need history to substantiate its conviction of truth.

Yes, I must say that one's mind could stand still with such a remark: A Protestant theologian who claims that the truth of Christianity is based only on history, that Christianity does not contain eternal truths! It is impossible to find out what the contradiction is supposed to consist of. He himself explains that after all, theosophy also arose historically. But he attaches great importance to the fact that theosophy endeavors — although it arose historically — to find truths without history, that is, eternal truths. Christianity is supposed to be just a historical thing. Traub writes:

The first sentence ...

— namely "Christianity is a historical religion" —

... cannot be justified here, only explained. It means not only that Christianity has a history and goes through a historical development, but also that its validity as truth is bound to history.

Yes, it is absolutely incomprehensible how such a sentence can be pronounced as something valid, [only] because it is pronounced as something valid. The person in question is a university professor, so he teaches with a certain authority. Isn't it true, these things are sufficiently characteristic of the corner from which those tones come that oppose the spiritual science.

It is particularly interesting for me, who always tries to reject everything that is overheated, who tries to present as calmly as possible, with a calm, scientific style, that I'm also accused of:

It was different with the great mystics of the past. To them one felt: "Take off your shoes; the ground you stand on is holy land." You don't have that feeling with Steiner. You don't feel the shudder of mystery here. It is as if the magic of mystery had been stripped from the afterlife. Hence the sober, dry tone inherent in Steiner's writings. They have none of the ravishing, gripping quality that one would expect from the prophet of a new worldview. When one considers this, it is impossible to overlook the contrast between Christianity and Anthroposophy. There the reverence for the mystery of the Eternal; here the understanding and sobriety of the one who discovered the secret.

Yes, my dear friends, I consciously refuse to speak in an overheated tone about anything unknown, for that is precisely what has a hypnotic effect on human souls.

Well, I have pointed out to you some typical things of what opposes the spiritual-scientific movement. We had to stop here, because next time^[3] I intend to go on to characterize what the attitude of that spiritual being to the human present and its culture actually is, which we call Michael, who again has become the spiritual world ruler since the end of the seventies of the last century.

Next time I have to characterize the whole metamorphosis of Michael's personality, from the way Michael was — that what is called the face of Yahweh — to his present position. So it was necessary for the stones that are thrown in the way of spiritual science to be characterized a little.

One can say: Firstly, in such a case there is the most terrible inaccuracy [in this pamphlet], secondly in such a case there is an inability to find out the crux of the matter in any way — and also the unscrupulous will to characterize things as it has been done here. Finally, the pamphlet summarizes the content of the criticism as follows:

Christianity is a historical religion...

— there is the sentence for the second time! —

... theosophy is without history. Christianity is essentially ethical, Anthroposophy is cosmically oriented. Christianity is a religion of mystery, Anthroposophy discovered the secret. Christianity is simple in its core, Anthroposophy is complicated and fantastic.

Yes, isn't it, much of what opposes anthroposophy today sails under this flag. But on what grounds it rests and where the verdict is to be directed if one wants to obtain a just, a dignified verdict, we had to draw attention to a typical case. I want to talk about the things just mentioned next Friday. We will then find ourselves here again at 7 o'clock for the lecture.

Addendum



I found the following excerpt in another lecture where Dr. Steiner references the above pamphlet. The lecture is titled "" and can be accessed on the [RSArchive](#). -anthony

In this description I have wished to show how necessary it is to throw light on the parallel between cosmic existence, historical existence and human existence, in order to arrive at a judgement of how Man has to relate to the cosmic movements. We have seen that if he places himself rightly, the result is not one astronomy, but *two*; a *solar* and a *lunar* astronomy. So too we have a human development of a *heathen* nature — natural science is still heathen — and a human development of a *Christian* nature. In our day many have the tendency to prevent these two streams, which have met on Earth in order to work together, from coming together.


Consider for instance, how the whole purport of a book such as that of Traub [*"Rudolf Steiner as Philosopher and Theosophist", by Friedrich Traub, Tübingen, 1919.] — the rest of the book has no meaning without this — consists in the assertion: 'Yes, Dr. Steiner wishes to unite the two streams, heathen and Christian. We will not let that happen. We want natural science to remain heathen, so that there may be no necessity to bring about anything in Christendom which may reconcile it with natural science.' of course, if Natural Science is allowed to be heathen, Christianity cannot unite with it. Then it can be said: 'Natural Science is carried on externally, materialistically; Christendom is founded on faith. The two must not be reconciled.' Christ however, truly did not appear on Earth in order that side by side with his Impulses the heathen impulse should increase in power; He came to

permeate the heathen impulse. The task of the present time is to unite what man would keep asunder — Knowledge and Faith — and this must come to pass. Therefore attention must be drawn to such things, as I have done in one of my recent public lectures. On the one side the Church has reached the conclusion that Cosmology is not to be admitted into Christology, and on the other hand a Cosmology is reached by the principle of the indestructibility of matter and force. [*The word "force" on this page is generally rendered "Energy" in English scientific writing (Indestructibility of Matter and Energy).] But if matter and force are regarded as indestructible and eternal, it leads to the treading under foot of all ideals. And then Christianity too is meaningless. Only when what constitutes matter and its laws is regarded as a transitory phenomenon, and when the Christ-Impulse becomes a seed of what will exist when matter and force no longer rule as they do now according to law but have died away, then alone will Christianity, and then alone will ethical ideals and human worth, have a true meaning. There are two great antitheses: The one arising from the final logical conclusion of heathenism — 'Matter and Force are immortal', and the other arising from Christianity — 'Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.'

Notes

1.  The German word "retuschieren" translates as "retouch" or "touch up" (using both DeepL and Google Translate), however, when looking at synonyms in English, I think what is most likely being emphasized here is a "rework" or "polishing" of history i.e. recorded history. It is far too easy to lie to oneself about oneself where difficult matters are of a concern. However to be honest, even brutally so, is the only means by which we can attain the truth—about ourselves, about life, about the world.
2.  "appalling little dirt hole"—"daß es ein entsetzliches kleines Dreckloch von Dörfchen ist" was translated in both Google and DeepL (in the context of the entire paragraph and sentence) as "it is an appalling little shithole of a hamlet" (Google) and "that it is a horrible little shithole of a village" (DeepL). Since the use of the word "shithole" is vastly uncharacteristic of Dr. Steiner in the hundreds if not thousands of pages of his lectures I have studied, I looked deeper into the word(s) as they stood alone.

The particular word of interest is "Dreckloch", which, translated alone, is "dirt hole" (hence my decided translation). Wondering why or how it was translated as "shithole", this is what I found: Going from English to German for the word "shithole", the word is "Drecksloch". The difference between the two is the presence of the letter "s".

3.  This lecture cycle is titled "The Mission of the Archangel Michael", GA 194, and is available in English [on the RSArchive](#).

Source: https://odysseetheater.org/GA/Buecher/GA_255b.pdf



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