

The Lectures of Rudolf Steiner

About the Transcripts of Lectures

Extract from *Rudolf Steiner, An Autobiography*, Chapter 35 pp. 386–388, 2nd Edition 1980, Steinerbooks, New York

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"The results of my anthroposophical work are, first, the books available to the general public; secondly, a great number of lecture-courses, originally regarded as private publications and sold only to members of the Theosophical (later Anthroposophical) Society. The courses consist of more or less accurate notes taken at my lectures, which for lack of time I have not been able to correct. I would have preferred the spoken word to remain the spoken word. But the members wished to have the courses printed for private circulation. Thus they came into existence. Had I been able to correct them the restriction: *for members only* would have been unnecessary from the beginning. As it is, the restriction was dropped more than a year ago.

"In my autobiography it is especially necessary to say a word about how my books for the general public on the one hand, and the privately printed courses on the other, belong within what I elaborated as Anthroposophy.

"Someone who wishes to trace my inner struggle and effort to present Anthroposophy in a way that is suitable for present-day consciousness must do so through the writings published for general distribution. In these I define my position in relation to the philosophical striving of the present. They contain what to my *spiritual sight* became ever more clearly defined, the edifice of Anthroposophy certainly incomplete in many ways.

"But another requirement arose, different from that of elaborating Anthroposophy and devoting myself solely to problems connected with imparting facts directly from the spiritual world to the general cultural life of today: the requirement of meeting fully the inner need and spiritual longing of the members.

"Especially strong were the requests to have light thrown by Anthroposophy upon the Gospels and the Bible in general. The members wished to have courses of lectures on these revelations bestowed upon mankind.

"In meeting this need through private lecture courses, another factor arose: at these lectures only members were present. They were familiar with basic content of Anthroposophy. I could address them as people advanced in anthroposophical knowledge. The approach I adopted in these lectures was not at all suitable for the written works intended primarily for the general public.

"In these private circles I could formulate what I had to say in a way I should have been *obliged* to modify had it been planned initially for the general public.

"Thus the public and the private publications are in fact two quite different things, built upon different foundations. The public writings are the direct result of my inner struggles and labours, whereas the privately printed material includes the inner struggle and labour of the members. I listened to the inner needs of the members, and my living experience of this determined the form of the lectures.

"However, nothing was ever said that was not solely the result of my direct experience of the growing content of Anthroposophy. There was never any question of concessions to the prejudices or the preferences of the members. Whoever reads these privately-printed lectures can take them to represent Anthroposophy in the fullest sense. Thus it was possible without hesitation — when the complaints in this direction became too persistent — to depart from the custom of circulating this material only among members. But it must be borne in mind that faulty passages occur in these lecture-reports not revised by myself.

"*The right to judge such private material* can of course, be conceded only to someone who has the prerequisite basis for such judgment. And in respect of most of this material it would mean *at least* knowledge of man and of the cosmos insofar as these have been presented in the light of Anthroposophy, and also knowledge of what exists as 'anthroposophical history' in what has been imparted from the spiritual world."

Source: wn.rudolfsteinerelib.org



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