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The Spiritual Guidance of Mankind

The Authorized English Translation

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PREFACE

In the following pages are reproduced the contents of some lectures delivered by me at Copenhagen in June last, in connection with the General Meeting of the Scandinavian Theosophical Society. What is here set forth was therefore spoken to an audience acquainted with occult science, or theosophy. A similar acquaintance is assumed in this work. It is throughout based on the foundations given in my books '*Theosophy*' and '*An Outline of Occult Science*.' To anyone taking up the present work who is unacquainted with these premises, it must needs appear the strange outpouring of mere fancy, but the above-named books point out the scientific basis of everything stated in this one.

I have completely rewritten the shorthand report of the lectures; nevertheless it has been my intention on publishing them, to preserve the character given in oral delivery. This is specially mentioned because it is in general my opinion that the form of work intended for reading should be quite different from that used in speaking. I have expressed this principle of mine in all my earlier writings, as far as they were intended for the press. If in this instance I have worked out my subject in closer connection with the spoken word, it is because I have reasons for allowing this work to appear at this juncture, and an adaptation completely in accordance with the above rule would take a great deal of time.

RUDOLF STEINER, Munich, August 20, 1911

LECTURE I

A man reflecting on his own nature soon becomes conscious that there is within him a second and more powerful self than the one bounded by his thoughts, his feelings, and the fully-conscious impulses of his will. He becomes aware that he is subject to that second self, as to a higher power. It is true that at first he will feel it to be a lower entity as compared with the one limited by his intelligent and fully-conscious soul, with its inclinations towards the Good and True. And at first he will strive to overcome that lower entity.

But closer self-examination may reveal something else about this second self. If we often, in the course of our lives, make a kind of survey of our acts and experiences, we make a singular discovery about ourselves. And the older we are, the more significant do we think that discovery. If we ask ourselves what we did or said at a particular period of our lives, it turns out that we have done very many things which are only really understood in later years. Seven or eight, or perhaps twenty years ago, we did certain things, and we know

quite well that only now, long afterwards, is our intellect ripe enough to understand what we did or said at that earlier period.

Many people do not make such discoveries about themselves, because they do not look for them. But it is extremely profitable frequently to hold such communion with one's own soul. For directly a man becomes aware that he has done things in former years which he is only now beginning to understand, that formerly his intellect was not ripe enough to understand them, — .at that moment, something like the following feeling arises in the soul: The man feels himself protected by a good power, which rules in the depths of his own being; he begins to have more and more confidence in the fact that really, in the highest sense of the word, he is not alone in the world, and that everything which he understands, and is consciously able to do, is after all but a small part of what he has really accomplished in the world.

If this observation is often made, it is possible to carry out in practical life something which is very easy to see theoretically. It is easy to see that we should not make much progress in life if we had to accomplish everything we have to do, in full consciousness, with our intelligence taking note of every circumstance affecting us. In order to see this theoretically, we have only to reflect as follows: In what period of his life does a human being perform those acts which are really most important as regards his own existence? When does he act most wisely for himself? He does this from about the time of his birth up to that period to which his memory goes back when in later life he survey his earthly existence. If he recalls what he did three, four or five years ago, and then goes farther and farther back, he comes at last to a certain point in childhood, beyond which memory cannot go. What lies beyond it may be told by parents or others, but a man's own recollection only extends to a certain point in the past. That point is the moment at which the individual felt himself to be an ego. In the lives of people whose memory is limited to the normal, there must always be such a point. But previous to it, the human soul has worked in the wisest possible manner on the individual, and never afterwards, when the human being has gained consciousness, can he accomplish such vast and magnificent work on himself as he does when impelled by subconscious motives during the first years of childhood.

For we know that at birth man carries into the physical world what he has brought with him as the result of his former earthly lives. When he is born, his physical brain, for instance, is but a very imperfect instrument. The soul has to work a finer organization into that instrument, in order to make it the agent of everything that the soul is capable of performing. In point of fact, the human soul, before it is fully conscious, works upon the brain so as to make it an instrument for exercising all the abilities, aptitudes and qualities, which appertain to the soul as the result of its former earthly lives. This work on a man's own body is directed from points of view which are wiser than anything he can subsequently do for himself when in possession of full consciousness.

Moreover, man during this period not only elaborates his brain plastically, but has to learn three most important things for his earthly existence. The first is the equilibrium of his own in space. The man of the present day entirely overlooks the meaning of this statement which touches upon one of the most essential differences between man and animals. An animal is destined from the outset to develop its equilibrium in space in a certain way; one animal is destined to be a climber, another, a swimmer. An animal is organized from the beginning in such a way as to be able to bear itself rightly in space, and this is the case with all animals up to and including the mammals most resembling man. If zoologists would ponder this fact, they would lay less emphasis on the number of bones and muscles similar in men and animals, for this is of much less account than the fact that the human being is not endowed at birth with the complete equipment for his conditions of equilibrium. He has first to form them out of the sum total of his being. It is significant that man should have to work upon himself in order to make out of a being unable to walk at all, one that can walk erect. It is man himself who gives himself his vertical position, his equilibrium in space. He brings himself into relation with the force of gravitation. It will obviously be easy for anyone taking a superficial view of the matter to question this statement, with apparently good reason. It may be said that the human being is just as much organized for his erect walk as, for instance, a

climbing animal is for climbing. But more accurate observation will show that it is the peculiarity of the animal's organization that causes its position in space. In man it is the soul which brings itself into relation with space and controls the organization.

The second thing which the human being teaches himself is speech. This is by means of the entity which proceeds from one incarnation to another as the same being. Through speech he comes into relation with his fellowmen. This relation makes him the vehicle of that spiritual life which interpenetrates the physical world primarily through man. Emphasis has often been laid, with good reason, on the fact that a human being removed, before he could speak, to a desert island, and kept apart from his fellows, would not learn to talk. On the other hand, what we receive by inheritance, what is implanted in us for use in later years and is subject to the principles of heredity, does not depend on a man's dwelling with his fellows. For instance, his inherited conditions oblige him to change his teeth in the seventh year. If it were possible for him to grow up on a desert island, he would still change his teeth. But he only learns to talk when his soul's inner being, which is carried on from one life to another, is stimulated. The germ, however, for the development of the larynx must be formed during the period in which the human being has not yet acquired his ego-consciousness. Before the time to which his memory goes back, he must plant the germ for developing his larynx, in order that this may become the organ of speech.

And then there is a third thing, the life within the world of thought. It is not so well known that the human being acquires this of himself, from that part of his inner nature which he carries on from one incarnation to another. The elaboration of the brain is undertaken because the brain is the instrument of thought. At the beginning of life, this organ is still plastic, because the individual has to form it for himself as an instrument of thought, in accordance with the intention of the entity which proceeds from one incarnation to another. The brain immediately after birth is, as it was bound to be, in consonance with the forces inherited from parents and other ancestors. But the individual has to express in his thought what he is as an individual being in conformity with his former earthly lives. Therefore he must remodel the inherited peculiarities of his brain, after birth, when he has become physically independent of his parents and other ancestors.

We thus see that man accomplishes momentous things during the first years of his life. He is working on himself in the spirit of the highest wisdom. In point of fact, if it were a question of his own cleverness, he would not be able to accomplish what he must accomplish without that cleverness during the first period of his life. Why is all this accomplished in those depths of the soul which lie outside consciousness? This happens because the human soul and entire being are, during the first years of earthly life, in much closer connection with the spiritual worlds of the higher hierarchies than they are later. A clairvoyant who has gone through sufficient spiritual development to be able to witness actual spiritual events, sees something exceedingly significant at the moment when the ego acquires consciousness, *i.e.*, at the earliest point to which the memory of later years goes back. Whereas what we call the child's aura hovers around it during its earliest years like a wonderful human and superhuman power and, being really the higher part of the child, is continued on into the spiritual world, at the moment to which memory goes back, this aura sinks more into the inner being of the child. A human being is able to feel himself a continuous ego as far back as that point of time, because that which was previously in close connection with the higher worlds, then passed into his ego. Henceforward the consciousness is at every point brought into connection with the external world. This is not the case with a very young child, to whom things appear only as a surrounding world -of dreams.

Man works on himself by means of a wisdom which is not within him. That wisdom is mightier and more comprehensive than any conscious wisdom of later years. The higher wisdom becomes obscured in the human soul which, in exchange, receives consciousness.

The higher wisdom works out of the spiritual world deep into the bodily part of man, so that man is able by its means to form his brain out of spirit. It is rightly said that even the wisest may learn from a child, for in the child is working the wisdom which does not pass

later into consciousness. Through that wisdom man has something like telephonic connection with the spiritual beings in whose world he lives between death and rebirth. From that world there is something still streaming into the aura of the child, which is, as an individual being, immediately under the guidance of the entire spiritual world to which it belongs. Spiritual forces *from* that world continue to flow into the child. They cease so to flow at the point of time to which memory goes back. It is these forces which enable the child to bring itself into a definite relation to gravitation. They form the larynx, and so mold the brain that it becomes a living instrument for the expression of thought, feeling, and will.

What is present in childhood to a supreme degree, so that the individual is then working out of a self which is still in direct connection with higher worlds, continues to some extent even in later years, although the conditions change in the manner indicated above. If at a later stage of life we feel that we did something years before which we are only now able to understand, it is just because we previously let ourselves be guided by higher wisdom, and only after the lapse of years have we attained to an understanding of the reasons for our conduct.

From all this we can feel that, immediately after birth, we had not escaped so very far from the world in which we were before entering upon physical existence, and that we can never really escape from it wholly. Our share in higher spirituality enters our physical life and accompanies us throughout. We often feel that what is within us is not only a higher self which is gradually being evolved, but is something higher which is there already, and is the motive cause of our so often developing beyond ourselves.

All ideals and artistic creations which man is able to produce, as well as all the natural healing forces in his own body, by means of which he is continually able to adjust the injuries that befall him in life — all these powers do not proceed from ordinary intellect, but from those deeper forces which in our earliest years are at work on our equilibrium in space, on the formation of our *larynx*, and on the brain. For these same forces are still at work in man in later years. When sickness attacks us, it is often said that external forces cannot help us, but that our organism must develop the healing powers latent within it; by this is meant that there is a profoundly wise activity present in us. Moreover, it is from this same source that proceed the best forces whereby knowledge of the spiritual world, true clairvoyance; is attained.

The question now suggests itself: why do the higher forces which have been described work upon human nature only during early childhood? One-half of the answer may be easily given as follows: If those higher forces went on working in the same way, man would be always a child. He would not attain the full ego-consciousness. From within his own being must proceed the motive power which previously worked on him from without. But there is a more important reason which explains still more clearly the mysteries of human life, and that is the following:

It is possible to learn through occult science, that the human body, as it exists at its present stage of evolution, must be regarded as having arrived at its present form under different conditions. It is known to the occultist that this evolution was effected by means of the working of various forces on the sum-total of man's being; certain forces worked on the physical body, others on the etheric, others on the astral body. Human nature has arrived at its present form through the action of those beings whom we call the Luciferic and Ahrimanic. By their means it has, in a certain way, become more imperfect than it need have been if only those forces had been active within it which proceed from the spiritual rulers of the cosmos who desire to evolve man along straight lines. The causes of sorrow, disease, and even of death are to be sought in the fact that, besides the beings who are evolving man in a straight line forwards, there are also the Luciferic and Ahrimanic spirits, who are continually crossing the line of straightforward progressive development.

Man brings with him at birth something which he cannot improve upon later in life. This is so, because the Luciferic and Ahrimanic forces have little influence over man during early childhood; they are virtually operative only in what man makes out of himself by his conscious life. If he were to retain in full force beyond early childhood that more perfect part

of his being, he would be unable to endure its influence, because his whole being is weakened by the opposing forces of Lucifer and Ahriman. Man's organism in the physical world is so constituted that it is only as a soft and pliable child that he can endure within him those direct forces of the spiritual world. He would be shattered, if during his later life there were still directly working in him those forces which underlie the faculty of equilibrium in space, and the formation of the larynx and the brain. Those forces are so tremendous that, if they were to continue working, our organism would pine away under the influence of their holiness. Man must only have recourse to such forces for the purpose of developing the power to make conscious connection with the supersensible world.

But out of this there arises a thought which is of great significance, if rightly understood. It is expressed in the New Testament in the words, 'Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' What then becomes manifest as man's highest ideal, if what has just been said be rightly received? Surely this — the drawing ever nearer and nearer to what we may call a conscious relation to the forces which work in man unknown to him during early childhood, only it must be borne in mind that man would collapse under the power of those forces, if they were at once to operate in his conscious life. For this reason, careful preparation is necessary for the attainment of those faculties which induce the perception of supersensible worlds. The object of such preparation is to qualify man to bear what he is unable to bear in ordinary life.

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The passing of the individual through successive incarnations is of importance for the collective evolution of the human race. The latter has advanced through successive lives in the past, and is still advancing, and parallel with it the earth too is moving forwards in its evolution. The time will come when the earth will have reached the end of its career. Then the earthly planet will fall away as a physical entity from the sum-total of human souls, just as the human body falls away from the spirit at death, when, in order to continue living, the soul enters the spiritual realm which is adapted to it between death and re-birth. When once this is realized, it must appear as man's highest ideal to have progressed far enough at earthly death, to be able to reap all possible benefits which may be obtained from earthly life.

Now those forces which prevent man from being able to endure the powers working upon him during early childhood come out of the substance of the earth. When these have fallen away from a human being, the latter, if he has attained the aim of his life, must have advanced far enough to be able actually to give himself up, with his whole being, to the powers which at present are only active in man during childhood. Thus the object of evolution through successive earthly lives is gradually to make the whole individual, including therefore the conscious part, into an expression of the powers which are ruling in him under the influence of the spiritual world — though he does not know it — during the first years of his life. The thought which takes possession of the soul after such reflections as these, must fill it with humility, but also with a due consciousness of the dignity of man. The thought is this man is not alone; there is something living within him which is constantly affording him proof that he can rise above himself to something which is already growing beyond him, and which will go on growing from one life to another. This thought can assume more and more definite form; and in that case it affords something supremely soothing and elevating, at the same time filling the soul with corresponding humility and modesty. What is it that man has within him in this way? Surely a higher, divine human being, by whom he is able to feel himself interpenetrated, saying to himself, 'He is my guide within me.'

From such a point of view, it is not long before we arrive at the thought that by all the means in our power we should strive to be in harmony with that within our being which is wiser than conscious intelligence. And we shall be referred on from the directly conscious self to an enlarged self, in the presence of whom all false pride and presumption will be extinguished and subdued. This feeling develops into another which opens the way to accurate understanding of the nature of present human imperfection; and the consciousness of this leads to the knowledge that man may become perfect, if once the larger spirituality

ruling within him is allowed to bear the same relation to his consciousness which it bore to the unconscious life of the soul in early childhood.

If it often happens that memory does not extend as far back as the fourth year of a child's life, it may nevertheless be said that the influence of the higher spirit-sphere, in the above sense, lasts through the first three years. At the end of that span of time a child becomes capable of linking its impressions of the outer world to the ideas of its ego. It is true that this coherent ego-conception can only be reckoned as existing as far back as memory extends. Yet we must say that virtually memory extends to the beginning of the fourth year, only it is too weak at the beginning of distinct ego-consciousness to be perceptible. It may be granted that those higher powers which dispose of a human being in the early years of childhood can be operative for three years; therefore man, during the present middle period of the earth, is so organized that he can receive these forces for *only* three years.

Supposing a man now stood before us, and that some cosmic powers could cause his ordinary ego to be removed. For this purpose we must assume that it would be possible to remove from the physical, etheric, and astral bodies the ordinary ego which has passed through successive incarnations with the human being. And now suppose that into the three bodies could be introduced an ego which works in connection with spiritual worlds, what would happen to a person thus treated? At the end of three years his body would necessarily be shattered. Something would occur, through cosmic karma, which would prevent the spirit-being which would be in connection with higher worlds, from living more than three years in that body. [The vitality of the human organism is maintained at *the* transition from childhood to later life, because the organism is capable of change at that period. Later in life, it is no longer susceptible of change, and on this account cannot continue to exist with that other Self.] Only at the end of all his earthly lives will man have that within him which will enable him to live more than three years with that spirit-being. But then, it is true, man will be able to say to himself, 'Not I, but that Higher One within me, who was always there, is now working in me.' Till that time comes, he is not able to say this. The most he can say is that he feels that higher being, but has not yet progressed far enough with his real, actual human ego, to be able to bring that higher being to full life within him.

Supposing then that, at some time in the middle earth-period, a human organism were to come into the world, and later in life be freed from his ego by the action of certain cosmic powers, receiving in exchange the ego which usually only works in man during the first three years of life, and which would be in connection with the spiritual worlds in which man exists between death and rebirth: how long would such a person be able to live in an earthly body? About three years. For at the end of that time, something would arise through cosmic karma, which would destroy that human organism.

What is here supposed is, indeed, a historical fact. The human organism which stood in the river Jordan at John's baptism when the ego of Jesus of Nazareth left the three bodies, contained, after the baptism, in complete conscious development, that higher Self of humanity which usually works with cosmic wisdom on a child without its knowledge. At the same time, the necessity arose that this Self which was in connection with the higher spirit-world could only live for three years in the appropriate human organism. Events had then to take place which brought the earthly life of that being to a close. The outer events in the life of Christ Jesus are to be interpreted as absolutely conditioned by the inner causes just set forth, and present themselves as the outward expression of those causes.

We are now able to see the deeper connection existing between that which is man's guide in life, which streams in upon his childhood like the dawn and is always working below the surface of consciousness as the best part of him, and that which once upon a time entered the whole of human evolution and was able to dwell for three years in a human frame.

What then is manifested in that 'higher' ego, which is connected with the spiritual hierarchies, and which in due time entered the body of Jesus of Nazareth, this entrance being symbolically represented by the sign of the Spirit descending in the form of a dove, and by the words; 'this is my well-beloved Son, today have I begotten him' (for so stood the

words originally)? If we fix our eyes upon this picture, we are contemplating the highest human ideal. For it means that the history of Jesus of Nazareth is a statement of this fact; the Christ can be discerned in every human being. And even if there were no Gospels and no tradition to tell us that once a Christ lived on earth, we should yet learn through knowledge of human nature that the Christ is living in man.

The recognition of the forces working in human nature during childhood is the recognition of the Christ in man. The question now arises, does this recognition lead to the further perception of the fact that this Christ once really dwelt on earth in a human body? Without bringing forward any documents, this question may be answered in the affirmative. For genuine clairvoyant knowledge of self leads the man of the present day to see that powers are to be discovered in the human soul which emanate from the Christ. These powers are at work during the first three years of childhood without any action being taken by the human being. In later life they *may* be called into action, if the Christ be sought within the soul by inner meditation. Man was not always able, as he is now, to find the Christ within himself. There were times when no inner meditation could lead him to the Christ. This again we learn from clairvoyant perception. In the interval between that past time when man could not find the Christ in himself, and the present time when he can find him, there took place Christ's earthly life. And that life itself is the source of *man's* power to find the Christ in himself in the manner that has been pointed out. Thus to clairvoyant perception the earthly life of Christ is proved without any historical records.

It is just as if the Christ had said; 'I will be such an ideal for you human beings that, when it is raised to a spiritual level, you will be shown that which is fulfilled in each human body.' In his early childhood man learns from the spirit how to walk; he is shown by the spirit his way through earthly life. From the spirit he learns to speak, to form *truth*; in other words, he develops the essence of truth out of sound during the first three years of his life. And the *life* too, which man lives on earth as an ego-being, obtains its vital organ through what is formed in the first three years of childhood. Thus man learns to walk, to find 'the way'; he learns to present 'truth' through his physical organism; and he learns to bring 'life' from the spirit into expression in his body. No more significant interpretation seems possible of the words 'Except ye become as little children ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.' And momentous is that saying in which the ego-being of the Christ comes into expression thus, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' Just as, unknown to a child, the higher spirit-forces are fashioning its organism to become the bodily expression of the way, the truth, and the life, so the spirit of man, through being interpenetrated with the Christ, gradually becomes the *conscious* vehicle of the way, the truth, and the life. He is thereby making himself, in the course of his earthly development, into that force which bears sway within him as a child, when he is not consciously its vehicle.

This saying about the way, the truth, and the life, is capable of opening the doors of eternity. It sounds to man out of the depths of his soul, if his self-knowledge is true and real.

Such reflections as these open up, in a double sense, the vision of the spiritual guidance of the individual and of collective humanity. As human beings we are able, through self-knowledge, to find the Christ within us as the guide Whom, since His life on earth, we can always reach, because He is always in man. Furthermore, if we apply to the historical records what we have apprehended without them, we discover their real nature. They express something which is revealed of itself in the depths of the soul. They are therefore to be accounted as *guiding* humanity in the same direction as the soul itself is proceeding.

If we thus understand the suggestion of eternity in the words, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life,' we cannot feel ourselves justified in asking, 'Why does a person who has passed through many incarnations always re-enter life as a child?' For it becomes evident that this apparent imperfection is an ever-recurring reminder of the Highest that is in man. And we cannot be reminded often enough — at any rate each time we enter earthly life is not too often to remind us — of the vast importance of man's connection with that Being Who underlies all earthly existence, untouched by its imperfections.

It is not well to make many definitions or summaries in spiritual science or theosophy, or indeed in occultism generally. It is better to give a description, and to try and call forth a feeling of what really exists. On this account we have attempted to induce a feeling of what distinguishes the first three years of human life, and of the way in which this is related to the light that streams from the cross on Golgotha. The meaning of this feeling is that an impulse is passing through human evolution, and that through this impulse the Pauline saying, 'Not I — but the Christ in me,' will become a fact. We have only to know what man is in reality, in order to be able to proceed from such knowledge to insight into the nature of the Christ. When once, however, we have arrived at the Christ-idea, through true observation of humanity, we know that we discover the Christ in the best way if we first look for Him in ourselves; and if we then return to the Bible records we value them rightly for the first time. And no one prizes the Bible more, or more consciously, than one who has found the Christ in this way. It is possible to imagine a being, let us say, an inhabitant of Mars, descending to earth, without ever having heard of the Christ and His work. Much that has taken place on earth would be incomprehensible to the Martian; much that interests people nowadays would not interest him. But it would interest him to discover the central impulse of earthly evolution, the Christ-idea as it is expressed in human nature itself.

Having grasped this, a man is able for the first time rightly to understand the Bible, for he finds expressed there in a marvelous way what he has previously observed in himself, and he says: It is unnecessary to have been brought up with any special reverence for the Gospels; by means of what I have learned through spiritual science, they need only be presented to me, a fully-conscious human being, to stand revealed before me in all their greatness.

Indeed, if it is not too much to say that in the course of time people who have learned through spiritual science rightly to appreciate the contents of the Gospels, will value them as guides of the human race more justly than hitherto. It is only through knowledge of human nature itself that humanity will learn to see what is latent in those profound records. It will then be said: If there is to be found in the Gospels that which forms an integral part of human nature, it must have come from the people who wrote these documents on earth, Therefore what genuine reflection brings home to us about our own lives — the more so the older we grow — must hold especially good with regard to those writers. We ourselves have done many things which we only understand years afterwards, and in the writers of the Gospels may be seen people who wrote out of the higher self which works in man during childhood, so that the Gospels are writings emanating from the wisdom which molds human nature. Man is a manifestation of spirit through his body, and the Gospels are such a manifestation in writing.

On this assumption the idea of inspiration regains its true and loftier meaning. Just as higher forces are at work on the brain during the first three years of childhood, so there were higher forces from spiritual worlds impressed on the souls of the Evangelists, under the influence of which they wrote the Gospels. The spiritual guidance of humanity is expressed in such a fact as this. For the human race must surely be *guided*, if within it people are writing records under the influence of those same powers that are at work on the molding of man in profound wisdom. And just as the individual says or does things which he only understands at a later period of life, so collective humanity has produced in the Evangelists means of revelation which can only be understood by degrees. The farther humanity progresses, the greater will be the understanding of these records. The human being can feel spiritual guidance within himself; and collective humanity can feel it in those of its members who work as did the writers of the Gospels.

The idea thus gained of the guidance of humanity may be extended in many directions. Let us suppose that a man finds disciples — a few people who follow him. Such a one will soon become aware, through genuine self-knowledge, that the very fact of his finding disciples gives him the feeling that what he has to say does not originate with himself. The case is rather this — that spiritual powers in higher worlds wish to communicate with the disciples, and find in the teacher the fitting instrument for their manifestation.

The thought will suggest itself to such a man: when I was a child I worked on myself by the aid of forces proceeding from the spiritual world, and what I am now able to give, of my best, must also proceed from higher worlds; I may not look upon it as belonging to my ordinary consciousness. Such a man may in fact say: something demonic, something like a 'daimon' — using the word in the sense of a *good* spiritual power — is working out of a spiritual world through me on my disciples.

Socrates felt something of this kind. Plato tells us that he spoke of his 'daimon' as of the one who led and guided him. Many attempts have been made to explain this 'daimon' of Socrates, but it can only be explained by supposing that Socrates was able to feel something like that which results from the above reflections. Then we are able to understand that throughout the three or four centuries during which the Socratic principle was active in Greece, a state of feeling permeated the Greek world, which prepared the way for another great event. The feeling that man, as he now is, is not the whole of what comes through from higher worlds — this feeling went on working. The best of those in whom it was present were those who afterwards best understood the words, 'Not I, but the Christ in me.' For they could say to themselves: Socrates used to speak of a being working as a 'daimon' from higher worlds; the Christ-ideal makes clear what Socrates meant. Socrates could not as yet speak of Christ, because in his time no one was able to find the Christ-nature *within himself*.

Here again we feel something of the spiritual guidance of man, for nothing can be established in the world without preparation. Why was it that Paul found his best disciples in Greece? Because the ground had been prepared there by the teaching of Socrates and the state of feeling that has been described. That is to say, what happens in human evolution may be traced back to events which operated previously, and made people ripe for what was afterwards to be brought to bear upon them. Do we not feel here how far the guiding impulse passing through human evolution extends and how at the right moment it places people where they will best be used to further that evolution? In such facts is manifested the guidance of mankind.

LECTURE II

IF WE turn our attention to what was said to the Greeks by the teachers and leaders of ancient Egypt about the direction and guidance of the spiritual life of their country, we may trace a remarkable parallel between that which is manifested in the individual life of man, and that which governs human evolution as a whole. It is related that when a Greek once asked an Egyptian, who had guided and led his nation from ancient times onwards, he answered, 'In the times of yore, the gods ruled and taught us, and only afterwards men came to be our leaders.' The Egyptians named Menes to the Greeks as their first leader on the physical plane to be recognized as a *human* leader. That is to say, the directors of the Egyptian people alleged that in earlier times the gods themselves — as Greek records confirm — guided and led the Egyptian nation. Such an assertion, coming down to us from ancient times, must, however, be rightly understood. What did the Egyptians mean when they said, 'Our kings and great teachers were gods?'

The man who thus answered the question of the Greek meant that if any one had gone back into the ancient times of the Egyptian nation, and had asked those people who felt something within them like a higher consciousness, or wisdom from higher worlds: 'Who are really your teachers?' they would have answered: 'If I wanted to tell you about my real teacher, I should not point to such and such a person and say, 'That is my teacher,' but I should first have to put myself into a clairvoyant state (it is known from spiritual science that this was comparatively easier in ancient times than it is now), and then I would find my real inspirer and teacher, who comes to me only when the eyes of my spirit are opened.' For in ancient Egypt beings who were not incarnated in a physical human body came down

amongst men. In those remote ages, it was the gods who still ruled and taught the Egyptians, and by “gods” they understood beings who had preceded man in evolution.

According to spiritual science, the earth passed through an earlier planetary condition, called the *Moon-state*, before it became *Earth*. During this condition man was not yet human in the present sense of the word. On the old *Moon* were present beings not possessed of the present human forms and differently constituted, who nevertheless were then at the evolutionary stage which man has now attained on earth. We may therefore say, that on the ancient *Moon-planet* which has perished, and out of which the *Earth* afterwards originated, there lived beings who were man's predecessors. In Christian esoteric language they are called Angel-beings (Angeloi). The beings immediately above them, Archangels (Archangeloi), were human at a still earlier period. The angels, or angeloi in Christian esotericism, Dhyanic beings in eastern mysticism, were ‘men’ during the *Moon-period*. Now these beings, during the present *Earth-period*, are a stage farther advanced than man — those of them, that is to say, who completed their evolution on the *Moon*. Only at the end of the *Earth's* evolution will man have arrived at the stage which those beings had reached at the end of the *Moon-period*.

When the *Earth-state* of our planet began and man appeared on earth, these beings were not able to appear in an external human form, for the human body of flesh and blood is essentially a product of earth, and is only adapted to the beings who are now human. The beings who are a stage farther advanced than man could not be incarnated in human bodies. They were only able to take part in the government of the earth by illuminating and inspiring those people in primeval times who had attained the stage of clairvoyance. Indirectly, then, through such clairvoyant persons the angels intervened to guide the destinies of earth.

Thus the ancient Egyptians still remembered a time when the leading personalities of the nation were clearly conscious of their connection with what are called gods, angels, or dhyanic beings. Now what sort of beings were these, who were not incarnated in a human form of flesh and blood, but who influenced mankind in the way we have described? They were man's predecessors, advanced beyond the human stage.

There is in these days much misuse of a word which may in this connection be applied in its true meaning, the word “Superman.” If we really wish to speak of “Supermen,” it is these beings who may rightly be so called. Human during the *Moon-period*, the planetary stage preceding our *Earth*, they had now outgrown humanity. They were only able to appear in an etheric body to clairvoyants. It was thus that they came down to earth from spiritual worlds and ruled here even as late as post-Atlantean times.

These beings had, and still have, the remarkable quality of not being obliged to think; in fact, we might even say that they cannot think at all as man does. How then does man think? More or less in this way. He starts from a certain point and says, “I understand this or that,” and from that point he then tries to understand various other things. If this were not the method of human thought, school-life would not be such a difficult period for many. We cannot learn mathematics in a day, because we have to begin at a certain point and go slowly forwards. This takes a long time. We cannot survey a whole world of thought at a glance, for human thought runs its course in *time*. A system of thought does not enter the mind in a flash. We have to make an effort and have to exert ourselves, in order to find the sequence of thought. The beings described above are without this human peculiarity. A far-reaching train of thought comes into their minds with the same rapidity with which an animal makes up its mind that it will snatch at something which its instinct tells it is eatable. Instinct and reflective consciousness are in no wise distinct in these beings; they are one and the same. Just as animals have instinct at their stage of evolution, in their kingdom, so these dhyanic beings or angels have direct spiritual thought and conceptions. By virtue of this instinctive inner life of conception they are of an essentially different nature from human beings.

Now we can easily understand why it is impossible for these beings to use a brain or physical body like ours. They have to use an etheric body, because the human body and

brain only allow of thoughts in *time*, whereas these beings do not develop their thoughts in *time*, but feel the wisdom that is approaching them blaze forth, as it were, spontaneously within them. It is impossible for them to think erroneously in the sense in which man does. The process of their thought is a direct inspiration. Hence the personalities who were able to come into contact with these super-human or angelic beings were conscious that they were in the presence of unerring wisdom. Therefore, even as late as ancient Egyptian times, when the man who was the human teacher or king was in the presence of his spiritual guide, he felt thus the command which he is giving, the truth which he is enunciating, is *literally* right and cannot be wrong. This was also felt by those to whom the truths were passed on.

The clairvoyant guides of the human race were able to speak in such a manner that in their words people believed they were receiving exactly what came down from the spiritual world. In short, there was a direct current down from the higher spirit-hierarchies which were directing humanity. Thus what works on the individual in early childhood may be seen working on humanity at large in the form of the next world of spirit-hierarchies which hovers over human evolution as a whole. This is the next kingdom of the angels or super-human beings, standing a step higher than man, and extending directly into spiritual spheres. They bring down to earth from those spheres what is worked into human civilization. In the child, it is on the formation of the body that the higher wisdom leaves its impress; in human evolution of past ages, it was civilization that was so matured.

Thus the Egyptians, who described themselves as being in connection with divinity, felt that the soul of humanity was open to the action of spirit hierarchies. Just as the soul of a child opens its aura to the hierarchies up to the time mentioned in the preceding pages, so, through its work, did the whole of humanity open its world to the hierarchies with which it was connected.

This connection was most important in those teachers whom we call the holy teachers of India, the great teachers of the first post-Atlantean or Indian civilization, which unfolded itself in southern Asia. When the Atlantean catastrophe was over, and the physiognomy of the earth had changed, so that the new conformation of Asia, Europe, and Africa had evolved in the Eastern hemisphere, the civilization led by the ancient great teachers of India began. This was before the time we have mentioned as reported in ancient records. The man of today is apt to get quite a wrong idea about these teachers. If, for example, one of the great Indian teachers were to be confronted with an educated man of the present day, the latter would gaze upon him with astonishment, and perhaps say, "Is that a great teacher? I should never have thought it." The words "clever" or "learned" in the sense of modern culture could not be applied to the holy teachers of ancient India. They had nothing clever to say. They were simple, homely people, who would have answered even questions of everyday life in the simplest fashion possible. And there were many periods during which scarcely anything could be elicited from them but what would seem, to an educated man of today, insignificant. On the other hand, there were certain times when these holy teachers were revealed as something more than simple, homely men. At these times they were obliged to be together to the number of seven, because what each individual was able to feel had to combine harmoniously with the feelings of the other six teachers, as though in a consonance of seven sounds. For it was then possible for each one to see something according to his particular gift and degree of development. Assuming that we know how to decipher the real occult records, we find that from the harmony of the separate parts which each individual was able to see, there arose the primeval wisdom which comes down to us from ancient times. These records are not the revelations of the Vedas, however much we may admire them. What the Indian holy teachers taught is of much earlier date than the composition of the Vedas, and it is only a feeble echo of their wisdom which lies before us in those mighty works. But when each of these men was in the presence of a super-human predecessor of humanity, was gazing clairvoyantly into higher worlds, and listening clairaudiently to what was being taught through that predecessor, it was as though the sun shone from their eyes. What they were then able to say worked with overpowering force on their environment, so that all who heard them knew that it was not human life or wisdom that was speaking, but that *gods*, super-human beings, were influencing human civilization.

The ancient civilizations had their rise in this sounding to mankind of the knowledge of the gods. Only by degrees in post-Atlantean times was the door closed into the divine spiritual world which in the Atlantean period had still been wide open for the human soul. And in the various countries and nations it was felt that man was thrown ever more and more on his own resources. What is revealed in the case of a child appears in humanity in a different way. The divine spiritual world is first diffused into the unconscious soul of a child, and the soul works upon the formation of the body. Then comes the moment at which the child learns to feel itself an 'ego' and this is the moment to which its memory goes back in later life. This is what makes it possible to say that the wisest of men may still learn something from the soul of a child. From this point, however, the individual is left to himself. The ego-consciousness comes into being, and everything combines to make it possible for him to remember his experiences.

So, too, in the life of nations there came a time when they began to feel themselves shut off from the divine inspiration of their early forefathers. Just as the child becomes gradually shut off from the aura that floats about its head in its earliest years, so in the life of nations did the divine ancestors withdraw themselves more and more, and mankind was left to its own research and to its own knowledge. When history speaks in this manner, the fact of the guidance of humanity is realized. Menes was the Egyptian name of him who inaugurated the first human civilization, and it is at the same time hinted that man thereby became liable to error, for thenceforward he was left to look for guidance to the instrument of his brain. That man was liable to fall into error is symbolically indicated by the fixing of the date of the construction of the labyrinth at the time when humanity was abandoned by the gods; for the labyrinth is an image of the convolutions of the brain as the instrument of man's own thoughts — windings in which the thinker is able to lose himself. The Orientals called man, as a thinking being, *Manas*, and *Manu* stands for the first great thinker. The Greeks called the first organizer of the human principle of thought *Minos*, and with him is associated the myth of the labyrinth, because it was felt that, since his time, mankind had gradually passed from the direct guidance of the gods to a guidance in which the "ego" feels the influence of the higher spirit-world in a different way.

Besides those predecessors of man, the true supermen, who had completed their humanity on the *Moon* and had become angels, there are, however, other beings who did not perfect their evolution on the *Moon*. The beings called dhyanic in Oriental mysticism and angelic in Christian esotericism, consummated their evolution on the ancient *Moon*, and when man began his earthly career were already a stage higher than he was. But there were other beings who had not finished their evolution on the ancient *Moon*, any more than the higher categories of Luciferic beings had finished theirs. When the *Earth*-state of our planet began, man as we have described him was not the only being there. He felt also the inspiration of divinely-spiritual beings; otherwise, like a child, he would have been unable to progress. Accordingly, besides these childlike human beings, and acting through them, there must have been also present on the earth beings who had completed their evolution on the *Moon*. But between these and man there were yet other beings who had not finished their evolution on the *Moon* — beings of a higher order than man, because, even as early as the ancient *Moon*-period, they might have become angels or dhyanic beings. At that time, however, they had not come to full maturity. They were angels in a backward state, yet they far outdistanced man as regards everything which man called his own. Generally speaking, they are beings occupying the lowest grade in the ranks of Luciferic spirits. They hold a middle position between men and angels, and with them begins the kingdom of Luciferic spirits.

Now it is extremely easy to get an erroneous idea of these spirits. We might ask why did the divine spirits, the regents of good, allow them to fall short, and thereby admit the Luciferic principle into humanity? And it might further be objected on this ground, that surely the good gods turned everything to good. This question is obvious. And another misunderstanding which might *arise*, is expressed in the idea that these are "evil" spirits. Both ideas are merely misunderstandings; for these spirits are by no means purely "evil," although the origin of evil in human nature is due to them. Since they stand midway between

man and superman, they are, in a sense, more perfect than men. In all the qualities which human beings have to acquire for themselves, these spirits have attained a high standard, and they only differ from man's predecessors described above in being able to incarnate in human bodies whilst man is being evolved on *Earth*. This is because they did not consummate their humanity on the *Moon*.

The dhyanic or angelic beings proper, who are the great inspirers of humanity, and to whom the Egyptian referred as being still their teachers, did not appear in human bodies. They could only manifest themselves *through* human beings. On the other hand, the beings in a mid-position between men and angels were still able, in very early times to incarnate in human bodies. Hence amongst the human race inhabiting the earth in the Lemurian and Atlantean periods, we find people whose innermost soul-nature was that of an angel in a backward state. Not only ordinary people were going about the earth, who through their successive incarnations were to arrive at the ideal of humanity, but beings who only outwardly appeared like them. These had to bear a human body, for the outward form of a human being in the flesh is dependent on earthly conditions. Especially in more ancient times did it happen that beings belonging to the lowest category of Luciferic individualities were present amongst men. And so at the same time that the angel-beings were working on human civilization through man, Lucifer-beings were also incarnated and founding human civilizations in various places. And when in the old folk legends it is related that in some place there lived a great man who was the founder of a civilization we are not to understand that such a Lucifer-being was necessarily the vehicle of evil but rather that human civilization was to receive countless blessings from him.

Now it is known through occult science that in ancient times, particularly in the Atlantean period, there existed a kind of primitive human language, a manner of speech, which was the same all over the earth, because "speech" in those days came much more out of the depths of the soul than it does now. This may be gathered from the following: In Atlantean times, people felt all outward impressions in such a way that if the soul wished to express anything *outward* by a sound, it was constrained to use a *consonant*. What existed in space pressed for imitation in a consonant. The blowing of the wind, the murmur of the waves, the shelter given by a house were felt and imitated by man in consonants. On the other hand, the sorrow or joy which was felt *inwardly*, or was observed as feeling in another being, was imitated in a *vowel*. From this we can see that the soul became one, in speech, with outer events or beings. The following instance is taken from the Akashic Records: A man drew near a hut, which was arched in the ancient fashion and gave shelter and protection to a family. He noticed this, and expressed the protective arch by a consonant; and by a vowel he expressed the fact, which he was able to *feel*, that within the hut the embodied souls were comfortable. Thence arose the thought "shelter"; "there is a shelter for me — shelter for human bodies." The thought was then poured forth in consonants and vowels, which could not be otherwise than they were, because they were a direct impression of experience and had but one meaning. This was the same all over the earth. It is no dream that there was once an original human root-language. And, in a certain sense, the initiates of all nations are still able to feel that language. Indeed there are in all languages certain similar sounds which are the remains of that universal language.

This speech was prompted in human souls by the inspiration of the super-human beings, man's true predecessors, who had perfected their evolution on the *Moon*. From this it may be seen that if that evolution alone had taken place, the entire human race would practically have remained one great unity, and there would have been uniformity of speech and thought all over the earth. Individuality and diversity could not have been developed, nor at the same time could human freedom. In order that man might become individual, cleavages had to take place in humanity, and the difference of language in different parts of the world is due to the work of those teachers in whom a Luciferic spirit was incarnated. According as a particular angel-being, who had fallen short in his evolution, was incarnated in a particular race, was he able to instruct its people in a particular language. Thus the ability to speak a separate language is, in all races, traceable to the illuminating presence of these great beings who were angels in a backward state and who stood far above the people of their

immediate environment. For instance, the beings described as the original heroes of the Greeks and other nations, and who worked in a human form, were those in whom an angel who had fallen short was incarnated. Therefore these beings must by no means be characterized as entirely “evil.” On the contrary, they brought to man that which predestined him to be a free human being all over the globe, and they differentiated what otherwise would have constituted a uniform whole everywhere on earth. This is not only true of languages but of many other departments of life. Individualization, differentiation, freedom, we may say, come from the beings who fell short in their *Moon*-evolution. It is true that it was the purpose of the wise rulership of the cosmos to bring all beings in planetary evolution to their goal, but if this had been done in a direct way particular ends would not have been attained. Certain beings were therefore arrested in their development because they were to have a special mission in the progress of humanity. Since the beings who had fulfilled their mission on the *Moon* would only have been able to educate a uniform human race, beings who had fallen short on the *Moon* were set against them, and it thereby became possible for these backward ones to turn into good what appeared as a defect.

This opens up the question, why do evil, wickedness, imperfection, and disease exist in the world? This problem should be looked at from the point of view from which we have just considered the imperfect angel-beings. Everything which at any time exhibits imperfection or backwardness will be turned into good in the course of evolution. It is obvious that this affords no justification for bad actions on man's part.

Why does a wise Providence allow certain beings to lag behind and not reach their goal? There will be good reason for it at the time following the formation of such a purpose. For it was when nations were not yet able to guide and govern themselves that the teachers of particular periods and individuals arose. And all the different race-teachers, Cadmus, Cheops, Pelops, Theseus, etc, are, in one aspect, angel-beings in the depths of their souls. From this it appears that in this respect also, humanity is really subject to direction and guidance.

Now at every stage of evolution there are beings who lag behind and do not attain the possible goal. Let us look once more at the ancient Egyptian civilization which ran its course thousands of years ago in the Nile valley. Super-human teachers manifested themselves to the Egyptians, who said that these teachers guided mankind like gods. At the same time, however, other beings were also at work, who had only half or partially attained the angelic stage. Now we must fully understand that the souls of people of the present day had attained a definite stage in the Egyptian period. But it is not only man who gains by letting himself be guided; the beings directing him attain thereby something which furthers their evolution. For instance, an angel is something more after he has guided humanity for a while, than he was before that guidance began. His guiding work helps him to progress, and this is true not only of one who has completed his evolution as an angel, but also of one who has lagged behind. All beings are able continually to advance; everything is in a state of perpetual development; but at every stage beings are left behind. Thus, in accordance with what has just been said, there can be distinguished in the ancient Egyptian civilization the divine leaders or angels, the semi-divine leaders who did not quite attain the angelic stage, and the men. But certain beings in the ranks of the angels again lag behind; they do not bring all their powers into expression when guiding humanity, but remain behind as angels during the ancient Egyptian stage of civilization. Similarly some of the incomplete angels lag behind. Thus while men below were progressing, certain of the beings above, the dhyanic spirits or angels, fell behind in their evolution. When the Egypto-Chaldæic civilization came to an end, and the Graeco-Roman period began, certain guiding spirits from the former period, who had fallen behind in their evolution, were present. But they could not use their powers, for other angels or half-angelic beings had replaced them, and that meant that their own evolution was at a standstill.

Hence there comes under our notice a category of beings who might have used their powers during the Egyptian period, but did not at that time use them fully. In the ensuing Graeco-Roman period they were not able to use them, because they were replaced by other guiding spirits, and all the conditions of that time made their intervention impossible. But just

as the beings who had not reached the angelic stage on the old *Moon* were, during the *Earth*-period, once more allotted the task of interposing actively in human evolution, so also the beings who, as guiding spirits in the Egypto-Chaldæic civilization, had stopped short in their development, had lagged behind, later received the mission of intervening again in civilization. We shall be able to watch a later period of civilization in which beings sent to be guides are certainly there to direct the normal progress of evolution, but in which, at the same time, other beings are intervening who were left behind at an earlier stage, and more particularly those who fell behind during the ancient Egyptian period. The civilization to which we are referring is our own. We live at a time when, side by side with the normal directors of humanity, others are interposing who were left behind in the ancient Egyptian and Chaldæic period.

Now we have to look upon the evolution of events and beings in such a way that occurrences in the physical world must be considered only as effects or manifestations, the true causes of which are to be sought in the spiritual world. On the one hand our civilization is in the main marked by an upward movement towards spirituality, and this tendency of certain people towards spirituality is the manifestation of the spiritual directors of our contemporary humanity, who have attained their own normal stage of development. In everything which tends to lead man up to the great spiritual wisdom-truths transmitted to us by theosophy, these normal guides of our evolution are manifested. But the beings out-distanced during the Egypto-Chaldæic civilization are also affecting the tendencies of our age. They are manifest in much that is being thought and done at the present and will again be manifest in the near future. They are revealed in everything which gives a materialistic stamp to our civilization, and may often be seen even in aspirations after spiritual things. In our age we are virtually experiencing a revival of Egyptian civilization. The beings who are to be looked upon as the invisible directors of that which takes place in the physical world fall accordingly into two classes. The first includes those spiritual individualities who have passed through their own normal course of development up to the present time. They were able to interpose in the guidance of our civilization, whilst the directors of the preceding Graeco-Roman period were gradually finishing their task of guiding civilization during the first thousand years of Christianity. The second class, who work simultaneously with the first class of beings, are spiritual individualities who did not complete their evolution during the Egypto-Chaldæic civilization. They were obliged to remain inactive during the ensuing Graeco-Roman period, but are now able to resume their activity because our present age has points of resemblance to the Egypto-Chaldæic period. It thus comes about that many things arise in contemporary humanity which look like a revival of ancient Egyptian forces, but there is also much which is like a materialistic resuscitation of forces which then worked spiritually. To illustrate this, we may point to an example of the way in which ancient Egyptian knowledge has been revived in our days.

Let us think of Kepler. He was quite possessed by the feeling of the harmony of the cosmos, and this idea was expressed in his important mathematical laws of the mechanism of the heavens, the so-called laws of Kepler. These are outwardly very dry and abstruse, but in Kepler they were the outcome of an understanding of the harmony of the universe. We may read in Kepler's writings that in order to discover what he did, he was obliged to go to the sacred Egyptian mysteries, purloin their temple-vessels, and by this means bring knowledge into the world, the importance of which to humanity would only be known in later times.

This utterance of Kepler's is by no means an empty phrase, but contains a dim consciousness of a revival of what he had learned in the Egyptian period, during a former incarnation. We may certainly entertain the idea that Kepler assimilated the ancient Egyptian wisdom during one of his previous lives, and that it reappears in his soul in a new form, adapted to a later age. That a materialistic impulse should enter our civilization through the Egyptian spirit is quite intelligible, for Egyptian spirituality had a strong materialistic tendency, which found expression, for instance, in embalming the physical bodies of the dead. This meant that the Egyptian attached value to the preservation of the physical body. This has come down to us from the Egyptian period in a different form, but in one corresponding to

our time. The same forces which had not then run their course, affect our age, but in a different way. The temper of mind which embalmed dead bodies gave rise to that which idolizes the merely material. The Egyptian embalmed dead bodies and thereby preserved what he accounted valuable. He thought that the development of the soul after death was connected with the preservation of the physical material body. The modern anatomist dissects what he sees, and thinks that in this way he understands the laws of the human organism. Thus in our modern science are living the forces of the ancient Egyptian and Chaldæic world. At that time progressive forces, they now lag behind, and must be recognized for what they are if a correct estimate is to be formed of the character of the present time. These forces will injure a man of the present day if he does not know their real significance. If he knows their effect and thereby brings himself into the right relation to them, he will take no harm from them, but will turn them to good account. They must be used, for without them we should not have the present great achievements in technology and industry. They are forces belonging to Luciferic beings of the lowest stage, and the danger lies in the fact that if they are not recognized aright, the materialistic impulses of the present time are thought to be the only possible ones, and the other forces, which lead up to the spiritual world, are not taken into consideration. For this reason any clear diagnosis is certain to discern two currents of thought in the present age. Now if a wise Providence had not allowed certain beings in the Egypto-Chaldæic period to fall short in their evolution, our contemporary civilization would have been wanting in necessary weight. In that case only those forces would be operative which would bring man into the spiritual world by main force. People would be only too ready to yield themselves up to those forces, and would become dreamers. The only life they would wish to know about would be one which is being spiritualized as fast as possible, and their standard of action would be a view of life showing a certain degree of contempt for what is physical and material. But the present epoch of civilization can only fulfill its mission if the forces of the material world are brought to the fullest perfection, and if thus by degrees their sphere too is won for spirituality. Just as the fairest things may become corrupters and tempters of mankind if pursued in a one-sided way, so if this one-sidedness took root, there would be great danger that all kinds of good efforts would come into manifestation as fanaticism. True though it is that humanity is helped forward by its noble impulses, it is also true that wild and fanatical advocacy of the noblest impulses may bring about the worst of results as far as true evolution is concerned. Only when people strive after the highest modestly and sensibly, not out of wild fanaticism, can anything beneficial to the progress of humanity take place. In order that the work done on earth at the present day may have the necessary weight, and that material beings of the physical plane may be understood, the wisdom which directs the government of the world left those forces behind which would normally have completed their evolution during the Egyptian period; and it is these which are now directing man's attention to physical life.

It is obvious from the foregoing that evolution takes place under the influence both of normally progressive beings and of those who lag behind. Clairvoyant vision is able to trace the cooperation of both classes of beings in the super-sensible world, and hence is able to comprehend the spiritual events of which the physical facts surrounding humanity are the manifestations.

We observe that, in order to understand cosmic events, it is not enough to have spiritual eyes and ears opened to the spiritual world by some kind of exercise. This only means that we see what is there, that we are cognizant of spiritual beings and know that they are entities of the soul-world or spirit-sphere. But it is also necessary to recognize what kinds of beings they are. We may meet some being of the soul or spirit world, but we do not necessarily know whether it is progressing in its evolution, or whether it belongs to the category of powers that have lagged behind; whether therefore it is pushing evolution onwards, or hindering it. Those people who acquire clairvoyant faculties and do not at the same time gain complete understanding of the conditions of human evolution which we have described may know absolutely nothing of the nature of the beings whom they meet. Mere clairvoyance must be supplemented by clear judgment of what is seen in the supersensible world. There is urgent necessity for this especially in our own time, but it had not always to

be so much considered. If we go back to very ancient civilizations, we find different conditions. If in the most ancient Egyptian times a person was clairvoyant, and was confronted with a being from the supersensible world, the latter had, as it were, written on his forehead who he was. The clairvoyant could not mistake him. Now, however, the possibility of misunderstanding is very great. Whereas humanity in early times still stood very near the kingdom of the spiritual hierarchies and could see what beings it was meeting, it is now very easy to be mistaken. The only protection against being severely injured is the effort to gain ideas and conceptions like those indicated above.

A person who is able to look into the spiritual world is called esoterically a “clairvoyant,” but merely to be clairvoyant is not enough, for such a man might be able to see well enough although unable to discriminate. He who has acquired the faculty of distinguishing the various beings and events of higher worlds, is called an “Initiate”. Initiation brings with it the possibility of distinguishing between different kinds of beings. It is possible to be clairvoyant in the higher worlds without being an initiate. In ancient times distinguishing between spirits was not specially important, for when the ancient occult schools had brought a pupil so far as clairvoyance, there was no great danger of error. Now, however, this danger exists to a high degree. Therefore in all esoteric training, care should be taken that initiation should be acquired in addition to clairvoyance. In proportion to the extent of his clairvoyance must a man become capable of distinguishing between the various kinds of supersensible beings and events.

In modern times the powers guiding humanity are faced by the special task of bringing about a balance between the two principles of clairvoyance and initiation. Leaders of spiritual training had necessarily to pay attention to this at the beginning of the modern era. Therefore the esoteric spiritual movement which is adapted to present conditions, always makes a point of maintaining the right proportion between clairvoyance and initiation. This became necessary at the time when mankind was passing through a crisis with regard to its higher knowledge. That time was the thirteenth century. About the year 1250 was the point of time when mankind felt itself most shut out from the spiritual world. A clairvoyant looking back upon that period sees the following: The most eminent minds of that time who were striving after some kind of higher knowledge could only say to themselves: “What our reason, our intellect, our spiritual knowledge are able to find out is limited to the physical world around us. With all our human endeavor and power of perception, we cannot reach a spiritual world. We only know of it by accepting the information concerning it which our forefathers bequeathed us.” This was the time when direct view of the higher worlds was obscured. That this can be said of the era in which scholasticism flourished, is not without significance.

About the year 1250 was the time when men were compelled to fix a boundary between what they were able to apprehend for themselves, and what they had to believe from the impression made upon them by the traditions which had been handed down. What they could find out for themselves then became limited to the physical world of sense. Afterwards, however, came the time when there was more and more possibility of again winning a view of the spiritual world. But the new clairvoyance was of a different kind from the old, which virtually became extinct just about the year 1250. In the new form of clairvoyance, western esotericism was obliged strictly to uphold the principle that initiation must be the guide of spiritual sight and hearing. This was the special task assigned to an esoteric current which then entered the stream of European civilization. As the year 1250 drew near there arose a new kind of guidance into the super sensible worlds.

This guidance was prepared by the spirits then standing behind outer historical events, who centuries before had provided for the kind of esoteric training which would be rendered necessary by the conditions prevailing in 1250. If the term “modern esotericism” be not misused, it may be applied to the spiritual work of those very highly evolved personalities. External history knows nothing of them, but what they did is apparent in every form of civilization which has developed since the thirteenth century.

The importance of the year 1250 for the spiritual evolution of humanity is specially apparent if we look at the result of clairvoyant research given in the following fact: Even

those individualities who had attained high stages of spiritual development in previous incarnations, and who were reincarnated about 1250, were compelled for a while to undergo a complete clouding over of their direct view of the spiritual world. Quite enlightened individuals were as though cut off from the spiritual world, and their only knowledge of it was through their remembrance of earlier incarnations. Thus we see how necessary it was that from that time onwards a new element should be brought into the spiritual guidance of humanity. This element was true modern esotericism. By its means it is for the first time possible rightly to understand how that which we call the “Christ-impulse” may intervene to guide in all eventualities, not alone the individual, but the whole of mankind.

Between the accomplishment of the Mystery of Golgotha and the beginnings of modern esotericism, lies the first period of the working of the Christ-principle in human souls. During that period, people received Christ to a certain degree unconsciously as far as their higher spirit-forces were concerned, and this caused them afterwards, when they were obliged to receive them consciously, to make all kinds of mistakes, and to lose themselves in a maze instead of understanding Christ. In primitive Christian times we may trace the adoption of the Christ-principle by the lower soul-forces. Then came a new period, in which mankind of today is still living. Indeed, in a certain respect, people are only now beginning to understand the Christ-principle with the higher faculties of their souls. In the further course of this work it will be shown that the decline of supersensible knowledge down to the thirteenth century, and on the other hand its slow revival since that time, coincide with the interposition of the Christ-impulse in human evolution.

We may therefore take modern esotericism to mean the raising of the Christ-impulse to be the motive power in the guidance of souls desiring to work their way to a knowledge of higher worlds, in accordance with the evolutionary conditions of modern times.

LECTURE III

IN ACCORDANCE with what has been said in the preceding chapters, the spiritual guidance of the course of human evolution may be sought for amongst those beings who went through their stage of humanity during the previous embodiment of the *Earth*-planet, during the ancient *Moon* period. This guidance stood contrasted with another which checked, and yet in a certain sense furthered it, and which was carried out by those beings who had not completed their own evolution during the *Moon*-period. Reference is made in both these cases to those guiding beings immediately above man; to those who lead humanity forward, and to those who provoke resistance, thereby strengthening and confirming the forces arising through the progressive beings, by bestowing on them balance and individuality. In Christian Esotericism, these two classes of superhuman beings are called Angels (Angeloi). Above these beings in ascending order, stand those of the higher hierarchies, the Archangels, the Archai, and so forth, who likewise take part in the guidance of humanity.

Within the ranks of these different beings there are all possible gradations in regard to perfection. At the beginning of the present *Earth*-evolution, some in the category of the Angels stand high, while others are less developed. The former have progressed far beyond the minimum of their *Moon*-development. Between these and those who had just reached this minimum when the *Moon*-evolution had come to an end, and the *Earth*-evolution had begun, are all possible gradations. Conformably with this gradation of rank, the beings in question entered during the *Earth*-period upon the leadership of human evolution. Thus the evolution of the Egyptian civilization was effected under the guidance of beings who had become more perfected on the *Moon* than those who were the leaders of the Graeco-Roman period, and these again were more perfect than those who have the leadership at the present time. In the Egyptian as also in the Greek Period, those who later on assumed the direction, were meanwhile developing, and making themselves ready to guide the civilization of later periods.

Since the time of the great Atlantean catastrophe, seven consecutive epochs of civilization have to be differentiated; the first is the ancient Indian epoch, and it is followed by the ancient Persian. [By “ancient Persian” is not meant “Persian” in the usual historic sense, but a pre-historic Asiatic (Iranian) civilization which developed in that land over which, later on, the Persian Kingdom extended.] The third is the Egypto-Chaldæic, the fourth is the Graeco-Roman, and the fifth is our own, which, since about the twelfth century, has been gradually developing and in which we are still living. And since the separate periods overlap, we see already in our times those early events preparing which will lead over into the sixth post-Atlantean epoch. And a seventh epoch will succeed the sixth in due course. On closer observation we find the following evidence with regard to the guidance of mankind. It was during the third epoch of civilization, the Egypto-Chaldæic, that the Angels (or lower dhyanic beings according to Oriental mysticism) were to some extent independent leaders of humanity. They were not so during the ancient Persian civilization. For then they were subject to a higher direction in a much greater degree than in the Egyptian times, and had to regulate everything in conformity with the impulses of the hierarchies immediately above them. In this way everything was under the immediate guidance of the Angels, who themselves submitted to the rulership of the Archangels. And in the Indian epoch when post-Atlantean life had reached such a height in spiritual matters as has never been attained since — a natural height under the direction of great human teachers — the Archangels themselves were subject in a similar sense to the guidance of the Archaï or Primal Powers. Thus if we trace the evolution of humanity from the Indian epoch through the ancient Persian and Egypto-Chaldæic civilizations, we may say that certain beings of the higher hierarchies withdrew ever more and more from the direct guidance of humanity. In the fourth post-Atlantean period, the Graeco-Roman, man had become quite independent. The guiding superhuman beings were certainly intervening to develop humanity, but only in such a way that the reins were tightened as little as possible, and also that the spiritual leaders themselves might profit as much through the deeds of men as men profited through them. Hence arose that peculiar and quite “human” civilization in the Graeco-Roman time in which man was made to rely entirely on himself. For all the distinctive characteristics of art and political life in Greek and Roman times are traceable to the fact that man had to live out his own life in his own way.

So, when we look back to the most ancient times of civilization, we find evolution guided by beings who, in earlier planetary conditions, had accomplished their development as far as the human stage. But the fourth post-Atlantean period of civilization was intended as a time when man should be put to the test as much as possible. Consequently the whole spiritual guidance of humanity had to be reorganized. We are now living in the fifth post-Atlantean period of civilization. The leading beings of this period belong to the same hierarchy as that which ruled the ancient Egyptians and Chaldæans. In fact those beings who then took the lead, have again begun to be active in our times. As has been stated certain of these beings remained behind during the Egypto-Chaldæic civilization, and are to be found manifest in the materialistic feelings and perceptions of our own period.

Now the progress made by the two classes of Angels or lower dhyanic beings — the class which leads mankind forward and that which obstructs — consisted in their being able to be leaders among the Egyptians and Chaldæans. They achieved this by means of those qualities which they had acquired in primordial times, and which they had further developed by their work as leaders. The progressive angels are intervening to guide the fifth post-Atlantean civilization by means of capacities which they themselves had won during the third or Egypto-Chaldæic civilization. Through the progress they make they are acquiring for themselves quite special capabilities, for they are qualifying themselves to receive the influx of forces emanating from the most important Being in the whole evolution of the *Earth*. The power of the Christ is working in them; for that power works not only on the physical world through Jesus of Nazareth, but also in the spiritual worlds upon the super-human beings. The Christ exists not only for the earth but also for these beings. The beings who guided the old Egypto-Chaldæic civilization were not under the direction of the Christ. It is only since that period that they have placed themselves under His guidance. Their progress consists in

their following Him in the higher worlds, so that they may guide our fifth post-Atlantean period of civilization in accordance with His influence. Those beings who operate as obstructive powers remain behind because they failed to put themselves under the leadership of the Christ. Thus they continue to work independently of Him. More and more in human evolution will become evident a materialistic movement under the guidance of these backward Egypto-Chaldæic spirits. This movement will have a materialistic character and the greater part of contemporary science is under its influence. There are, for example, people today who say that our earth in its final essence consists of atoms. Who instills this thought into men's minds? It is the super-human angel beings who had remained behind during the Egypto-Chaldæic period. But, side by side with this movement, there is another making itself *felt*, the one which has as its goal the eventual finding of the Christ-principle by man in all that he does.

Now what will those beings teach who attained their goal in the old Egypto-Chaldæic sphere of civilization, and who then learned to know the Christ? They will be able to instill into man other thoughts than those that assert that there are only material atoms; they will be able to teach that, even to the minutest particle of the world, the substance is permeated with the Spirit of the Christ. And, strange as it may seem, there will be in the future chemists and physicists who will not teach chemistry and physics as they are now taught under the influence of the backward Egypto-Chaldæic spirits; but who will teach that 'matter is built up in the way in which the Christ gradually ordained it,' The Christ will be found working even in the very laws of chemistry and physics. It is a spiritual chemistry and spiritual physics that will come in the future. Today such a statement may appear to many people as fanciful or worse. But often the sense of the future seems folly to the past. The factors which enter into the evolution of human civilization are there for the careful observer. But he will know quite well the objections which may, with apparent justice, be urged against such alleged folly from the modern scientific or philosophic point of view.

From such hypotheses we are able to understand the advantage the guiding super-human beings have over man. Humanity learned to know Christ in the fourth civilization period of the post-Atlantean times, the Graeco-Roman epoch, for it was in the course of this civilization that the Christ-event found its place in evolution, and it was then that man learned to know the Christ. The guiding super-human beings, however, learned to know Him during the Egypto-Chaldæic times, and worked themselves up to Him. Then during the Graeco-Roman civilization they had to leave man to his own fate in order that, later on, they might re-enter the sphere of human evolution. And if nowadays anthroposophy is cultivated, this constitutes recognition of the fact that the super-human beings who formerly guided humanity are now continuing their task as leaders in such a way as to be themselves under the direct guidance of the Christ. Thus it is with other beings also.

In the ancient Persian epoch, the leadership of humanity was apportioned to the Archangels. They put themselves under the direction of the Christ earlier than did the beings in the rank next below them. Of Zarathustra it can be said that pointing to the sun, he spoke to his followers and his people in some such words as these: "In the sun there lives the great Spirit Ahura Mazdao, who will one day come down to the earth." For the beings out of the region of the Archangels who guided Zarathustra, pointed to the great sun-leader who had not at that time come down upon the earth but had only begun his journey thither in order, later on, to enter directly into the earth evolution. And the guiding beings who directed the great teachers of the Indians, also pointed out to these the Christ of the future; for it is a mistake to think that these teachers had no foreknowledge of the Christ. They said that He was "beyond their sphere" and that they "could not attain" unto Him.

As now in our fifth period of civilization, it is the Angels who bring down the Christ into our spiritual evolution, so the sixth period of civilization will be directed by beings belonging to the ranks of the Archangels who guided the ancient Persian civilization. And the spirits of Personality — the Primal Powers — or Archai — who guided humanity during the ancient Indian epoch will have to guide humanity in the seventh period of civilization. In the Graeco-Roman period the Christ descended from the heights of the spirit-world and revealed Himself in the physical body of Jesus of Nazareth. He then came down as far as the physical world.

It will be possible to find Him in the world immediately above ours when humanity shall have become sufficiently ripe. It will not be possible in the future to find Him in the physical world, but only in the world immediately above, for human beings will not always remain the same. Having become more mature, they will then find the Christ in the spiritual world, as Paul found Him in his experience before Damascus, which event prophetically foreshadowed the future means of finding the Christ. And since in our times the same great teachers who have already guided mankind through the Egyptian civilization are working, so also in the twentieth century it will be these same teachers who will lead men out to behold the Christ as Paul beheld Him. They will show mankind how the Christ not only works upon the earth, but how He spiritualizes the whole solar system. And those who will be the reincarnated holy teachers of India in the seventh period of civilization will proclaim the Spirit Who was foreshadowed by the undivided Brahma. To such teaching, however, the right content and meaning can only be given through the Christ, as the great, the immense Spirit, of Whom these teachers formerly said He hovered above their sphere. Thus will humanity be led upwards from stage to stage into the spiritual world.

To speak in this way about the Christ — how He is the leader of the higher hierarchies also in the successive worlds, is to teach the science which, under the sign of the Rose Cross, has endured in our civilization since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. If from this aspect we observe more closely the Being Who lived in Palestine, and Who consummated the Mystery of Golgotha, we shall find the following: up to the present time many ideas concerning the Christ have found expression. There was for instance the idea of certain Christian Gnostics in the first centuries who said that the Christ Who lived in Palestine was not present in any physical body of flesh at all; that He had only an apparent body — an etheric body which had become physically visible; so that His death on the Cross had been no real death but only an apparent one. Then we find diverse disputes among those who professed Christianity, as for example, the well-known controversy between the Arians and Athanasians, and the most varied explanations concerning what the Christ really was. Indeed, right up to *our* own times people express and have expressed the most different ideas concerning the Christ.

Now spiritual science must recognize in Christ not merely an earthly but also a *cosmic* Being. In a certain sense man is, taken as a whole, a cosmic being. He lives a twofold life — one in a physical body from birth to death, another in the spiritual worlds between death and a new birth. When he is incarnated in a physical body, he is living in dependence on the earth, because the physical body is restricted by the forces and conditions of existence belonging to the earth. The human being, however, does not only take the substances and forces of the earth into himself, but is joined to the whole of the earth's organism. When he has passed through the gate of death, he no longer belongs to the forces of the earth; but it would be incorrect to imagine that he belongs to no forces at all, for he is then connected with the forces of the solar system and the more distant star-systems. In this way, between death and a new birth, he lives in the domain of the cosmic, just as in the period between birth and death he lived in the domain of the earthly. From death to a new birth he belongs to the cosmos, as on the earth he belongs to the elements — Air, Water, and Earth. Accordingly, while he is passing through a life between death and a new birth, he comes into the region of cosmic influences. For the planets send forth not merely the physical forces of what astronomy teaches, such as gravitation and others, but also spiritual forces. With these spiritual powers of the cosmos man is connected, each person in a special manner according to his own individuality. If he is born in Europe, he lives in a different relation to warmth conditions, and so forth, than if he had been born, let us say, in Australia. Similarly, during his life between death and a new birth, one person may stand more closely related to the spiritual powers of Mars, another to those of Jupiter, others again to those of the whole planetary system in general, and so on. It is also these forces which bring man back again to the earth. Thus before he is born he is living in connection with the collective whole of stellar space.

According to the way in which a man stands individually related to the cosmic system, so are the forces directed which lead him to this or that set of parents and to this or that locality.

The impetus, the inclination to incarnate here or there, in this or that family, in this or that people, at this or that time, depends on how the person was organically connected with the cosmos before birth. In former times, in that territory where the German tongue was spoken, a specially apt expression was used to indicate a person's entrance into the world through birth. When a person was born, people said that in such and such a place he had "become young" (junggeworden). Therein lies an unconscious reference to the fact that man in the time between death and a new birth continues at first to be subject to the powers which had made him old in a previous incarnation, but that before birth there come in their place such forces as again make him "young." Thus Goethe in "Faust" still uses the expression "to become young in Nebelland." — Nebelland being the old name for mediæval Germany.

The truth underlying the casting of a horoscope is that those who know these things can read the forces which determine a person's physical existence. A certain horoscope is allotted to a person because, within it, those forces find expression which have led him into being. If for example in the horoscope Mars stands over Aries (the Ram), this signifies that certain of the Aries forces are not allowed to pass through Mars, and are weakened. Thus is a man put into his place within physical existence, and it is in accordance with his horoscope that he guides himself before entering upon earthly existence. This subject, which in our times seems so much a thing of chance, should not be touched upon without our attention being called to the fact that nearly everything practised in this connection today is simply dilettantism. It is pure superstition, and for the external world the true science of these matters has been for the most part completely lost. Consequently, the principles expressed here are not to be judged according to that which nowadays frequently leads a questionable existence under the name Astrology.

Now it is the active forces of the stellar world that impel a man into physical incarnation; and when clairvoyant consciousness observes a person, it can perceive in his organization how this has resulted from the cooperation of cosmic forces. We may now attempt to illustrate this hypothetically, but in a form corresponding entirely with clairvoyant observation. If a person's physical brain were extracted and its construction clairvoyantly examined, so that it might be seen how certain parts are situated in certain places and how they send out appendages, it would be found that each individual's brain is different from that of every other. No two people have brains alike. Let us imagine further that such a brain could be photographed in its complete structure so that one would have a kind of half sphere in which every detail was visible. In a series of such pictures each would be different according to the brains of the different individuals. And if one were to photograph a person's brain at the moment of birth and then photograph also the heavens lying exactly over the person's birthplace, this latter picture would be of exactly the same appearance as that of the human brain. As certain centers were arranged in the latter, so would the stars be in the photograph of the heavens. Man has within himself a picture of the heavens, and every man has a different one, according to whether he was born in this place or that, and at this or that time. This is one indication that man is born from out of the whole cosmos.

When we keep this clearly in view we can rise to the idea of how the macrocosm manifests itself in each separate individual, and then, starting from this point, we can attain a conception of how it showed itself in the Christ. But if we were to imagine the Christ after the Baptism of John as though the macrocosm had then been living in Him in the same way as in other people, we should be mistaken.

Let us first consider Jesus of Nazareth. His conditions of existence were quite exceptional. At the beginning of our era two boys were born and named Jesus. The one came through the Nathan line of the house of David, [Luke III, 23–38.] the other through the Solomon line of the same house. [Matthew 1, 1–17. See also Appendix.] These two children were not born quite at the same time, but nearly so. In the Jesus descended from Solomon, described in the Gospel of St. Matthew, there was incarnated the same individuality who had formerly lived on the earth as Zarathustra, so that in this Child Jesus there appears the re-incarnated Zarathustra or Zoroaster. The individuality of Zarathustra grew up in this Child until, as St. Matthew says, His twelfth year. In that year, Zarathustra left the body of this Child and passed over into that of the other Child Jesus Whom the Gospel of St. Luke

describes. In consequence of this the latter Child became suddenly quite different. The parents were astonished when they found Him in Jerusalem in the temple after the spirit of Zarathustra had entered into Him. This is intimated when it is said that the Child, after having been lost and found again in the temple, so spoke that his parents did not recognize Him. They only knew Him, the Child descended from Nathan, as He had been up to this time. But when He began to reason with the doctors in the temple, it was possible for Him to speak as He did because the spirit of Zarathustra had come into Him. Until the thirtieth year did the spirit of Zarathustra live in the Jesus who was descended from the Nathan line of the house of David. In this body He ripened to a still higher perfection. The following remark must here be added: as regards this personality in which the spirit of Zarathustra *now* lived, an extraordinary feature was that into his astral body the Buddha rayed forth his impulses from the spiritual worlds.

The oriental tradition is correct which says that the Buddha was born as a “Bodhisattva” and only during his time on earth, in his twenty-ninth year, rose to the dignity of a Buddha. When the Gautama Buddha was a little child, the Indian sage Asita came weeping into the royal palace of his father, Suddhodana. He wept because, as a seer, he knew that this King's son would become the Buddha, and because as an old man, he felt that he would no longer be living to see that event take place. Now this sage was born again in the time of Jesus of Nazareth. It is he who is brought before us in the Gospel of St. Luke as the priest of the temple who saw the revelation of the Buddha in the Child Jesus descended from Nathan. And seeing this he was able to say: “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace for I have seen my Master,” What he had not been able to see previously in India, he saw through the astral body of the Boy Jesus, Who comes before us in St. Luke's Gospel: the Bodhisattva become Buddha.

All this was necessary in order that that body might be produced which received the baptism of St. John in the Jordan. At that moment the individuality of Zarathustra left the threefold body, the physical, the etheric and the astral body of that Jesus Who had grown up in so complicated a manner, in order that the spirit of Zarathustra might be able to dwell in Him. The reincarnated Zarathustra had to pass through two possibilities of development which were given in the two Jesus children. Thus there stood before the Baptist the body of Jesus of Nazareth and in it from that time onwards there acted the cosmic individuality of the Christ. Now, as we have shown, in the case of any other human being, the cosmic spiritual laws work upon him only in so far as they give him a start in earth-life. Afterwards there appear in opposition to these laws, others which arise out of the conditions of the earth-evolution. In the case of the Christ-Jesus, after the baptism of John the cosmic-spiritual forces alone remained effective without being influenced in any way through the laws of the earth evolution.

Thus in Palestine during the time that Jesus of Nazareth walked on earth as Christ-Jesus — during the three last years of his life, from his thirtieth to his thirty-third year, the entire Being of the cosmic Christ was acting uninterruptedly upon Him, and was working into Him. The Christ stood always under the influence of the entire cosmos — He made no step without this working of the cosmic forces into and in Him. That which here took place in Jesus of Nazareth was a continual realization of the horoscope, for at every moment there occurred that which otherwise happens only at a person's birth. This could be so only because the whole body of Jesus descended from Nathan had remained open to the influence of the sum total of the forces of the cosmic spiritual hierarchies which direct our earth. If thus the whole spirit of the cosmos worked into the Christ-Jesus, who was it that went, for example, to Capernaum? He who went about as a being upon the earth appeared quite like any other man. The forces active within Him, however, were the cosmic forces, coming from the sun and stars; and these directed His Body. And it was always in accordance with the collective Being of the whole Universe with whom the earth is in harmony, that all which the Christ-Jesus did took place. It is because of this that in the case of the acts of the Christ-Jesus there is so often some slight hint given in the Gospels about the relative grouping of the stars at the time. We read in St. John's Gospel how the Christ finds His first disciples. There we are told: “It was about the tenth hour,” because in this fact

the spirit of the whole cosmos found expression in conformity with the appointed moment of time. Such intimations are less clear in the other Gospel passages, but he who can truly read the Gospels finds them everywhere. From this point of view also the miracles are to be judged. Let us take one passage — the one that runs thus: “When the sun was set, they brought the sick unto Him, and He healed them.” What does that mean? The evangelist is drawing attention to the fact that this healing was connected with the whole position of the constellations and that, at the time in question, the constellations throughout the heavens stood as they only could have when the sun had set. The meaning is that, at the time, the requisite healing forces could make themselves felt after sun-set, and the Christ-Jesus is represented as the intermediary Who brought the sick into connection with the forces of the cosmos which, just at that time, could work curatively. These forces were the same as those which worked as Christ in Jesus. It was through the presence of Christ that the healing took place. Only thus could the sick person be exposed to the healing forces of the cosmos which could only work as they did when they were in the right relationship to time and space. Thus these forces worked on the sick person through their representative, the Christ. But it was only just during the time of Christ on earth that they could so work. It was only then that such a connection existed between the cosmic constellations and the powers of the human organism that for certain illnesses, healing could intervene when through the instrumentality of the Christ-Jesus the cosmic grouping of the same forces was able to work on men. A repetition of this relationship in the evolution of the cosmos and the earth is as little possible as is a second incarnation of the Christ in a human body. Regarded in this way, the life of the Christ-Jesus appears as the earthly expression of a definite connection between the cosmos and the forces of man. The tarrying of a sick person by the side of Christ means that through the proximity of Christ this sick person found himself in such a relation with the macrocosm that the latter could work upon him curatively.

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Herewith the points of view have been stressed which enable us to discern how the guidance of humanity has come under the influence of the Christ. The other forces, however, which had remained behind in the Egypto-Chaldæic times worked on side by side with those that are permeated by the Christ. This is evident even in the attitude frequently adopted today towards the Gospels. Literary works appear in which great pains are taken to show that the Gospels can be understood through an astrological interpretation. The greatest opponents of the Gospels employ this astrological interpretation to prove, for example, that the way taken by the Archangel Gabriel from Elizabeth to Mary signifies merely the progress of the sun from the constellation of Virgo to another. This, in a certain sense, is correct, except that these thoughts were poured in this manner into our age by the beings who had remained behind during the Egypto-Chaldæic period. Under such an influence people are induced to a make-belief that the Gospels present only allegories in the place of definite cosmic relations. The truth really is that in the Christ the whole cosmos finds expression. Therefore one can express the life of the Christ by connecting its separate events with the cosmic relations which work into earth existence unceasingly *through the Christ*. A right understanding of this matter will thus lead to a full recognition of the Christ as having lived on earth. Whereas if the interpretation were true that the Christ life as expressed in the Gospels is only a matter of constellations being treated allegorically, then we should have to conclude that there was no real earthly Christ at all.

If a comparison were to be used, we might think of each human being as represented by a spherical mirror — which, if it were set up, would give pictures of all its surroundings. Let us suppose we were to trace with a pencil the outline of all that is shown from the surroundings. We could then take the mirror and carry the picture about with us wherever we went. Let this be a symbol for the fact that when a person is born, he brings with him a copy of the cosmos in himself, and afterwards carries about with him all through his life the effect of this one picture. The mirror might, however, be left untouched by the pencil, so that wherever the person carried it, it would depict the immediate surroundings. It then would

always be giving a picture of the collective environment. This would be a symbol of the Christ from the baptism of St. John up to the Mystery of Golgotha. That which, in the case of any other person, passes into his earthly existence only at birth, flowed into the Christ-Jesus at every moment. And when the Mystery of Golgotha was consummated, that which had been radiating from the cosmos passed over into the spiritual substance of the earth, and has from that time forward been united with the spirit of the earth.

When St. Paul became clairvoyant before Damascus, he could recognize that That Which had formerly been in the cosmos has passed over into the spirit of the earth. Of this every one can be convinced who can bring his soul into such a condition that he can have the same experience as had St. Paul. It is in the twentieth century that those people will first appear who will have St. Paul's experience of the Christ event in a spiritual way.

Whereas up to our times this event could be experienced only by such persons as had gained clairvoyant powers by means of an esoteric training; hereafter to look upon the Christ in the spiritual sphere surrounding the earth will be possible for the advanced powers of the soul in the course of the natural evolution of humanity. This — as a repetition of the experience of the event before Damascus — will be possible for some people from a certain point of time in the twentieth century. The number of such people will afterwards increase, until in the distant future, it will be a natural faculty of the human soul.

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With the entrance of Christ into the evolution of the earth an entirely new impulse or direction was given to this evolution. External facts of history also express this. In the early times of post-Atlantean evolution men knew very well that above them there was not merely a physical Mars, but that what they saw as Mars, Jupiter, or Saturn was the expression of a spiritual being. In later times this perception was completely forgotten. The heavenly bodies became, according to human ideas, mere bodies to be estimated according to their physical condition. In the Middle Ages people saw in connection with the stars what only the eyes can see — the sphere of Venus, the sphere of the Sun, the sphere of Mars and the other planets, up to the sphere of the fixed stars. Then came the eighth sphere like a solid blue wall behind. Later Copernicus appeared and broke down the idea that only that which is perceptible to the senses can be authoritative. The modern physical scientists may indeed say: "It is madness to declare that the world is Maya, or illusion, and that you must look into a spiritual world in order to see the truth, for in spite of all you say true science is that which relies on the senses and records what these senses tell." But when did astronomers rely only on the senses? Surely at the very time when that astronomical science was dominant which is attacked by the science of today! It was at that time when Copernicus began to think out what exists in the cosmic space beyond the evidence of the senses, that our modern astronomy as a science began. And so it is in every domain of science. Wherever science, in the most modern sense of the word, has arisen, it has done so in opposition to what had been apparent to the senses. When Copernicus declared "what you see is Maya or deception; rely on what you cannot see" — that was the moment when the science came into being which is recognized as such today. It might thus be said to the representative of modern science "your science itself only became 'science' when it was no longer willing to depend upon the senses only."

Giordano Bruno came as philosophical interpreter of the teachings of Copernicus. He led the gaze of man out into cosmic space, and announced that what people had called the limitations of space, what they had placed there as the eighth sphere limiting everything in space — was in reality *no* limitation; it was Maya, or illusion; for an infinite number of worlds had been poured forth into cosmic space. That which was formerly considered to be the boundary of space was shown to be only the boundary of the sense-world of man, and if we direct our gaze beyond the sense-world, we shall no longer see the world only as known to the senses, but we shall also recognize Infinity.

From this it is apparent that in the course of human evolution man originally started from a spiritual view of the cosmos and in time lost it. In its place there came a mere sense-

perception of the world. Then there came into evolution the Christ Impulse. Through this, mankind was led to stamp the spiritual view once more upon the materialistic. At that moment when Giordano Bruno burst the fetters of sense illusion, the Christ evolution was so far advanced that the soul power which had been kindled by the Christ Impulse could then become active within him. An indication is thus given of the whole significance of the manner in which the life of Christ penetrates all human evolution, at the mere beginning of which humanity stands today.

To what then does spiritual science now aspire? It completes the work begun for external science by Giordano Bruno and others in that it says: that which external science is able to perceive is Maya, or illusion. Just as formerly one looked to the "eighth sphere" and thought that space was thereby bounded, so contemporary human thought believes that man is shut in or enclosed between birth and death. Spiritual science, however, expands man's vision by directing his attention out and beyond the limits of birth and death.

There is a continuous chain in human evolution which such ideas as these make us recognize. And in the true sense of the words, that which resulted in the conquest of sense illusion through Copernicus and Giordano Bruno proceeded from the inspiration arising from that spiritual current now working in the modern spiritual science of anthroposophy. What one might call the newer esotericism worked in a mysterious manner on Copernicus, Bruno, Kepler and others. Those therefore who now base their thought on foundations laid by Giordano Bruno and Copernicus and do not wish to accept anthroposophy, are unfaithful to their own traditions in desiring to hold fast to sense illusion. As Giordano Bruno forced a way through the blue firmament of heaven, even so does spiritual science break down the barriers of birth and death for man by showing how he originates from out of the macrocosm, lives in a physical existence, passes through death, and reenters macrocosmic life. And what we see in a limited degree in each individual meets us unrestrictedly and in a larger sense in the representative of the spirit of the cosmos — in the Christ-Jesus. Once and once only could that impulse be given which the Christ gave. Once only could the whole cosmos be thus reflected, for the conjunction of the stars which then took place can never be repeated. In order to give an impulse to the earth, this conjunction was obliged to work through a human body. As it is true that this same grouping cannot occur a second time, so it is equally true that the Christ was only once incarnated. Only if one did not know that the Christ is the representative of the whole universe and only if it were impossible to win one's way to this Christ-Idea, the elements for which are given through spiritual science — only then would it be possible to maintain that Christ could appear more than once upon the earth.

Thus we see how an idea of Christ arises out of the new spiritual science, which reveals to man in a new form his connection with the whole macrocosm. Certainly, in order to gain a true knowledge of the Christ, those inspiring forces are absolutely necessary which are now being bestowed by the same super-human beings who formerly guided the Egypto-Chaldæic epoch and who have now put themselves under the Christ. There is need of a new inspiration of this kind, of an inspiration which the great esoteric teachers of the middle ages had prepared from the thirteenth century onwards, and which from this time forth must ever come more and more into publicity. When man, according to the meaning of this science, prepares his soul aright for the knowledge of the spirit-world, he can then hear clairaudiently and he can see clairvoyantly what is revealed by the old Chaldæic and Egyptian angel beings who are now again acting as spiritual leaders under the guidance of the Christ. That which humanity will some time later actually gain thereby, could only be prepared in the first centuries of Christianity and up to our times.

Consequently we may say that in the future there will live in the hearts of men an idea of the Christ incomparable in greatness with anything which humanity has so far recognized. That which arose as a first impulse through the Christ, and has lived as an idea of Him up to the present time — even in the case of the best representatives of the Christ-principle — is only a preparation for the true understanding of the Christ. It would be strange indeed if, against those who in the West gave expression in such a way as this to the Christ-idea, it were brought as a reproach that they do not stand on the foundation of western Christian

tradition. But *it* is quite possible, for this western tradition does not by any means suffice to help us to comprehend the Christ of the near future.

From the hypothesis of western esotericism we can see the spiritual direction of humanity gradually flowing into what may be in a real, true sense called the guidance which comes from the Christ-impulse. That which is appearing as the new esotericism will flow slowly into the hearts of men, and the spiritual guidance of men and of humanity will ever more and more be consciously seen in such a light. We realize within ourselves how at first the Christ-principle flowed into the hearts of men because the Christ had gone about Palestine in the physical body of Jesus of Nazareth. Because men by that time were gradually surrendering themselves to reliance on the world of sense, they could receive the impulse which corresponded to their perception. Afterwards that same impulse so worked through the inspiration of the new esotericism that such spirits as Nicholas of Cusa, Copernicus, and Galileo were inspired, and Copernicus, for instance, was enabled to make this assertion: "That which is evident to the senses cannot teach the truth about solar systems; if we want to find the truth we must investigate behind sense appearances" At that time men, even spirits like Giordano Bruno, were not yet ripe enough to join consciously to the new esoteric stream. The spirit of the movement had to work in them unconsciously. Yet powerful and magnificent was the announcement of Giordano Bruno: "When a human being enters into existence by means of birth, then it is something macrocosmic that concentrates itself as a monad; and when a human being passes through death the monad spreads itself out again; that which was enclosed within the body spreads itself out in the cosmos in order to draw itself together again in other stages of existence, and again to spread itself out." There Bruno gave expression to mighty conceptions which, even if expressed in stammering tongue, were in entire accord with the sense of the new esotericism.

The spiritual influences which lead humanity need not work in such a way that man is always conscious of them. For example, they put Galileo in the cathedral of Pisa. Thousands had seen the old church lamp there, but they had not seen it as did Galileo. He saw the church lamp swinging; compared the time of its oscillation with the beat of his own pulse; found that the church lamp swung in a regular rhythm resembling his pulse-beat; and from this discovered the laws of the pendulum in the sense of modern physics. Anyone acquainted with contemporary physics knows that this science would not be possible without Galileo's principle. In this way the force was then working which is now appearing as spiritual science; Galileo was placed in the cathedral of Pisa before the oscillating church lamp, and modern physics gained its principles. In such a mysterious way do the guiding spiritual forces of humanity perform their work.

We are now approaching the time when people are to become conscious of these guiding powers. We shall always come to a better and better understanding of what has to happen in the future if we rightly understand what is working inspirationally as the new esotericism. We must recognize that those same spiritual beings indicated as their gods by the ancient Egyptians when the Greeks asked them about their teachers, are now again assuming control through having placed themselves under the leadership of the Christ. Ever more and more will men feel how they can cause to reappear in a brighter lustre, in a nobler style and on a higher level, that which was pre-Christian. The consciousness necessary for the present time, which must be an intensified consciousness, ought to give us a feeling of our high duty and great responsibility in reference to the recognition of the spiritual world. This can only penetrate our souls when we have recognized, in the sense indicated, the task of spiritual science.