

# The Gospel of St. John

in Relation to the other Gospels especially that of St. Luke

By Rudolf Steiner

GA 112

A course of fourteen lectures given at Cassel, 24th June to 7th July, 1909. This translation has been made from the original of Rudolf Steiner, by permission of H. Collison, M.A. (Oxon) by whom all Rights are reserved. Published in German as *Das Johannes-Evangelium im Verhaeltnis zu den Drei Anderen Evangelien, Besonders zu dem Lukas-Evangelium*. Published by kind permission of the *Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung*, Dornach, Switzerland.

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### CONTENTS

Christians of St. John. The rebirth of the higher Ego in man and in humanity  
e living spiritual history. The leaders of humanity. The creative Word  
ie metamorphoses of the Earth. The prototypes of created types. The servants of the Word  
ie hierarchies of our solar system and the kingdoms of the earth  
man development during the incarnations of our Earth. The kingdom of the Luciferic and  
Ahrimanic spirits and the kingdom of the divine spiritual beings  
ie Atlantean oracles. The post Atlantean Sanctuaries of initiation. The Baptism by John  
he Baptism with Water and the Baptism with Fire and Spirit  
The Mysteries of initiation. The rebirth through Christ Jesus  
ie artistic composition of the Gospel of St. John. The climax of power in the signs and miracles  
iat occurred at the Baptism by John? Christ's mastery over the laws of the bony system and the  
conquest of death  
ie establishment of harmony in the inner forces of man through the Christ-impulse. The  
connection between the ancient Mysteries and the Gospels  
he decline of the ancient wisdom and its renewal through the Christ-impulse. The significance of  
the Mystery of Golgotha for human evolution upon earth  
The cosmic significance of the Mystery of Golgotha. The conquest of death through the expulsion  
of the Luciferic and Ahrimanic influence. Death as the bringer of life. The Earth becomes a new  
Sun. The power of Christ radiates into the human etheric body. The effects of the Christ-light and  
its reflection in the earth's periphery as a spiritual sphere. The Holy Ghost  
The Earth as the body of Christ and as a new centre of light. The Last Supper as the preparation  
for the mystical union with Christ. Paul, the apostle of the spiritually living Christ. The seven  
stages of Christian initiation. Death, the seed of eternal Ego-hood. Spirit-knowledge is the fire of  
life

# The Gospel of St. John

## LECTURE I

Cassel, St. John's Day, 1909

My Dear Friends,

The celebration of a particular festival on the present day of the year was a custom to which a large portion of aspiring humanity adhered, and it is a matter of importance for the friends of the anthroposophical movement assembled with us in this city that the present series of lectures should begin precisely on midsummer or St. John's Day. As long ago as in ancient Persia a festival known as the 'Baptism of Fire and Water' was associated with a day which would roughly correspond to a day in June at the present time. In ancient Rome the festival of Vesta fell on a similar day in June, and that again was a festival of 'Baptism by Fire'. And if we look back upon European civilization before the spread of Christianity, we again find a June festival which coincided with the time of the year when the days begin to shorten and the nights to lengthen — when the sun begins to lose a part of the strength he lavishes upon all growth and increase on earth. To our European ancestors this June festival appeared as a gradual withdrawal and disappearing of the God Baldur — Baldur who, in their minds, was associated with the Sun. In Christian times this same festival gradually became that of St. John, the forerunner of Christ Jesus. Thus it can also be our starting-point for the considerations to which we will devote ourselves during the next few days, bearing upon this most important event in the evolution of humanity — upon the Deed of Christ Jesus. Indeed, the subject of the present course of lectures will be founded upon the whole import of this Deed for the evolution of humanity, and upon its manner of presentation, firstly in the most significant of human documents, in the Gospel according to St. John, then, by comparison, in the other Gospels.

The festival of St. John reminds us that the greatest Individuality who participated in the evolution of humanity was preceded by a 'Forerunner', and we here touch upon an important point which must precede our further considerations, also as a kind of 'forerunner'. In the course of the development of humanity there occur, ever and again, events of surpassing importance shedding a stronger light than others. We can observe these essential occurrences in epoch after epoch of history, and ever and again we are told of men who, in a measure, know of them in advance and can foretell their coming. These are no arbitrary events; indeed, whoever has insight into the whole meaning and spirit of human history is aware that such events must come, and knows how he himself must work in preparation for them to take place.

During the next few days we shall often have occasion to speak of the Forerunner of Christ. Today we shall consider him from the standpoint that he was one of those who, by virtue of special spiritual gifts, have a deeper insight into things and know that there are super-eminent moments in the evolution of humanity. Hence he was fitted to pave the way for Christ Jesus. But when we look upon Christ Jesus Himself, we clearly realize that the division of chronology into epochs before and after His appearance upon earth is not without good reason. By adhering to this division, humanity to a large extent shows that it is sensible of the incisive significance of the Christ-Mystery. But whatever is real and true must ever and again be proclaimed in new forms and new ways, for the requirements of humanity alter from epoch to epoch. Our time needs, in a sense, a new annunciation of this greatest of events in the history of man, and it is the will of Anthroposophy to be this annunciation.

This anthroposophical annunciation is new only in respect of its form; its content, the subject of these lectures, was for centuries taught within our European civilization and spiritual life. The one difference between the former and the present annunciation is that the latter may be addressed to a wider circle. The smaller circles within which this teaching has been heard for centuries recognized the same sign which you here see before you — the Rosy Cross. This may therefore again stand as the symbol of the same annunciation, now that the latter finds its way to a greater public. Let me now figuratively describe the foundations upon which this Rosicrucian annunciation of Christ Jesus rested.

The Rosicrucians (not the strange new group being founded in America in California using the same name) are a community which has cultivated, since the fourteenth century, a spiritual, a genuinely spiritual Christianity within the sphere of European spiritual life. Apart from all exterior historical forms, this Rosicrucian Society sought to reveal the deepest truths of Christianity to its followers, whom it also called 'Christians of St. John'. An understanding of this expression, 'Christians of St. John', will enable us, if not to explain with our intellect, at any

rate to grasp with our presentiment the whole spirit and tenor of the following lectures.

You all know the opening words of the Gospel of St. John: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a God. The same was in the beginning with God.' The Word or Logos was in the beginning with God, and the Light, it is further said, shone in the darkness but the darkness comprehended it not. This Light was in the world and among men, but of those only a small number were capable of comprehending it. Then there appeared the Word made Flesh as a Man — in a Man whose forerunner was the Baptist, John. And now we see how they who had to some extent grasped the significance of this appearance of Christ upon earth are at pains to explain the real nature of Christ. The author of the Gospel of St. John definitely indicates that the deepest Being enfolded in Jesus of Nazareth was naught else than the Being out of which all beings proceeded; that it was the living spirit, the living Word, the Logos Himself.

The other Evangelists were also at pains, each in his own way, to describe what actually appeared in Jesus of Nazareth. The author of the Gospel of St. Luke endeavours to show how something quite especial appeared when, through the Baptism of Christ Jesus by John the Baptist, the Spirit united itself with the body of Jesus of Nazareth. The same writer goes on to show how this Jesus of Nazareth is a descendant of a line of ancestors reaching far, far back into the past. We are told that the genealogical tree of Jesus of Nazareth reaches back to David, to Abraham, to Adam, and even to God Himself. We find it clearly indicated that Jesus of Nazareth was the son of Joseph; Joseph was the son of Heli; then: he was the son of David; and further: he was the son of Adam, and Adam was the son of God. That is to say, the writer of St. Luke's Gospel lays special stress on the fact that from Jesus of Nazareth, on whom the Spirit descended at the Baptism of St. John, a direct line of descent can be traced to Him whom he calls the Father of Adam — God. Such things must absolutely be taken literally.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew the attempt is made to trace the lineage of Jesus of Nazareth back to Abraham to whom God revealed Himself.

Thus, the Individuality who is the bearer of Christ, indeed, the whole advent of Christ, is represented not only as one of the greatest but as the very greatest of phenomena in the evolution of humanity. What is here unmistakably expressed can be put in the following simple words: If Christ Jesus was regarded by those who had an inkling of His greatness as the most momentous figure in the evolution of humanity upon earth, there must be some connection between this same Christ Jesus and the holiest, most essential element in man himself. There must be something within man which is in direct correspondence with the Christ-event. If Christ Jesus, as is stated in the Gospels, really represents the greatest event in the evolution of mankind, must there not be in all things and in each human soul some bond of union with Christ Jesus? Indeed, the most important and essential point, in the eyes of the Christians of St. John and the Rosicrucians, was precisely the fact that in each human soul something exists which directly bears upon and is connected with the events which occurred in Palestine through Christ Jesus. Moreover, if the Christ-event may be called the supreme event for humanity, the element which corresponds to the Christ-event in the human soul must be the supreme feature in man. What can this be?

The Rosicrucian answer to this question was that every human soul is open to an experience which is expressed by the word 'awakening', or 'rebirth', or 'initiation'. We shall see what is meant by these words.

When we behold, in the world around us, the various things which our eyes perceive and our hands touch, we observe how they arise and decay. We see how the flowers blossom and wither, and how the year's whole vegetation comes to life and dies away, and though there are things in the world such as mountains and rocks, apparently defying the ages, the proverb 'Constant dropping wears a stone' points to a premonition in the human soul that the very rocks and mountains, in all their majesty, are subject to the laws of the temporal world. Man knows that whatever is formed from the elements grows and decays; and this applies not only to his bodily form but also to his temporal self. They, however, who know how a spiritual world may be attained, are aware that though a man's eyes, ears, and other senses do not avail for this purpose, he may nevertheless enter the spiritual world by way of awakening, or rebirth, or initiation. And what is reborn?

When a man looks within himself, he finally comes to the conclusion that what he finds in his inner self is the being of which he speaks as 'I'. The 'I' is distinguished, by virtue of its very name, from all things of the exterior world. To every exterior thing a name may be applied from outside. We can all call the table 'table', and the clock 'clock'. The word 'I', however, can never resound upon our ear if we ourselves are meant, for this word ('I') must be uttered in our inner self. To every other being we are 'thou'. This fact in itself enables man to find the distinction between this Ego-being and all else within and around himself. But to this we must add something which the spiritual investigators of all ages have emphasized ever again from their own experience for the benefit of mankind — namely, that within this 'I' another, a higher Ego, is born, as the child is born of the mother.

When we consider the human being as he confronts us in life, we see him first as a child, clumsy in respect of his surroundings, and merely beholding things; gradually and by degrees he learns to understand the things; we see how his intelligence awakens, how his will and intellect grow, and how he increases in strength and energy. But there are individuals who advance also in another way; they attain a higher development, behold the ordinary; they reach the point, so to speak, of finding a second Ego which, looking down upon the first Ego, can say 'thou' to it,

even as the ordinary Ego says 'thou' to the exterior world and to its own body.

Thus a distant ideal of the human soul can become actuality for those who, following the instructions of the spiritual investigator, say to themselves: 'The self of which I have known hitherto partakes of the outer world and passes away with it. But a second self slumbers in me — a self of which men are not aware, though it is equally united with the eternal, as the first self with the transitory and the temporal.' Upon the consummation of rebirth, the higher Ego can behold a spiritual world even as the lower Ego can perceive the sensible world through the senses. This so-called awakening, rebirth, or initiation is the greatest event the human soul can experience, a view held also by those who called themselves followers of the Rosy Cross. They knew that this birth of the higher self which can look down upon the lower self as a man looks upon the outer world — this event, they knew, must stand in connection with the event of Christ Jesus. That is to say: even as individual man can experience a new birth in the course of his development, a new birth for the whole of humanity took place through Christ Jesus. Man's individual experience of the birth of his higher Ego as an inner, mystic and spiritual event — this was enacted for the whole of humanity as an historical fact in the outer world through Christ Jesus in Palestine.

In what light did this event appear, for instance, to the writer of St. Luke's Gospel? He could say to himself: the genealogy of Jesus of Nazareth reaches back to Adam and even to God. Humanity once descended from divine spiritual heights to dwell in a physical human body; humanity was born of the spirit; it was with God. Adam was sent down from spiritual heights into matter; in this sense he is the Son of God. Thus there was once a divine spiritual kingdom which densified, as it were, to the transitory earthly kingdom. Adam appeared, the earthly image of the Son of God. From him descended the human race which inhabits a physical body. In Jesus of Nazareth there lived, in a special manner, something over and above what lives in one and every man — something which can be found in its true nature only if we are conscious that the essential part in man has its origin in divine being. In Jesus of Nazareth something is still evident of this divine origin. Hence the writer of St. Luke's Gospel feels impelled to say: Behold Him who was baptized by John. He bears special characteristics of the divine source from which Adam descended. That divine source can be reborn in Him. The divine being which descended into matter and, as divinity, disappeared in the human race, behold, it now reappears. Humanity can be born again, in its inmost divine nature, in Jesus of Nazareth. In short, the writer of St. Luke's Gospel wished to say: When we trace the lineage of Jesus of Nazareth to its origin, we find in him again the divine origin and the attributes of the Son of God, in a renewed form and in greater measure than humanity hitherto existing could show.

The writer of St. John's Gospel emphasized still more strongly that there was something divine in man and that this divinity appeared in its supreme form as the Logos Himself. The God who was as though buried in matter is born again in Jesus of Nazareth. That was the meaning of these writers who prefaced their Gospels in the above manner. And they who wished to carry on the wisdom of the Gospels — the Christians of St. John — what did they say? They taught as follows: For every individual man there is a great, a mighty event which may be called the birth of the higher self. As the child is born of the mother, so too the divine Ego is born of the individual human being. Initiation, awakening is possible, and when it is consummated, things that were hitherto of importance are superseded. A comparison will show what then becomes of primary importance.

Suppose we have before us a man who has reached his seventieth year — an 'awakened' man who has gained his higher Ego, and let us suppose that he experienced the rebirth or awakening of his higher self in his fortieth year. Anyone intending to write his life might say: Here is a man in whom the higher self is born. Five years ago I knew him in such a position, ten years ago in another. If the identity of this man were to be shown with reference to the significance of his birth, the forty years of his physical existence would be traced back and described from the standpoint of spiritual science. In his fortieth year, however, the higher self is born in this man and thenceforward sheds its light over all the circumstances of his life. He is now a new man. What precedes this event is now of less importance to us; we are now chiefly concerned to know how the higher self grows and develops from year to year. When this individual has reached his seventieth year, we should enquire what had been the career of his higher Ego from his fortieth to his seventieth year, and the presence of his true spiritual Ego in his seventieth year would be primarily important for us, if indeed we believed in what was born in his soul at the age of forty. The writers of the Gospels proceeded in this manner; so too the Christians of St. John and followers of the Rosy Cross, when they considered that Being whom we call Christ Jesus.

The Evangelists had set themselves the task firstly to show that Christ Jesus issues from the primal spirit of the world, indeed from God Himself. The Divinity hitherto concealed in all mankind becomes pre-eminently manifest in Christ Jesus. This is the same God of whom it is said in St. John that He was there in the beginning. And it was the aim of the Evangelists to show that that God and no other was in Jesus of Nazareth. They, however, whose task it was to carry on the wisdom of all ages, even into our time, were bent upon showing how the higher Ego of mankind, the divine spirit of humanity, born in Jesus of Nazareth through the events in Palestine, has remained one and the same, having been truly preserved by those who rightly understood it. And as in the case described above, of the man whose higher Ego is born in his fortieth year, the Evangelists described the God in man up to and including the events in Palestine. The successors of the Evangelists, however, had to show that the events thus described covered the birth of the higher Ego and that thenceforward we are concerned with the spiritual aspect alone, which now outshines everything else. The Christians of St. John, whose symbol was the Rosy Cross, said: Precisely that which was reborn as the mystery of humanity's higher self, this same has been preserved intact. It was preserved by that exclusive community which took its rise in Rosicrucianism. This continuity is indicated symbolically in the

legend of the sacred vessel called the 'Holy Grail', from which Christ Jesus ate and drank and in which the blood which flowed from His wounds was gathered by Joseph of Arimathea. This vessel, they say, was brought to Europe by angels. A temple was built for it and the Rosicrucians became the guardians of its content, that is, of that which constituted the very essence of the reborn God. The mystery of the reborn God prevailed among men — the mystery of the Holy Grail. It is presented to us as a new Gospel, and we are told the writer of the Gospel of St. John, whom we venerate, could say in his wisdom: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a God.' The same that was in the beginning with God has been born again in Him whom we saw suffer and die upon Golgotha and who is risen again. The continuity of the divine principle through all ages and the resurrection of the same is described by the writer of the Gospel of St. John. But the narrators of such things knew that that which was from the beginning has been preserved unchanged. IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE MYSTERY OF THE HIGHER HUMAN EGO; THE SAME WAS PRESERVED IN THE GRAIL AND REMAINED UNITED THEREWITH. IN THE GRAIL LIVES THE EGO WHICH IS UNITED WITH THE ETERNAL AND THE IMMORTAL, EVEN AS THE LOWER EGO IS UNITED WITH THE TRANSITORY AND THE MORTAL. Whoever knows the mystery of the Holy Grail knows that from the wood of the Cross springs living, budding life, the immortal self symbolized by the roses on the dark wood of the Cross. Thus the mystery of the Rosy Cross may be regarded as a continuation of the Gospel of St. John and, in this respect, we may truly speak the following words: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him and without Him was no thing made. In Him was the Life and the Life was the Light of men. And the Light shone in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. Only a few, in whom something lived that was not born of the flesh, comprehended the Light that shone in the Darkness. Then the Light became flesh and dwelt among men in the likeness of Jesus of Nazareth.' Now we might continue: 'And in Christ who dwelt in Jesus of Nazareth we see none but the higher, divine self of all mankind, the God who came down to earth in Adam and was born again. This reborn human self was continued as a sacred mystery; it was preserved under the symbol of the Rosy Cross and is annunciated today as the mystery of the Holy Grail and the Rosy Cross.'

The higher Ego which may be born in every human soul points to the rebirth of the divine Ego in the evolution of humanity through the event in Palestine. Even as the higher self is born in every human being, the higher self of the totality of mankind was born in Palestine. The same is preserved and further developed behind the external symbol of the Rosy Cross. But when we consider human evolution, this one great event, the rebirth of the higher ego, does not stand alone; beside it there are a number of lesser events.

Before the soul can rise to this all-embracing, all-pervading experience (the birth of the immortal within the mortal self), certain preliminary stages, of comprehensive nature, must be traversed. A man must prepare himself in many and manifold ways. And after this great experience which enables him to say: 'I now feel something within me, I am aware of something in me that looks down upon my ordinary self, even as my ordinary self looks down upon the objects of sense; I am a second self within the first; I have now risen to the regions in which I am united with divine beings' — even after this experience there are other different, and still higher stages which must be traversed.

Thus we have the birth of the higher self in every individual man, and a similar birth for humanity as a whole — the rebirth of the divine Ego. Then there are preparatory stages and others which succeed this event. From the Christ-event we look back upon the preparatory stages. We behold other great beings and events in human evolution. We see how the Gospel of Christ gradually drew near. As St. Luke said: In the beginning was a God; a spiritual Being in sublime spiritual regions. He descended into the material world and became Man, investing Himself with humanity. Man's divine origin could well be perceived, but God Himself could not be perceived when human evolution was regarded with mere physical eyes. God, so to speak, was behind the earthly, physical world. They alone perceived him who knew where He was and could perceive His kingdoms.

Let us go back to the first period of civilization following upon a great disruption — to the primeval Indian civilization. There we find seven great, holy teachers known as the Holy Rishis. They pointed upwards to a higher Being of whom they said: 'With all our wisdom we can but dimly sense — we cannot behold this sublime Being.' The seven Holy Rishis saw far and deep, yet this high Being, whom they called Vishva Karman, was beyond their sphere. This Being did indeed fill the spiritual world, but He was beyond the range of clairvoyant vision at that time. Then came the period of civilization named after its great inaugurator, Zarathustra. To those whom it was his mission to lead, Zarathustra said: 'When the clairvoyant eye beholds the things of the world, the minerals, plants, the animals and man, it sees manifold spiritual beings behind all things. But the spiritual Being to whom man owes his very existence and who, in time to come, must live in man's innermost self — this Being cannot yet be seen, when the things of the world are beheld, whether with physical or with clairvoyant eyes.' But when Zarathustra's spiritual gaze was raised toward the Sun, he beheld more than the Sun. As a man's aura can be seen enveloping him, he said, so too, the great Sun-Aura, Ahura Mazdao, can be seen beside the Sun. And the great Sun-Aura it was which produced man in a way to be described later. Man is the image of the Sun-Spirit, Ahura Mazdao, but Ahura Mazdao did not yet dwell upon earth. Then came the time when man, in clairvoyant vision, began to see Ahura Mazdao in his earthly environment. The great moment was at hand when that could be accomplished which was not yet possible in Zarathustra's time. In earthly thunder and lightning Zarathustra's clairvoyant eye did not behold Ahura Mazdao, the great Sun-Spirit, the archetype of humanity; but when he turned to the Sun, there he saw Ahura Mazdao. Moses, Zarathustra's successor, could see, with clairvoyant eye, in the burning bush and in the fire on Mount Sinai, that Spirit who proclaimed Himself as the 'Ejeh asher ejeh', 'I am he that was, and is, and will be.'

Jahve or Jehovah.

Since the prehistoric time of Zarathustra and before Moses appeared among men, the Spirit who had hitherto dwelt in the Sun had descended upon earth. His light shone in the burning bush and in the fire on Mount Sinai; He was in the earthly elements. Yet a while — and the Spirit whom the great Rishis divined but could not clairvoyantly behold, the Spirit whom Zarathustra sought in the Sun, who proclaimed himself to Moses in thunder and lightning — the same appeared in human form in Jesus of Nazareth. That was the course of evolution: out of cosmic space He descended, first to the physical elements, then into a human body. The divine Ego from which man issued, and to which the writer of St. Luke's Gospel traces the lineage of Jesus of Nazareth, was born again. Herewith was consummated the sublime event of the rebirth of God in man.

From here let us look back upon the preparatory stages which humanity, too, traversed. The former leaders who had shared in the general progress of humanity were also subjected to preliminary stages until one of them had advanced far enough to become the bearer of the Christ. This shows us how the evolution of humanity presents itself when regarded from a spiritual standpoint.

The Being revered by the Holy Rishis as Vishva Karman, by Zarathustra as Ahura Mazdao of the Sun, by Moses as 'Ejeh asher ejeh' — this Being appeared in one distinct man, Jesus of Nazareth, in limited earthly humanity. But before the point was reached when this sublime Being could dwell in a man such as Jesus of Nazareth, manifold preparations were necessary. To this end Jesus of Nazareth must himself have risen to a high stage of evolution. Not any man could be the bearer of a Being who had descended to earth in the manner described. Now we who have approached spiritual science know the truth of reincarnation. Hence we must say that Jesus of Nazareth (not the Christ) had passed through many incarnations and stood the test of many a trial in earlier times before he could become Jesus of Nazareth. In other words, Jesus of Nazareth had to become a high initiate before he could be the bearer of the Christ. Now when a high initiate is born, how is his birth and life distinguished from the birth and life of an ordinary man? In general it may be assumed that at his birth a man is formed approximately in accordance with the results of his preceding life. With the initiate, however, this is not the case. The initiate could not be a leader of mankind if his inner life no more than conformed with outer circumstances. A man must build up his exterior according to the circumstances of his environment. But when an initiate is born, a great soul, one which has experienced great things in the world in past lives, must enter his body. Hence it is said of all such, that their birth takes place under other than ordinary circumstances.

Now we have already touched upon the reason of this difference. It is because an all-embracing Ego, one that has experienced remarkable things, unites itself with the body. The body, however, cannot at first fully contain the spiritual nature which seeks to incarnate in it. Hence, when a high initiate descends into a mortal body, the reincarnating Ego necessarily overshadows the physical form to a greater extent than with an ordinary man. Whereas the physical form of an ordinary human being soon after birth resembles and corresponds to the spiritual form (the human aura), the initiate's aura is radiant. This is the spiritual part, which proclaims that there is more here than meets the eye in the ordinary sense. Indeed it bears witness that, apart from the birth of the child in the physical world, an event has taken place in the spiritual world. That is the meaning of the legends which gather round the birth of all initiates. Not only is a child born, in the physical body, but in spiritual regions something is born which cannot be contained in the body below. But who can recognize this? Only one whose eyes are clairvoyant and open to the spiritual world. Hence it is related that at the birth of the Buddha an initiate recognized that an event more remarkable than the birth of an ordinary child was taking place. In the same way it is related of Jesus of Nazareth that His coming was announced by John the Baptist. The advent and birth of an initiate are known to all possessing insight into the spiritual world, for an event in the spiritual world is here enacted. The same was known to the three Kings from the East who brought offerings at the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, and the same is expressed in the words of the Priest-Initiate in the Temple: 'Now I will gladly die, for mine eyes have seen Him who is to be the salvation of mankind.'

Thus a sharp distinction is here necessary. We have a high initiate reborn as Jesus of Nazareth and, beyond this birth, something of significance in the spiritual world — something spiritual which will gradually develop the body until it be ripe for the spirit. When this point is reached, the event thus prepared is enacted. The Baptist approaches Jesus of Nazareth and a higher spirit descends upon him and unites with him; Christ enters the body of Jesus of Nazareth. John the Baptist, as the forerunner of Jesus of Nazareth, might well say: 'I came into the world and prepared the way for a [person] Mightier than I. I have preached before men that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand and that men must change their heart. I came among men and declared to them that a new impulse will enter mankind. As in spring the sun mounts higher in the heavens to proclaim the renewal of life, so do I come to proclaim the new life which is the reborn self of humanity.'

When the human principle in Jesus of Nazareth had reached its highest development, and his body had become an expression of the spirit within him, he was ripe to receive the Christ in the Baptism by John. His body had unfolded its full power, as the radiant sun on midsummer or St. John's day. This had been prophesied. The spirit was to be born out of the darkness, as the Sun which increases in power and waxes strong till St. John's day and then begins to wane. It was the Baptist's mission to proclaim this and to tell how the Sun mounts on high with increasing splendour until the moment when he, the Baptist, could say: 'He who was announced by the prophets of old, the Son of the spiritual realms, born of the spirit, behold, He hath appeared.' Up to this point John the Baptist

was active. But when the days begin to shorten and the darkness again prevails, then, the way having been prepared, the inner spirit-light must shine forth ever more brightly, even as the Christ shines forth in Jesus of Nazareth.

Thus did John behold the approach of Jesus of Nazareth, whose development he felt as his own increase, as the increase of the Sun. 'I must henceforth decrease,' he said, 'as the Sun decreases after midsummer day. But He, the spiritual Sun, will increase and his Light will shine forth from out of the darkness.' Thus did John the Baptist speak of himself and his mission. In this manner was the universal Ego of humanity reborn, and the condition fulfilled for the rebirth of the individual higher self in every human being.

We have herewith described the most momentous event in the evolution of individual man: the rebirth of the immortal being which can issue from the ordinary Ego. This is inseparable from the greatest of all events, the Christ-event, to which we shall devote the following lectures.

## LECTURE II

When a subject, such as the present, is considered from the standpoint of spiritual science, there is no question of adopting as a basis of discussion, some record or other handed down in the course of human evolution, with a view to throwing light on the accumulated facts, on the authority of this documentary evidence. This is not the method pursued by spiritual science. On the contrary, spiritual science investigates the facts and occurrences of human evolution independently of all documents. The spiritual investigator does not refer to documentary evidence until he is in a position to investigate and truly describe the things in question by means which are independent of documents and traditions. If he then turns to documentary evidence, it is to examine if the latter corroborates the results of his own independent research. Thus, no statement is made in these lectures, regarding any particular event, merely on the strength of biblical evidence; only the results of occult investigation are given — investigation independent of the Gospels. But, at every opportunity, attention will be called to the fact that whatever can be ascertained and observed by the spiritual investigator is reproduced in the Gospels and particularly in the Gospel of St. John.

There is a remarkable saying of the great mystic Jacob Boehme — a saying, however, which can surprise but those who are not in touch with spiritual science. Jacob Boehme once calls attention to the fact that he speaks of past ages in human evolution (for example, of Adam's personality) as of experiences in which he had played an immediate part. Someone might ask, he says: 'Were you present, then, when Adam lived on earth?' 'Most certainly I was there!' is Jacob Boehme's unhesitating reply. A remarkable saying, for it is indeed true that spiritual science is in a position to observe past occurrence, be it however so remote, with eyes that are of the spirit. I should like to indicate, by way of introduction and in a general way, how this comes to pass.

Everything that happens in the physical sense-world has its counterpart in the spiritual world. When a hand is moved, there is more before you than the moving hand seen by your eye, there is my thought and my volition: 'My hand must move.' A spiritual background is there. Whereas the ocular, sensible impression of the hand passes away, its spiritual counterpart remains engraved in the spiritual world and unfailingly leaves a trace there. So that, when our spiritual eyes are opened, we can follow the traces and find the spiritual counterpart of everything that has happened in the world. Nothing can happen in the world without leaving such traces. Let us suppose the spiritual investigator lets his gaze wander back to the days of Charlemagne, or to Roman times, or to ancient Greece. Everything that happened in those times is preserved in the trace left by its spiritual prototype, and can be observed in the spiritual world. This kind of vision is called 'reading the Akashic records'. A living script of this kind does indeed exist and can be seen by the spiritual eye. Thus when the spiritual investigator described to you the events in Palestine or the observations of Zarathustra, his descriptions are not taken from the Bible or Akashic records. Then, having completed his occult investigation, he turns to the traditional documents — in the present case, to the Gospels — and investigates whether they confirm his results. Thus, the standpoint of occult investigation, as regards traditional documents, is one of complete independence, for which reason such investigation is in every respect competent to judge these documents. But when we meet with the same facts in the traditional documents as we have been able to decipher in the Akashic records, this coincidence proves to us that these documents are true, furthermore that their author could also read in the Akashic records. Many of the religious and other traditions of humanity are regained in this way by spiritual science. Let us now illustrate this on the strength of one chapter of human evolution in particular, namely, the Gospel of St. John and its relation to the other Gospels. You must not imagine, however, that the Akashic records — that spiritual history that lies open before the seer's eye — is like ordinary handwriting. It is a kind of living script, as we will try to illustrate by the following example.

Suppose the seer glances back, let us say, to the times of Julius Caesar. Caesar's actions, inasmuch as they were performed on the physical plane, were witnessed by his contemporaries; but every action has left its trace in the Akashic records, and when the seer looks back, it is as though a spiritual shadow or archetype of these actions were

before him. Recall the movements of the hand. The picture presented to the physical eye cannot be seen by the seer, but the intention to move the hand, the invisible forces which actuated the movement, can always be seen by him. Similarly everything that lived in Caesar's thoughts is visible, whether it be his intention to take some particular step or to wage some particular war. For everything that his contemporaries witnessed originated in the impulse of Caesar's will, and became actuality through the action of the invisible forces which are behind the picture presented to the eye. But these invisible forces behind the external picture are indeed to be seen as the real Caesar, living and moving — as the spiritual image of Caesar visible to the seer in the Akashic records.

But someone inexperienced in such matters might object: 'To our mind, your narrative of past times is pure fancy. You are acquainted from history with the deeds of Caesar, and your powerful imagination makes you believe you see some kind of invisible Akashic pictures.' But whoever is familiar with such things knows that the less the seer knows from external history on the subject of his investigations, the easier it is for him to read in the Akashic records. External history is a positive hindrance to occult research. When we have reached a certain age, we are influenced in many ways by the culture of our day. The seer, too, brings with him the education of his day, up to the point when he can give birth to his clairvoyant Ego. He has studied history and the knowledge handed down to him in geology, biology, archaeology, and so on. Strictly speaking, all this disturbs his vision and may bias him when he comes to decipher the Akashic records. For the same objectivity and certainty may by no means be expected in external history, as are possible in deciphering the Akashic records. Consider upon what conditions some fact or other becomes 'historical'. Certain documents relating to some event or other have been preserved, while others — perhaps the most important — are missing. An example will show how unreliable all history may be.

Among Goethe's many unfinished poetical sketches, which are a beautiful addition to the great works he has given us in finished form, there is a fragmentary poem on *Nausicaa*. We have only a few notes on this poem, showing how Goethe intended to complete it. He often worked in this way — jotting down a few sentences — and often only a fragment has remained. So it is with the *Nausicaa*. Now two scholars have attempted to complete this fragment: Scherer, the author of a history of literature, and Herman Grimm. But Grimm was more than a scholar; he was an imaginative thinker. He is the same Grimm who has given us a *Life of Michelangelo* and a study on Goethe. Grimm set to work by endeavouring to identify himself with the spirit of Goethe. He put himself the question: Goethe being what he was, how would he have conceived the *Nausicaa* of the *Odyssey*? Then, with a certain disregard of the historical records, he reconstructed the poem in the sense of Goethe's ideas. Scherer, however, with a mania for documentary evidence in black and white, asserted that Goethe's *Nausicaa* could not be reconstructed except on the basis of existing material. He, too, attempted to reconstruct a *Nausicaa*, but keeping strictly to Goethe's notes. To this Herman Grimm remarked: 'Suppose Goethe's valet took some of the notes (perhaps the most important) to light the fire! Is there any guarantee that the available notes are of any value whatever, when compared with the others which perhaps served to light the fire?'

As in this case, so it may be with all history that is based on documental evidence. When we pin our faith to documents we must never forget that precisely the most important of these may have perished. In fact we have in 'history' neither more nor less than a fable convenue. When the facts shown by the Akashic records differ widely from conventional history, the seer finds it difficult to believe in the Akashic picture. And he would be immediately attacked by the public if his relation of any fact from the Akashic records differed from accepted history. Hence the experienced in such matters are happiest to speak of ancient times — of long past phases of our earth's evolution, of which there are no tradition or documents extant. Here experience of the Akashic records, being least hampered by exoteric history, is most true. It follows therefore that no one familiar with such things could ever conceive that the Akashic records were merely an echo of the facts related by conventional history.

Now when we investigate in the Akashic records that great event, the significance of which was touched upon yesterday, we discover the following main points. The human race living upon earth has its origin in a spiritual realm and springs from one divine spiritual existence. We might say: Before any possibility existed that a physical eye could perceive, or a physical hand could grasp a human body, man was there in the form of a spiritual being; he was present in the earliest ages as a part of divine, spiritual beings. Himself a being, man is born out of divine spiritual beings. Gods are, as it were, the ancestors of men; men are the descendants of Gods. The Gods needed men for their descendants; for, without such descendants, they were unable to descend to the physical world of sense. Continuing their existence in other worlds, the Gods worked upon man from outside, so that he gradually and by degrees developed upon earth. Eventually men had to overcome, step by step, the hindrances which arose from life upon earth. What were these hindrances?

For men, it was essential that the Gods remained spiritual and that men, as their descendants, became physical. Man, whose spiritual nature became merely the inner part of the physical, was not called upon to overcome the hindrances involved by physical existence. Though confined to the material world, he was to pursue his development. In this way, advancing from stage to stage of development and maturity, he found it increasingly possible to turn once more to the Gods out of whose bosom he was born. A descent from the Gods, followed by a re-ascent to, and a reunion with them — such is man's path in his life upon earth. To render this evolution possible, certain human individuals had to outstrip the rest of humanity and press forward in advance, in order to become the leaders and teachers of men. Such leaders and teachers take their place among men and, as it were, find their way back to the Gods sooner than the rest of mankind. So that we may say: At a given period men have reached a certain stage of evolution; they have perhaps only a dim presentiment of the way back to the Gods, and must travel

far before they reach that goal, but a spark of the divine is in them. In the leaders there is always more than a spark. They are nearer to the divine being which man is striving to reach. And that which lives in these leaders of humanity is their chief and essential attribute in the view of those whose eyes are opened to the things of the spirit.

Let us assume that a great leader of humanity stands before some other man who, though not of equal standing with the leader, nevertheless ranks higher than the average human being. The latter, we will suppose, is alive to the fact that the other is a great leader, and that the spiritual nature which the rest of mankind has yet to acquire, is already present in him in a high degree.

How would such a man describe this leader? He might say: A man is before me — a human being in a physical body, like all others. But his physical body is the least important thing about him; it is a negligible quantity. When, however, I turn my spiritual eye on him, I see, united with him, a mighty, divine, spiritual being. And this is so significant that I direct all my attention to this divine being and disregard the physical aspect, which he shares with the rest of men. Thus the spiritual seer beholds in a leader of men, something which essentially transcends the rest of humanity and must be described in an altogether different way. For the seer describes what his spiritual eyes behold. Those to whom the world looks up as authorities in public life, would indeed ridicule the idea of a leader of men towering above his fellows. We see how already certain learned men begin to regard the great figures of the human race from the standpoint of psychiatry.

He would only be recognized by those who have perfected their spiritual sight. They, however, would know that he is neither fool nor fanatic, nor simply a 'gifted man', as well meaning persons no doubt describe him, but that he belongs to the greatest figures of the history of mankind in the spiritual sense. Thus would it be today. But in the past it would be quite different, and in a past that does not lie so very far behind us.

Now we know that the consciousness of humanity has undergone various metamorphoses. All men once possessed a dull, dim clairvoyance. Even in the time of Christ clairvoyance still prevailed to a certain extent, and in earlier centuries to a greater extent, though this faculty had become a mere shadow of Atlantean and early post-Atlantean clairvoyance. Gradually and by degrees clairvoyant consciousness disappeared among men. Nevertheless there were always isolated individuals who possessed it, and even in our day 'naturally clairvoyant' people are to be found, who have a dim clairvoyance and can distinguish the elements of man's spiritual being.

Let us take the time of Buddha's appearance among the people of ancient India. Nowadays the appearance of Buddha (especially in Europe) would not to any great extent excite feelings of respect. But in Buddha's time it was otherwise. For at that time there were many capable of seeing what was really taking place, who knew that the birth of the Buddha was quite unlike any ordinary birth. In the scriptures of the East, and precisely in those which treat of the matter with the deepest understanding, the birth of the Buddha is described in 'elevated style' — as one might say. It is related how Queen Maya was the 'Image of the Great Mother' and that it had been foretold her that she would give birth to a mighty being. This being came to earth as a premature birth. It often happens that a remarkable being is sent into the world in this way; for the human being in whom the higher being is to incarnate, is thus less involved in matter than if borne to his full time of maturity. It is further related in the wonderful oriental scriptures that at the moment of his birth, the Buddha's body was radiant, and that he immediately opened his eyes and directed them to the four cardinal points of the earth — North, South, East, and West. Further we are told that he took seven steps the trace of which remained engraved in the ground where he trod. We are also told that he forthwith spoke, uttering the following words: 'This is the life in which I rise from Bodhisattva to Buddha, the last incarnation which I must live on this earth.'

However strange such accounts may sound to the materialistic thinker of today, and however impossible it may be to interpret them in an offhand materialistic manner, their truth is manifest to those who can behold things with spiritual eyes. At that time there were still people who, by virtue of their natural gift of clairvoyance, could behold spiritually what came to the world with Buddha. These are strange passages which I have quoted from Eastern scriptures about the Buddha. Nowadays people call them fables and legends. But they who understand these things know that spiritual truths are here concealed.

The significance of an event such as the birth of the Buddha is too great to be confined to the narrow limits of the personality born at that time. Such events have world-wide significance; spiritual forces radiate from them. And they who lived in those spiritually more receptive times could indeed behold the outpouring of spiritual forces at the birth of the Buddha. It would be simple to ask why such things do not happen now. To be sure, there are forces at work today, but there must be a seer there to behold them. For it is not enough for one to be there from whom the forces radiate; there must also be someone to receive them. In times when men were more spiritual, they were also more receptive for such radiations. Hence there is a profound truth in the saying that at the birth of the Buddha, forces of a healing and conciliating nature were at work. That is no mere legend; great truths underlie the saying that when Buddha was born, they who hated each other were united in love, and they who had lived in strife were reconciled, and so on.

To the eye of the seer, human evolution does not appear as the level road seen by the historian, above which rise (but only slightly) the characters accepted as historical. That there are altitudes and even mountains on this road is

not admitted; people cannot bear the idea.

But whoever can survey the world with higher vision knows that there are mighty heights and mountains towering above humanity on the evolutionary path. These are the leaders of mankind. On what grounds do these men assume the leadership of their fellow-men? It is because they have risen, step by step, to the attainment of life in the spiritual worlds. One such step we showed yesterday to be the most important: the birth of the higher, spiritual self; we also spoke of preparatory steps and of others following this event. From what was said you will gather that the Christ-event, as we have called it, is the mightiest summit in human evolution and that a long preparation was needed before the Christ could incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. To understand these preparations we must examine the same phenomenon on a small scale.

Let us suppose a man enters upon the path of spiritual knowledge in a given incarnation, that is, he practices some of the exercises (of which we will speak later) which render the soul ever more spiritual and receptive of higher knowledge, and lead to the point when the soul can behold the spiritual world. Many an experience is undergone before this point is reached, and it must not be imagined that excessive haste is admissible in spiritual things. The process must be gone through in patient labour and perseverance. Let us assume a man begins to develop himself in this way. His goal is the birth of his higher self; however he reaches only a subordinate stage. He dies — and is reborn. Two things are now possible. He may feel impelled to seek a teacher who can show him how to repeat in a short time what he has already learnt, and how to attain the stages next in order, or, for some reason or other, he does not seek to follow this path. Even in this case his life will present features differing from the average. The life of a man who has already taken the first steps on the path of knowledge, will of itself afford experiences which are the apparent effect of the grade of initiation he attained in his former incarnation. These experiences and their effect upon him are out of the ordinary, and he can, with their help, once more attain the point to which his former efforts had raised him. In his former incarnation he progressed from step to step by dint of active effort. In his succeeding incarnation, life of itself brings a recapitulation of the fruits of his former efforts; life, as it were, approaches him from outside and he may possibly experience the results of his former incarnation in quite a different form. Thus it may happen that a particular experience in his childhood creates so powerful an impression on him, that the forces which he had made his own in his foregoing incarnation are again aroused within him. Suppose that such a man had attained a definite stage in the development of higher knowledge. He is reborn in his next life as a child like any other; but in his seventh or eighth year a grievous experience befalls him. This affects him in such a way that the wisdom he had formerly acquired for himself now reappears, so that he now again stands where he formerly stood, and can advance to higher stages. He dies again. In his next life the same process may be repeated; an exterior experience puts him to the test, as it were, and brings to light firstly the fruits of his penultimate, then of his ultimate, incarnation, and at this point he can again ascend a step higher.

Thus it is evident that the foregoing must be taken into account if we are to understand the life of a man who has traversed certain stages of evolution. There is one stage, for instance, which is soon reached if a serious effort is made to advance on the path of knowledge. That is the stage of the so-called Homeless One — the man who outgrows the prejudices of his immediate environment and throws off the various constraints by which he is surrounded and kept, as it were, in leading strings. This does not necessarily make him irreverent; he may even become more reverent. But the ties which bind him to his immediate surroundings must be loosened. Take the condition of a man who dies after achieving a condition of some freedom and independence. He is born anew, and in this life an event experienced at a comparatively early age reawakens the feeling of freedom and independence. As a rule this is effected by the loss of his father or of someone to whom he is attached; or it may be that his father is unkind to him, or repudiates him, or the like. These truths are handed down to us in the legends of the various peoples, for in such matters myths and legends are really wiser than the science of our day. You will always find, as a typical incident, that the father orders the child to be exposed; the child is rescued by shepherds, is nurtured and reared by them, and finally restored to his station. (Chiron, Romulus and Remus, Oedipus.) In order that the fruits of their past lives be reawakened in them, they are brought as it were face to face with themselves through the treachery of their homes. The story of the exposure of Oedipus belongs to this category. Now whether a man has already experienced the birth of his higher self or has just reached this stage, we may imagine that the greater his advancement, the richer must his life be in experiences, before he reaches the point of experiencing something previously unknown to him.

He in whom the mighty Being whom we call the Christ was to incarnate, could not undertake this mission in any year of his life indiscriminately. Indeed, no ordinary man could undertake this mission, but only one who had attained high grades of initiation in many lives. Here the Akashic records faithfully recount to us all that had taken place. They show how, during many lives, an individual had striven upward, from stage to stage, to high grades of initiation. He was reborn and at first passed through experiences of a preparatory nature. Yet we recognize in him a high initiate who was destined at a later period of his life to receive into himself the Christ-Individuality. The first experiences of this initiate are a repetition of his former stages of initiation, and draw forth from his soul the high attainments to which he had formerly risen. Now, as we know, man is composed of a physical, an etheric, an astral body and an Ego. But we also know that in the course of human life the physical body is the only one born at the physical birth. Up to the seventh year the human etheric body is still surrounded by a kind of etheric sheath; in the seventh year, at the second dentition, this sheath is thrown off in the same way as the physical maternal covering is discarded when the physical body is born into the outer world. Later, at the age of puberty, an astral covering is cast off in like manner, and the astral body is born. Finally, about the twenty-first year, the Ego is born, but again only

by degrees. Then we have a similar birth of the sentient, the rational, and the consciousness soul at about the twenty-first, twenty-eighth, and thirty-fifth year respectively. Now we shall see that the Christ could not have incarnated in a human being on earth, before the rational soul was fully born, that is, before the twenty-eighth year. This is proved by spiritual research. The individual who was already a great initiate on earth, was between the twenty-eighth and thirty-fifth year of his age when the Christ entered into him; then, in the radiant light of this great Being he unfolded all that other men develop without this radiant light: the etheric and the astral body, the sentient and the rational soul. So that we may say: Up to the year of his age in which he was called upon to become the Bearer of Christ, we have before us a great initiate who by degrees undergoes experiences which finally evoke the sum of his experiences and conquests in the spiritual world. Then comes the moment when it is possible for him to say: `Now I am ready. I lay down all that I have. Henceforth I renounce my independent self! I give myself up to be the bearer of the Christ! He shall dwell in me and henceforth be all in me!'

All four Gospels indicate the moment when the Christ incarnated Himself in a personality upon Earth. However much they may differ in other particulars, all four agree as to the moment when the Christ descends, as it were, into the great initiate — the moment is the Baptism by John. That instant, so clearly indicated by the writer of the Gospel of St. John, when he says that the Spirit descended in the form of a dove and united itself with Jesus of Nazareth — in that instant we recognize the birth of Christ. Christ is born in the soul of Jesus of Nazareth, as the new, the Higher Self. And that other self, the self of the great initiate, had attained such greatness that it was ripe for this event.

And who was the Being born in Jesus of Nazareth? We indicated this yesterday: the God who was there from the beginning, who had remained in the spiritual world, leaving mankind to its development. He it was who descended and incarnated in the body of Jesus of Nazareth. Does the writer of the Gospel of St. John give us to understand this? To answer this question we need only read attentively the words of the Gospel; but first let us read the beginning of the Old Testament:

`In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth. And the Earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.'

Let us call up this picture before us: `The Spirit of God moved upon the waters.' Below is the Earth with its kingdoms, which issued from the divine Spirit. Among the descendants of the divine Spirit there is an individual so highly advanced that he can receive into himself this Spirit that moved upon the waters. What does the writer of St. John's Gospel say? He tells us that John the Baptist recognized that the Being foretold in the Old Testament was there. He says: `I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven like a dove, and it rested upon him.' John knew that he upon whom the Spirit descended was He who was to come: The Christ. Thus, the Spirit moving upon the waters is the beginning of earthly evolution; then, as John baptized with water, the Spirit who in the beginning moved upon the waters, descended into the body of Jesus of Nazareth. It would be impossible to express in words sublimer than St. John's, the connection between the events in Palestine and that other event related at the beginning of the same tradition of which his Gospel is a continuation. St. John also has words to express the fact that with Jesus of Nazareth that Spirit was united to whom the whole earth owes its creation and evolution. We know the first words of St. John's Gospel: `In the beginning was the Word (or Logos), and the Word (or Logos) was with God, and the Word (or Logos) was a God.'

What is the Logos? How was the Logos with God? Take the beginning of the Old Testament. We read of the Spirit of whom it is said: `And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.'

Let us note this well and then express it in different words. Let us listen to the call of the divine Spirit whose creative Word resounded through the world. What is this Word? In the beginning was the Logos, and the divine Spirit called, and that came to pass even as the divine Spirit called. That means: `In the Word was life.' For had there been no life in the Word, nothing would have come to pass. What came to pass? We are told: `And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.' Now let us again turn to the Gospel of St. John.

`In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a God.'

The Word was now poured out into matter; in matter it had become, as it were, the outer form of the Godhead.

`In Him (the Word) was life; and the life was the light of men.'

The writer of the Gospel of St. John refers directly to the ancient Book of Genesis and to the same divine Spirit, only in different words. He explains to us that this same divine Spirit appeared in Jesus of Nazareth; and, with regard to the Baptism by John, he is in agreement with the other Evangelists that at that moment the Christ was

born in Jesus of Nazareth, after long preparation duly undergone by him. We must be clear on the point that, up to the Baptism by John, the life of Jesus of Nazareth, as related to us in the Gospels, presents nothing but a sum of experiences demonstrating his ascent to higher worlds in former incarnations, and showing how he prepared his entire being — his astral, etheric, and physical bodies — for the final reception of the Christ.

The writer of the Gospel of St. Luke tells us in exemplary words that Jesus of Nazareth had in every respect prepared himself for this great event — for the birth of the Christ in him. The various experiences which led up to this event will be dealt with tomorrow; today I would merely point out how a single sentence in St. Luke indicates the preparation undergone by the recipient of the Christ. His astral body had become virtuous, noble, and wise, as was fitting, for the Christ to be born therein. He had made his etheric body so perfect and his physical body so supple and beautiful that the Christ could dwell in him. We must only understand the Gospel aright. Read the fifty-second verse of the second chapter of St. Luke. To be sure, the ordinary Bible rendering of the verse does not express what I have just said. It reads: 'And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature (or age), and in favour with God and man.' Now when a man like the writer of St. Luke says of Jesus of Nazareth that he increased in wisdom, we can find some meaning in his words. But when he goes on to relate that Jesus increased in age (stature), his meaning is not at first clear, for this circumstance hardly needs special mention. That it is so mentioned points to the fact that something else is meant. Let us read this verse in the original text: [The Greek cannot be reproduced here]

The meaning of this verse is as follows: He increased in wisdom, that is, he developed his astral body. Again, anyone who knows what is suggested to the Greek mind by the word age, stature, can tell you that the development of the etheric body is meant, whereby wisdom gradually becomes an accomplishment. We know that in the astral body qualities are developed which are called upon on single occasions; that is, we understand a thing once and then know it for ever. The etheric body brings to perfection the habits, inclinations, and accomplishments which it has acquired in the course of prolonged and continual repetition. Wisdom becomes a habit; it is put into practice, having passed into flesh and blood. That is the meaning of this increase in maturity (age). Even as the astral body increased in wisdom, the etheric body grew mature in noble habits of goodness and virtue. The third quality in which Jesus of Nazareth increased means in reality physical beauty as outwardly revealed. All other renderings are incorrect. We must render: He increased in grace and beauty, that is, he rendered also his physical body beautiful and noble.

'And Jesus increased in wisdom (in his astral body), in maturity of disposition (in his etheric body), and in grace and beauty (in his physical body), so that it was visible to God and to man.'

From this description given by St. Luke, the Evangelist evidently knew that the recipient of the Christ was called upon to develop to their highest perfection the three bodily members — the physical, etheric, and astral bodies.

Thus we reach the conviction that the facts asserted by spiritual science independently of the Gospels, can be rediscovered in the latter. Spiritual science is thereby a cultural factor which ensures the recapture of our religious traditions and documents, not merely as a triumph of human learning and science, but in the sense of a conquest of thought and intellect in the life of the higher feeling and emotion. We need an understanding of this nature, if we would grasp the significance of that event described as the intervention of Christ in the evolution of mankind.

### LECTURE III

Those of you who have repeatedly attended my lectures on subjects derived from spiritual science will have heard facts relating to the higher worlds presented from the most diverse points of view. We have approached some being or some fact, in one domain or another, and thrown light upon it from one standpoint or another. Now, to prevent misunderstandings, I should like today to remind you that, superficially considered, apparent contradictions may be discovered when some being or some fact illustrated now from one, now from another, standpoint. A closer observation, however, will convince you that the complicated facts of the spiritual world are rendered comprehensible to us precisely through a many-sided treatment of this nature. I must mention this because certain facts with which the great majority of you are already acquainted, will be shown today in a new light. When we take the most profound document of the New Testament known as the Gospel of St. John, and read the significance words with which we closed our considerations yesterday, we soon realize that infinite mysteries of cosmic and human evolution lie hidden in the opening words of that Gospel. We shall perhaps have occasion to show why the great narrators of spiritual events often express sublime, all-embracing truths in brief, exemplary fashion, as for instance in the opening verses of St. John. Today we shall revert to certain well-known truths of spiritual science, treating of them in a way different from yesterday's, and then see how the same truths confront us in the Gospel of St. John. Comparatively elementary facts of spiritual science will form our starting point.

We know that man, as he confronts us in daily life, consists of physical body, etheric or life body, astral body, and Ego or 'I'. We know that the daily life of the human being alternates between waking and sleeping, and that, from morning when he wakes, until evening when he falls asleep, these four members of his being are united as one self-contained organism. We know that at night when he sleeps, man's physical and etheric bodies remain in the bed, while the astral body and the Ego are raised out of the physical and etheric bodies. Now we must be clear on one point. In the present stage of human evolution, the four component members of man's being present a unity welded by necessity. At night, when we see him asleep and consisting of physical and etheric bodies, we may to a certain extent say that man then has the value of a plant. For the plant, as we see it in the world around us, consists of physical and etheric or life body; it has neither astral body nor Ego. This distinguishes the plant from the animal and from man. The animal has an astral body and man has an Ego within him. In the interval between night and morning, man is, as it were, a plant-like being — yet he is not a plant. This must be well understood. A free and independent being existing at the present day and consisting solely of etheric and physical body, must have the appearance of a plant, in fact must necessarily be a plant. Man, however, as he lies asleep, has outgrown the plant in value inasmuch as he has joined to his physical and etheric body, in the course of evolution, the astral body, the vehicle of pleasure and pain, of joy and grief, of impulse, desire and passion, and finally the vehicle of his Ego. But the addition of a higher principle to a being entails a corresponding change in all its lower principles. Were we to endow a plant with an astral body which, instead of bordering upon it, permeated the plant, the substance which we now see filling out the plant would necessarily turn into animal flesh; and a corresponding metamorphosis would ensue if the plant had its Ego in the physical world. We may therefore say that in a being possessed not only of a physical body but also of higher, invisible, supersensible members, an expression of these higher members will be found in the lowest. Even as the inner qualities of soul are superficially evidenced in features and physiognomy, so too the physical body is an expression of the activity of the astral body and the Ego. The physical body does not express itself alone; it is also the physical expression of the (physically) invisible members of man. Thus the human glandular system, and all that thereto pertains, is an expression of the etheric body; the nervous system is an expression of the astral body and the circulation of the blood is an expression of the Ego. So that in the physical body itself we have to distinguish a fourfold system, and only a gross materialist could hold the various substances in the physical human body to be of equal importance. The blood that pulsates through our veins has become the substance it is, because an Ego dwells in the human being. The nervous system has its present form and substance because man has an astral body; and the glandular system is as we see it, because man has an etheric body. Thus it is evident that man, as he appears to us in the interval between evening, when he falls asleep, and morning, when he awakens, is a self-contradictory being. We might say: he should be a plant, yet he is not plant! For a plant contains no nervous system, expressive of the astral body, and no circulatory blood system, the expression of its Ego. A physical being such as man, with glands, nerves and blood, can only exist if he contains an etheric body, an astral body and an Ego. Now, as a human being, in so far as your astral body and Ego are concerned, you leave your physical and etheric bodies at night. You forsake them, as it were, without a scruple and turn them into a self-contradictory being. If no intervention of a spiritual nature occurred here, in the interval between falling asleep and awakening; if you merely withdrew from your physical and etheric bodies, remaining in your astral body and Ego, you would find in the morning your nervous and blood systems destroyed; for these cannot subsist without an astral body and Ego. Hence the following procedure, perceptible to clairvoyant consciousness, intervenes.

In proportion as the Ego and the astral body withdraw, a divine Ego and a divine astral body are clairvoyantly seen to enter into man. For it is indeed true that, in the interval between falling asleep and awakening, as astral body and an Ego, or at any rate a substitute for these, replace the others in the physical and etheric bodies. When the astral body leaves the sleeper, a higher astrality enters into him, to preserve him until he awakens, and likewise a substitute for his own Ego. From this it is clear that other beings are at work in the sphere of our lives, besides such as come to expression in the physical world. In this world we find minerals, plants, animals and men. Men are the highest of the beings in our physical sphere. They alone possess a physical body, an etheric body, an astral body and an Ego. From the fact that during the night the astral body and Ego withdraw from the physical and etheric bodies, we may infer that the astral body and Ego still have, even at the present time, a certain independence; that they can detach themselves, as it were, and live for a certain part of everyday life, apart from their physical and etheric vehicles.

In the night, therefore, the following process takes place. Man's physical and etheric bodies which, during the day, are the vehicles of his Ego and astral body (that is, of his inmost being), become at night the bearer or temple of higher astral and Ego beings, which replace his own Ego and astral body, these having risen into higher worlds. We do not look with different eyes upon the sleeper as he lies in bed; for there is in him an astral body — but of divine spiritual astrality, and likewise a divine spiritual Ego. We may say in a certain sense that while man is asleep as regards his physical and etheric bodies, he is guarded by these beings — beings belonging to the sphere of our life, which enter man's forsaken physical and etheric bodies and preserve the structure of his organism.

There is much to be learnt from a fact like this which, when taken in connection with certain observations of the seer, may elucidate many a point regarding the evolution of man. We will now seek to connect precisely the fact of this difference between waking and sleeping with the great spiritual facts of evolution.

It is true that the astral body and the Ego of man appear to us as the highest and most interior principles of human nature, but they are far from being the most perfect. Even to superficial observation, the physical is more perfect than the astral body. Two years ago (Lecture-Cycle 'Theosophy', 16th-29th June 1907, Wilhelmshöhe bei Kassel, 14 lectures.) I pointed out to you here that the more closely we examine man's physical body, the more wonderful it appears to us. In the marvels of the human heart and the human brain we have more than a subject for anatomical examination calculated to satisfy the needs of the sharpest intellect; whoever brings his soul to bear upon these marvels will feel himself aesthetically and morally elevated before the sublime wisdom displayed by the structure of the physical body. The astral body is not yet

so far advanced. It is the vehicle of joy and sorrow, of impulses, desires, pleasures, and so on, and we must admit that, with regard to his desires, man takes up all kinds of things in the world, which are altogether unsuited to promote the wise and perfect adjustments of his heart and brain. His fondness for pleasure leads him to seek satisfaction in such things which (as coffee for instance) are poison and the like for the heart, thereby proving that the astral body craves for enjoyments which are harmful to the wise contrivances of the human heart. Yet the heart holds out for decades against such poisons, absorbed to satisfy the cravings of the astral body. Hence the physical body is seen to be more perfect than the astral body, though it is true that at a future time the astral body will, in its turn, be incomparably more perfect. At present the physical body is more perfectly evolved, the reason being that the physical body is the oldest constituent principle of the human being. It provides the proof that the physical body was being worked upon long before the genesis of our earth. The theories evolved by materialistic thoughts on the subject of cosmogony are nothing but materialistic illusions; whether it be the Kant-Laplace theory, or any other modern theory, the name is immaterial. To be sure these materialistic fancies are useful for the understanding of the external structure of our planetary system, but they are of no value when we endeavour to comprehend all that transcends the external picture presented to the eye.

Spiritual investigation shows us that even as man passes from incarnation to incarnation, a heavenly body such as our earth has also, in remote times, passed through other forms and other planetary conditions. Before it became our earth, this body existed in other planetary conditions. It was a body called in spiritual investigation the 'Old Moon'. This was not our present Moon but a forerunner of our Earth as a planetary being. Precisely as man evolves from a former to his present incarnation, so too our Earth developed from the old Moon into the Earth. The old Moon is, as it were, a former incarnation of the Earth. Again, an earlier embodiment of the old Moon is the 'Sun' — not the present Sun, but again a forerunner of our Earth. finally the forerunner of the old Sun is the old 'Saturn'. Our Earth traversed these earlier conditions — Saturn, Sun, Moon — and has now reached its Earth-condition. The first germ of our physical body was sown on the old Saturn, though nothing of all that now surrounds us in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms existed on that primeval sphere. Yet the first beginning of the present human physical body was there, though its form of existence was entirely different from present day conditions; it was in its earliest embryonic stage and continued to develop during the Saturn evolution. When that evolution was at an end, the old Saturn passed through a kind of cosmic night, as man in a similar way passes through a devachanic period in order to attain his next incarnation. Saturn then became the (old) Sun. Here the human physical reappeared, as the plant grows out of the seed, and became by degrees penetrated by an etheric or life body. On the old Sun, therefore, the etheric or life body was joined to the embryonic beginning of the physical body. The human being was not a plant, but he had the value of a plant. he consisted of a physical and an etheric body and his consciousness was similar to that of sleep or to the consciousness of the vegetable kingdom, now spread like a carpet over the physical Earth around us. The Sun period came to an end. Once more there was a cosmic night, or if we prefer the word, a cosmic Devachan. When the Sun had passed through this state, it became transformed into the old Moon. Here those parts of the human body which existed on Saturn and Sun (man's physical and etheric bodies) again spring forth and are increased by the astral body which was added during this lunar period. Man was now possessed of physical, etheric, and astral bodies. Hence we see that the physical body, having come into existence on Saturn, passed through its third stage on the Moon; the etheric body, associated to the physical on the Sun, had now advanced to its second stage of perfection; the astral body, having just been added to the others, was in its first stage on the Moon.

Something now happened on the Moon which would have been impossible on Saturn or Sun. Whereas man was preserved in a certain degree of uniformity during the Saturn and Sun development, the following event took place at a certain point during the old lunar evolution. The whole Moon-sphere became divided into two parts — into a Sun and a Moon satellite. So that whereas in the case of Saturn and Sun we have to consider the evolution of a single planet, only the first part of the lunar evolution can be described as that of a single planet. In the first part of the lunar evolution everything that now composes our Earth, Sun, and Moon was comprised in that one ancient Moon-sphere. Later there was a division into two bodies. What appeared then as 'Sun' was not our Sun, nor yet the old Sun of which we have already spoken; it was a new sphere which became separated from the old Moon as a 'Sun', around which another planet circled, which, again, we call the 'Old Moon'. Now what is the meaning of this cleavage of the forerunner of our Earth during the old Moon evolution?

The meaning of this division is that higher beings and finer substances quitted the whole mass in company with this 'Sun' at its separation; they left as 'Sun', whereas the grosser substances and lower beings remained behind on the old Moon. Thus we have two instead of one planetary body during the old Moon evolution: a Sun-body harbouring the higher beings and a Moon-body harbouring the lower beings. Had no division of the single planet occurred, certain beings who evolved on the Moon after the separation, would have failed to keep pace with the more rapid evolution of the solar beings. They were not mature enough for the solar evolution and were therefore constrained to separate the coarser substances and build for themselves a sphere of action apart. The higher beings, on their part, would have found it impossible to remain united to the coarser substances, for their more rapid progress would have been hindered. They too required a special sphere for their evolution, and the Sun was this sphere. Let us now turn our attention to the beings who took their abode upon the Sun and the Moon respectively, after the division of the old Moon.

We have seen that the physical human being received its first beginning during the Saturn evolution; on the Sun the etheric body was added and on the Moon the astral body. Now these human beings, or, if we may so call them, these primitive men on the Moon, had in fact adhered to the Moon at the cleavage. These were precisely the beings who could not keep pace with the rapid evolution of the Sun-beings, who had gone forth with the Sun and now abode surrounded by finer substances on that sphere. Hence these human beings coarsened during the lunar evolution. As we have seen, man was constituted at that time of a physical, an astral, and an etheric body. His stage of evolution was therefore the same as

that of the animal of the present day, which also has a physical, an astral, and an etheric body. But you must not imagine that the human being was actually an animal on the old Moon. The human form had an altogether different appearance from that of the animal on the Earth at the present day. Were I to describe the human form of that time, it would appear most fantastic to you. Thus we find on the old Moon forerunners of our present humanity, possessing physical, astral, and etheric bodies which, after the separation into Sun and Moon, became denser and coarser than would have been the case had these beings remained united with the Sun. Now the beings who had gone forth with the Sun had also passed through the three stages of Saturn, Sun, Moon. Their direction however was that of the Sun, whereas the ancestors of man followed the Moon. Among the Sun-beings we distinguish a threefold nature which runs parallel with that of the human being. There were beings on the Sun who had also advanced to the stage of threefold nature (astral, etheric, and physical body), only in their case, after the separation, instead of becoming coarser, these principles grew finer. Picture the process as follows: After the division of the old Moon, our human forefathers became beings of greater density and coarseness than they were before that event; their tendency was to harden. On the other hand, the corresponding beings on the Sun grew finer. The addition of the astral body during the lunar evolution had in a certain way the effect of lowering man to the level of the animal. But the beings who had kept aloof and had withdrawn to the Sun grew finer and more perfect. While man was hardening on the Moon, beings of high spirituality were evolving on the Sun. In spiritual science this spirituality is named the counterpart of that which developed on the Moon. On the Moon the human beings developed to the level of the animal, though they were not animals. Now in dealing with the animal kingdom, we are justified in distinguishing different grades of animals. The animal-man on the Moon also appeared in three grades differing from one another, and known in spiritual science as the grades of the `Bull', the `Lion', and the `Eagle'. These are, as it were, typical forms assumed by animal nature. There were therefore on the Moon three distinct groups: Bull-men, Lion-men, Eagle-men. Though we may in no sense apply these designations to the present animals, it is nevertheless true that the degenerated nature of the so-called lion-men on the Moon is in a certain way expressed in the present cat species, and in the character of the hoofed animals is expressed the degenerated nature of the so-called bull-men, and so on. Such was the nature of the human being, in a densified state, after three stages of evolution. On the Sun, however, were the spiritual counterparts of these beings, also in three groups. While the astral development on the Moon lent form to these three types of animal-men, the corresponding spiritual human beings evolved on the Sun as angelic spiritual beings, which are also designated, but this time in their character of spiritual counterparts) as `Lion', `Eagle', and `Bull'. When we therefore behold the Sun, we find spiritual beings of whom we may say that they represent to us the splendid prototypes fashioned in wisdom. And on the Moon we have something like hardened reproductions of the beings above on the Sun. There is, however, another mystery underlying this.

The reproductions down below on the Moon are not without connection with their prototypes on the Sun. We have on the Moon a group of primitive bull-men and above, on the Sun, a group of spiritual beings described as `Bull-spirits'; and there is a spiritual connection between type and prototype. For the group-soul is the prototype and functions, as prototype, upon the type or reproduction. The forces proceed from the group-soul and govern its image below, the lion-spirit directing the lion-men, the eagle-spirit the eagle-men, and so on. Had the spirits in those high regions remained united with the earth, had they remained bound to their counterparts and been compelled to dwell in them, they would have been hemmed in and unable to exercise the forces, upon which the preservation and development of their counterparts depended. They came to the following conclusion: `We must now care in a higher sense for that which develops on the Moon.' The Bull-spirit said to himself: `I must care for the bull-men; I cannot find on the Moon the conditions necessary for my own progress; therefore I must dwell on the Sun and from there direct my forces to the bull-men below.' The same applies to the Lion-spirit and the Eagle-spirit. That is the meaning of evolution. Certain beings required a higher sphere of action than those who were, so to speak, their physical counterparts. The latter needed a lower, inferior sphere. To ensure their freedom of action, the higher beings were compelled to withdraw with the Sun and send down their forces from outside. Thus we see how there is one evolution with a downward, and another with an upward trend.

The development on the old Moon proceeded apace. Through the action of the higher beings upon their counterparts, the moon became spiritualized, so that it could reunite at a later period with the Sun. The prototypes now again united with their types, absorbing them into themselves as it were. There again followed a universal Devachan or cosmic night. (This is also called a Pralaya, while the conditions known as Saturn, Sun, and Moon are called Manvataras.) After the cosmic night there issued from the dark womb of the universe our Earth whose mission it is to advance human evolution so far that man can add to his physical, astral, and etheric bodies the Ego or the bearer of the `I'. This, however, must be preceded by a repetition of the earlier stages. That is a cosmic law: whenever a higher stage is to be reached, all that is previously achieved must first be repeated.

First, then, the Earth had to recapitulate the conditions of old Saturn. Once more the first beginning of the physical body developed as if from the cosmic germ. Then came a repetition of the old Sun and finally of the old Moon. Sun, Moon, and Earth still formed one body; then followed a repetition of the cleavage already described. The Sun detached itself and again the more advanced beings who required a higher evolutionary sphere, left with it. They took with them the finer substances and established therewith the scene of their activity in the Universe. Thus, as we have said, the Sun quitted the Earth (which still bore the Moon within it), and took in its train the beings whose maturity allowed of their continued progress on the Sun. Foremost among these, of course, were the beings who formerly had functioned as prototypes. All the beings who had attained the requisite maturity upon the old Moon, progressed apace and in time could no longer dwell among the coarser substances and beings of the Earth-plus-Moon; they were compelled to withdraw from this sphere and to establish a new existence upon the Sun — out present Sun.

Who were these beings? They were the descendants of those other beings who, during the old Moon period, had evolved on the Sun as Bull-, Lion-, and Eagle-spirits. The highest and most advanced of these had brought the bull, lion, and eagle nature to a harmonious unity in themselves, and may be described in the true sense of the word as 'human prototypes', 'spirit-men'. Let us bear in mind, therefore, that certain of the Bull-, Lion-, and Eagle-spirits upon the Sun, during the old Moon period, had advanced beyond the rest; these now again prefer to take up their abode upon the Sun. They are the true spirit-men. They constituted the spiritual counterpart of evolving humanity down below on the Earth-plus-Moon. Now, as you may imagine, since the tendency to densify and harden had already set in with the beings on the old Moon, their descendants on Earth-plus-Moon showed the same tendency particularly strongly. In fact there now began for the severed portion consisting of Earth-plus-Moon a sad and dreary time. Above on the Sun ever more vigorous and active development, and ever fuller life. Below on the Earth sadness, desolation, and ever-increasing solidification.

Something now happened failing which evolution would have come to a standstill: our present Moon detached itself from the common cosmic body (Earth-plus-Moon) and our planet, the Earth, remained behind. With the Moon were withdrawn the coarser substances which would have led to a complete hardening of the Earth, had they remained in it. Thus at the beginning of our Earth evolution, the Earth was united with the present Sun and Moon. Had the Earth remained with the Sun, man would never have reached his present stage of evolution. He could not have kept pace with the rate of development required by the beings on the Sun. Indeed, the being evolving on the Sun was not man, as he lives on Earth; it was man's spiritual prototype, of whom man, as he confronts us today, is but the image. On the other hand, had the Moon remained in the Earth, man would have withered up and become mummified. The Earth would have become waste and shriveled, and man would have found no possibility of development upon it. Instead of human bodies as they now appear, lifeless statues and withered human forms, growing out of the soil, would have appeared on Earth. That was prevented when the Moon detached itself and went out into cosmic space, taking with it the coarser substances. With this event it became possible for the Ego to be suitably added to the physical, etheric, and astral bodies, which the descendants of the old Moon beings already possessed. The forces of Sun and Moon now worked from outside, holding the balance and enabling man to be fructified by the Ego or 'I'.

Man now developed apace on Earth. Though a deterioration and a downward tendency had been inherited from the old Moon, a new impulse now gave development an upward trend. During this time the spiritual beings who had departed with the Sun evolved there to ever higher states.

Let us imagine that we have a block of iron beside us, and say that we are men of average strength. We shower blows on the iron and try to beat it flat. But we can give it no form. We cannot form it until we have softened the substance by smelting. Something of this kind happened to the Earth when it was freed of its densest substances at the departure of the moon. The Earth-beings could now be formed, and the Sun-beings intervened once more. (It will be remembered that during the old Moon period, they had already acted, as Group-souls from the Sun upon the Moon below.) Before the separation of the Moon, the substances were too dense. These beings now made their influence felt as forces which by degrees fashioned and completed the human body in its present form. Let us consider this a little more closely. Suppose that you had been able to take up a position on that old sphere composed of Earth-plus-Moon. You would have seen the spiritual beings whom we have described above. You would have observed on the Earth a hardening process, a growing desolation, and you might have said to yourself: 'All around me is a waste; everything on Earth seems lifeless; the forces of the Sun have no power to influence what promises to become a huge graveyard filled with corpses.' Then you would have watched how the body of the Moon detached itself from the Earth. The Earth's substance would have become soft, impressionable, plastic, and you then might have said to yourself: 'Everything has grown soft and plastic; the forces proceeding from the Sun are now again work upon the Earth.' Then you might have seen how the Bull-spirits regained their influence upon the human beings who were their counterpart; likewise the Lion- and Eagle-spirits. And you might have said: 'The Moon is outside; its harmful influence is modified by its removal and now works only from a distance. The Earth is thus enabled once more to experience the activity of the spiritual beings.' Tomorrow we shall consider the picture that presents itself to the eye of the seer, when he traces remote scenes of past evolution in the Akashic records.

We look back to the old Saturn period and say: There the earliest beginning of the human physical body was formed. The physical human form, as we see it today, first took shape on Saturn, as though emerging from cosmic Chaos. Then came the Sun period. There the etheric body was added to the first form of the physical body. On the Moon the astral element was added, both to the beings on the Moon and to those evolving on the separate Sun. We find the spiritual prototypes on the Sun, and on the Moon their counterparts on the level of the animal. Finally on the Earth a new condition was brought about, enabling man to absorb into himself the astral element which had developed on the Sun during the lunar period, and which henceforth worked in him as a force. We will now trace these four conditions.

The sublime power which, during the evolution on Saturn, furnishes the germ of the human body form out of cosmic Chaos, is called by the writer of the Gospel of St. John the Logos. The element which appeared on the Sun and united itself to the first bodily form, he calls Life; it is what we call accordingly etheric or life body. The element added on the Moon, he calls Light; for this is the spiritual light, the astral light. This astral light causes a densification on the Moon, but a spiritualization on the separate Sun. This spiritualized element could evolve further, and did so evolve. And when the Sun again separated, the force evolved during the third evolution (Moon) now shone into men; but man was not yet able to behold that which shone into him from the Sun. It worked upon man as a force and formed him, but man could not behold it. The essential nature of the Saturn evolution, as we have clearly understood it, we now express in the words of St. John:

`In the beginning was the Logos.'

We now pass to the Sun. When we express the fact that whatever originated on Saturn was further developed on the Sun, we say: The etheric body was added:

`And the Logos was the Life.'

On the Moon the astral being was added, both of a corporal and of a spiritual nature:

`In the enlivened Logos was Light.'

The light developed further; on the one hand, to the light of clairvoyance and, on the other, with man to darkness. For when he should have received the Light, man, being darkness, comprehended it not. Thus when we throw light from the Akashic records upon the Gospel of St. John, we read of the evolution of the world as follows:

In the beginning, during the Saturn evolution, everything arose out of the Logos. During the Sun evolution, there was Life in the Logos; and from out of the living Logos, during the Moon evolution, there arose Light. And from out of the Logos filled with Light and Life, there arose, on the Sun, during Earth evolution, Light in a more glorious form, but man fell into a state of darkness. From the Sun, the beings who were the advanced Bull-, Lion-, Eagle-, and human-spirits shone down as Light upon the Earth into the developing human forms. But these were darkness; they could not comprehend the Light that shone down upon them. (We must not confound this Light with physical light; this Light consisted of the combined radiations of the spiritual beings, the Bull-, Lion-, Eagle-, and human-spirits who represented the spiritual evolution on the Moon in continued form.) This Light that streamed down was spiritual Light. Men could not receive it; they could not comprehend it; their whole evolution was furthered by it, but they were unconscious of its presence.

`The Light shone in the darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not.'

Such are the exemplary words of the writer of the Gospel of St. John, when he places before us those great truths. And they who knew these things were ever called `ministers and priests of the Logos, as He was from the beginning.' A priest or minister of the Logos as he was from the beginning is one who speaks thus. In the Gospel of St. Luke we have, strictly speaking, exactly the same order. Just try to read with proper understanding what the writer of St. Luke's Gospel says. He wishes to tell of the things which happened from the beginning, `even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word.' And we believe that the writers of these Gospels were ministers of the Word or Logos. We learn to believe in them when we see, from our own spiritual research, how things were, and how our earthly planet developed through Saturn, Sun, and Moon. Then when we see, from the comprehensive words of St. John and St. Luke, that we can find these truths independently of all traditions, we learn to believe in them when we see, from our own spiritual research, how things were, and how our earthly planet developed through Saturn, Sun, and Moon. Then when we see, from the comprehensive words of St. John and St. Luke, that we can find these truths anew and to see in them a testimony that they who wrote them down could read the characters of the spiritual world. An understanding between ourselves and the men of former times is thereby afforded; we behold these men, as it were, eye to eye, and say to them: `We recognize and know you;' for the things which they knew we find again in spiritual science.

## LECTURE IV

Our point of departure for yesterday's considerations was the fact that an altered state of consciousness is experienced by man in his everyday life, inasmuch as his physical and etheric bodies remain in bed, in the interval between falling asleep and awakening, while his astral body and Ego are away. At the same time we pointed out that the physical and etheric bodies, as they remain in bed, could not subsist did not a divine spiritual astrality and a divine spiritual Ego enter the sleeper. Thus, these alternating conditions of everyday human life consist in the fact that in the evening, when he falls asleep, the human being quite his etheric and physical bodies, with his Ego and astral body; these are replaced by divine spiritual astral and Ego-beings which enter his physical and etheric bodies. During the day man himself fills and provides for his physical and etheric bodies, with his astral body and Ego. That was one of the facts which headed yesterday's considerations. The other fact was our increased knowledge resulting from a comprehensive survey of our whole human evolution through the former incarnations of our Earth — Saturn, Sun, and Moon. We also discussed certain details arising out of the general survey and found that with regard to the progress of our planet, a division occurred since the Moon evolution. Certain beings who required lower, inferior substances for their progress separated off, as it were, with the old Moon, while other beings of a higher, more spiritual nature, also detached themselves, as an older form of Sun evolution. We saw further how the two parts afterwards re-united, how they passed through a state of cosmic Devachan or Pralaya, and then reached Earth evolution proper. Here there was, to begin with, a repetition of the former separation of the Sun. For a time we have the Earth-plus-Moon as a coarser, denser body, and the Sun with its higher, sublimer beings, as a separate, finer body. We have seen that, had the Earth remained united with the lunar substances, it must have become a petrified, desert sphere, and all life upon it must have died out, or rather become mummified. Then came a time

when the Moon, with all that it now harbours, was perforce ejected from Earth evolution. The immediate result was a rejuvenating process in the evolving human being.

We have seen that the sublime beings evolving on the Sun were unable to work upon the human substances and beings before the separation of the Moon; afterwards they were able to exercise a rejuvenating influence upon them, so that, strictly speaking, the evolution of the human race dates back from the separation of the Moon from the Earth. This separation of the Moon is a moment of the very greatest importance for the whole of evolution, and we shall examine it more closely today. Before doing so, however, let me draw attention to the manner in which the two starting-points of yesterday's considerations coincide.

Man, as we see him in everyday life, is a being consisting of a physical, an etheric, an astral body and an Ego. When we behold him asleep during the night, as he lies in bed as far as his physical and etheric bodies are concerned, we can, if gifted with clairvoyant consciousness, watch how higher beings enter into the physical and etheric bodies. Who are these beings? They are precisely those of whom we have said that their scene of activity is, generally speaking, on the Sun. There is nothing impossible in this. Unless someone imagines everything spiritual in physical form and applies physical standards to the idea of spiritual beings, he will not ask how solar spirits dwelling on the Sun can enter a physical and etheric body during the night. The same conditions of space do not apply equally to beings in the physical world and to beings so exalted that they dwell on the Sun. Such beings may very well live on the Sun and yet send their forces into the human physical body during the night. So that we may say: By day man is awake, that is, he inhabits his physical and etheric bodies; by night he sleeps, that is, he is outside his physical and etheric bodies. The Gods or other beings from the spheres beyond the Earth watch over man's physical and etheric bodies during the night. Thought this phraseology is more or less symbolical, it is nevertheless exact. We know, therefore, whence the beings come, who enter into our physical and etheric bodies during the night. Our two starting-points, then, coincide here. But we shall see immediately that these beings are of importance not only as regards man's life by night, but that they gradually gain in significance for his life by day. In the first place, however, in order to understand clearly the full importance of the Moon's exit from Earth evolution, we must consider some other matters. Today let us consider the other beings around us and enquire into the manner of their origin.

When we look back to the Saturn period we may say that this body was composed solely of human beings. There was no animal, no vegetable, no mineral kingdom on that body. The whole Saturn sphere was nothing but human forms in embryonic state — much as a blackberry consists of a number of single little berries. And all the beings who belonged to Saturn surrounded this sphere and acted upon it from the environing space. And not let us ask whence that power came which provided the first beginning of the human physical body on Saturn. In a certain sense we may say that it came from two sides. In the first place, high spiritual beings bearing the name of 'Thrones', in the sense of Christian esotericism, poured out their substance and consummated a great sacrifice on old Saturn. Human thought, even human seership, hardly dare presume to peer into the sublime evolution through which the Thrones must have passed before they were able to sacrifice a part of themselves to form the first beginning of the human physical body. Let us try to understand a little what is meant by such a sacrifice.

When we consider the being best known to us today, man, we say: Man, as he not is, demands certain things of the world and gives certain things to the world. Goethe has summed this up in the words: 'Human life runs its course in the metamorphosis between giving and taking.' Man derives more than physical sustenance from the outer world; his intellect, too, must draw nourishment from it. Thus he provides for his growth and obtains what he requires for his own development. On the other hand, he develops the capacity to requite what he receives, with matured ideas, feelings, and finally with love. By taking from the world on one side and giving back on the other, his abilities are increasingly heightened; he becomes a reasonable and intellectual human being; he can develop ideas which can be offered up for the common welfare of humanity. He develops feelings and emotions which become transmuted into love; and when he brings these feelings and emotions as an offering to his fellow human beings, the life of the latter becomes quickened thereby. WE need only recall the quickening effect of love, Whoever is really able to pour forth love on his fellow creatures can quicken, comfort, and elevate them by his love alone. Man has therefore the ability to sacrifice something. But to whatever heights our capacity for sacrifice may rise, our power is meagre when compared with that of the Thrones. Evolution, however, consists in the acquisition of an increasing capacity for sacrifice, until a being is finally capable of offering up his own substance and being; indeed, of feeling it to be his highest bliss when he gives forth what he has developed as his own substance. Such sublime beings do indeed exist, who rise to a higher level of existence by offering up their own substance. The materialist will of course here again say: 'If beings are so advanced that they can sacrifice their own substance, how can they rise to a higher stage? If they offer up themselves, there is nothing left of them!' Thus the materialist, for he cannot understand that there is a spiritual existence, and that a being is preserved even if he gives forth all that he has gradually taken to himself. On Saturn the Thrones had reached a stage at which they could pour out the substance which they had acquired in the course of their foregoing evolution. Through this act they rose to a higher stage of evolution. That which issued from the Thrones, as the thread which the spider spins from its body to weave its web, was the groundwork for the formation of the physical human body. Then came other beings, not so high in rank as the Thrones, whom we call Spirits of Personality or Archai, in the sense of Christian esotericism. The Spirits of Personality now took in hand, as it were, the substance that issued from the Thrones. The collaboration of these two hierarchies produced the first beginning of the physical human body, which was as then elaborated through long periods of time. Then, as we said yesterday, there ensued universal night or cosmic Devachan which was followed by the second incarnation of the Earth as 'Sun'. The human beings again came forth and other spiritual beings appeared on the scene. These were the Fire Spirits or Archangels, in the sense of Christian esotericism, and the Spirits of Wisdom or Kyriotetes. These now were most concerned in further developing what reappeared as the physical human body. It was now the turn

of the Kyriotetes (Dominions or Spirits of Wisdom) to sacrifice their substance, and what we know as the etheric body flowed from them into the human physical body. The etheric body was elaborated by the Spirits of Personality together with the Fire Spirits or Archangels, and as a result man developed to a being of the value of a plant. We may say that on Saturn man had the value and the existence of a mineral, inasmuch as he had no more than a physical body, as our minerals today. On the Sun man rose to the level of a plant, for he possessed both physical and etheric bodies. An event now took place the idea of which must occupy a foremost place in our minds if we wish to understand evolution in its entirety.

In speaking of this event, I always like to compare it with an event of everyday life, when children in school, having failed to attain the required standard, miss their promotion, to the grief and annoyance of the parents, and are left to repeat the same class. Something of the kind exists also in the Cosmos. Certain beings fail to reach the goal of their cosmic evolutionary stage and remain behind. Some of the Spirits of Personality who should have reached the goal due on Saturn, remained behind; they had neglected to do all that was necessary to raise man to the value of a mineral and to bring him to the appropriate perfection at this stage. Now in what way was it possible for these Spirits of Personality who had fallen behind on Saturn to work during the Sun evolution? They could not create a being such as man was due to become on the Sun, with both physical and etheric bodies. For this purpose Archangels were necessary. Those Spirits of Personality could create no more on the Sun than formerly on Saturn: a physical germ of the value of a mineral. Hence there arose during the Sun period, through their influence, beings of a lower grade, which formed a kingdom inferior to the human kingdom; these were the ancestors of our present animals. On the Sun, therefore, our human kingdom had advanced to the plant stage, while the animal kingdom was on the level of the mineral. In this way the first beginning of our animal kingdom arose in addition to the human kingdom.

We ask therefore: which of all the beings that surround us can look back upon the longest evolution? Who is the first born of our creation? Man! All the other beings have arisen because the evolutionary forces bound up with human existence kept back the embryo which might have become man at a certain stage, and allowed it to grow into a lower being at a later stage. Had the laggard Spirits of Personality performed their task on Saturn, and not on the Sun, there would have been no animal kingdom. In a similar way, the following events occurred on the Moon. (I need only touch upon them now.) Man's development progressed inasmuch as he received his astral body from other beings, the Spirits of Motion (Christian Dynamis). Man thereby rose to the value of an animal during the Moon period. But the beings who had arisen as a second (mineral) kingdom during the Sun period now mostly attained the plant value on the Moon. These were the precursors of our present animals. To these were added, once more by the agency of the spiritual beings who had fallen behind in the manner indicated, the creations which nor form our vegetable kingdom. On the Sun there had been no vegetable kingdom but only a human and an animal kingdom. The vegetable kingdom appeared for the first time on the Moon; but a mineral kingdom, a solid earth from which all things grow, did not yet exist. In this manner the kingdoms evolved by degrees. The highest of these, the human kingdom, was first to evolve. The animal kingdom is something in the nature of an outcast from the human kingdom — a failure to reach the highest level; and what remained still further behind, became our present vegetable kingdom.

When the evolution of the old Moon was completed, Earth evolution began, and we have already described how Sun and Moon separated from the Earth. The germ of the earlier kingdoms, both animal and plant, reappeared on the Earth, and finally (while the Moon and its substance still formed part of the Earth) the mineral kingdom appeared in addition. It was precisely owing to the mineral kingdom and the solid foundation it provided, that the Earth became hardened, parched, and waste, in the manner described. For the mineral kingdom by which we are now surrounded is nothing but the cast-off element of the other, higher kingdoms. As I have pointed out before, you need only consider thoughtfully what is recognized by the science of the day. You will then realize how the mineral kingdom was segregated from the other kingdoms. Remember that coal, a mineral substance, is extracted from the earth. What was coal ages ago? Trees that once grew on the earth, plants that once perished and became stony masses, minerals. What is now dug out in the form of coal was once a conglomerate of plants. Coal is a product that was segregated; originally there were plants there instead of coal. In the same way you will realize that everything else which forms the solid groundwork of our Earth has been segregated from the higher kingdoms. Think how certain of our present mineral products are excretions of certain animals, such as the shells of snails and other mollusks. Originally no minerals whatever existed; they were segregated in the course of time. The mineral kingdom appeared for the first time upon our Earth, and the reason of its formation was that there were still certain beings present who worked upon the Earth in the same way as they had worked upon Saturn. In fact, the existence of the mineral kingdom is due to the activity of the Spirits of Personality; and such beings are active on all higher stages. If, however, evolution had continued in this way, there would have been so many mineral deposits, so many processes of hardening and densification, that the Earth would have gradually become a desert waste.

We have now reached an important point in the evolution of our Earth. We picture to ourselves how the Sun has left the Earth with the finest substances and the beings who are now the spiritual inhabitants of the Sun. We behold the growing desolation of the Earth and see how its mineral crust becomes increasingly dense and how all forms (including the human forms) wither away. Even at that time a certain alternation took place in the conditions of human life. An illustration taken from the growth of the plant will show what occurred at that time.

Springing from the tiny seed, the plant bursts forth in spring, unfolds to blossom and fruit and withers away again in autumn. All that delights the eye in spring and summer disappears in autumn, and, outwardly in the physical world, only an insignificant remnant is left. But if you believed that during winter nothing of the true being of the plant were present, or that the true being must be sought in the physical seed alone, you would have little idea of the plant. To be sure, in its

present form of existence, the plant consists of a physical and an etheric body; but for clairvoyant vision, its upper part is surrounded by an astral being, as by a border. This astral being is enlivened by a power that streams towards the Earth from the Sun, that is, from the spiritual Sun. For clairvoyant consciousness every blossom is surrounded as by a cloud. This cloud breathes the life that is exchanged between Sun and Earth. In spring and summer, while the plants bud and blossom, something of the Sun-being draws near and hovers round the surface of the plant. When autumn comes this astral being withdraws and unites itself with the life of the Sun. We may say that the plant-astrality seeks its physical plant-body on the Earth in spring, and incarnates itself, if not IN this plant-body, at any rate around it. In autumn it returns to the Sun, leaving behind the seed as a pledge that it will find its way back again to its physical body.

In similar fashion there was a kind of exchange between the physical human beings and the Sun-beings, though the human form was as yet primitive and elementary. There were periods in which the Sun-spirits worked upon the Earth beneath, enveloping the human bodies with their astrality, as today the plant-astrality envelops the plants from spring till autumn. Thus, in speaking of those times, we may say that, during certain periods, man's astral being was to a certain extent united with his physical body on Earth, and that it (the astral being) then withdrew to the Sun, to return again later. In the physical body only the germ was left. But the Earth became ever denser and denser, and something then happened of great importance which I would ask you especially to bear in mind. In earlier times, immediately after the separation of the Sun from the Earth, it was still possible for the astral beings to unite with the physical body, when they returned after their period of separation. Subsequently, however, owing to the increasing influence of the Moon, the bodies down below became so hardened that the beings who descended to reside in them found them unfit for use. Here you have a closer description of what I described yesterday in a more abstract way. I said the Sun-forces found it impossible to form and shape the substances on the Earth. Speaking more concretely, we may say that the substances dried up and the beings no longer found suitable bodies. This resulted in the desolation of the Earth, and the human souls desiring to return to the Earth, at last found that the bodies were no longer suitable for them. The souls had to leave the bodies to their fate and only the strongest of these were able to rescue their existence through this period of desolation. This period reached its climax while the Moon was still in the Earth but was preparing to leave. The souls which still desired to be human souls were no longer able to enter these bodies. At that time only a few human beings inhabited the Earth, and it looked as though all life would become extinct upon it. It is a fair description of those conditions to say that at the time of the Moon's exit, very few souls desiring union with the bodies beneath were strong enough to unite with them, so that only very few human beings were able to survive this evil period.

I must not describe these conditions more in detail. Let us return to the point at which the old Moon evolution had reached an end, and the Earth arose from the bosom of the universe. The Earth was not like old Saturn; what now came forth contained the after effects of all that had gone before; not physical matter alone was connected therewith, but all the beings as well, who had worked in evolution. The connection of the Thrones with Saturn signifies that they remained united with the whole of evolution; they came forth once more when the Earth issued from cosmic darkness. The Spirits of Personality reappeared in like manner, so too the Spirits of Motion, and so on; also human, animal, and plant forms, for all these were contained in the Earth.

Modern physical science puts forward hypotheses which are pure fancy. Thus with regard to the genesis of the world, the theory is advanced that there was a vast nebular mass extending beyond Saturn. A cosmic nebula of this kind, composed merely of mists and vapours, is a fantastic idea; there never was such a thing. To anyone observing what happened there with physical eyes alone, something of the kind — a gigantic vaporous body — might indeed have been visible. But in that mass of vapour was something which physical eyes could not have seen — namely, all the beings connected with our evolution. The fact that everything afterwards assumed order and form was not due merely to rotary motion, but to the needs of the beings who were themselves a part of the whole. We shall never acquire a reasonable view of these things unless we rid ourselves altogether of the accepted theories with which even our children are inoculated from their earliest schooldays. They are taught that in ancient times only childish ideas and views were current: These unfortunate Indians believed in a Brahma filling the whole of universal space! An ancient Persian believed in Ormuzd, the good God, and in his opponent Ahriman! Not to speak of the ancient Greeks, with their host of divinities, Zeus, Pallas Athene, and so on! We know today that all that comes from popular imagination — beings imagined by a childish mind. And the Gods of the old Teutons, Wotan, Thor, and so on, are mythological figures; we have long ago got beyond this! We know now that such gods had nothing to do with the development of the world. In the beginning there was a vast primordial nebula in space; this began to rotate; first it threw off one sphere from its volume; then it continued to rotate; in time a second sphere was thrown off, then a third, and so on. But this is only the form taken by a physical-Copernican mythology of modern times, which will in its turn be superseded by other views. The earlier mythologies have the advantage that they are truer than the alter forms, which have merely sifted out the abstract and purely material side. We must never forget how very convenient it is to demonstrate to children the apparently simple and plausible genesis of the solar system. We take a drop of oil, cut out a small disk of cardboard, stick a pin through it in the direction of the equator and another through the top, then place it on the water and let it float. The whole thing is now brought into rotation, as they say the `universal nebula once rotated'. First there is flattening of the oil, then one drop detaches itself, followed by a second and a third — a large drop remains in the middle — and behold a miniature planetary system! And it sounds very plausible to say: `As this appears to us in miniature, so it once happened in the Universe.' They, however, who arrange such demonstrations forget one thing which it may be very laudable to forget under other circumstances. They forget themselves. They forget that they themselves are the cause of the rotation. The whole comparison would only hold good if the worthy teacher would bring himself to say: `Just as I stand here and turn the little pin, a giant professor stands out there and takes care that the planets separate off, as we saw happen on a small scale with the drop of oil.' In this case the experiment might pass muster.

We know that no giant professor stands out there and turns the pin, but that beings of every rank are there — spiritual beings who attract the substances corresponding to themselves. Beings who required certain definite conditions of life, attracted to themselves suitable substances, when they withdrew to the Sun. They took with them these substances and established their centre of activity by the power of their spiritual forces. Other beings again severed the Earth-substance for themselves. Spirit and nothing but spirit works into the smallest particle of matter — into the atom if we so choose to call it! And it is contrary to truth to ascribe to mere matter a mode of activity. People will not understand what takes place in the smallest division of space until they know that spirit is at work in the greatest. To be sure, not spirit in general, as when people say: 'There is of course, generally speaking, spirit in matter, an "All-spirit", or "primal spirit".' Such a designation might mean anything you like but explains nothing. We must know the 'Spirits' as they really are, with their peculiarities and various vital requirements. And now I will add something to complete what I touched upon yesterday concerning the separation of the Sun from the Earth-plus-Moon, and again the separation of the Moon from the Earth. In the main this is correct, but this picture must be supplemented.

Before the Sun could separate, the necessity arose for certain beings to sever off for themselves special spheres of activity. These spheres are visible to us today in the physical planets Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars. Thus we may say that in the universal substance, in which the Sun and Moon were contained, Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars were also contained, and that certain beings removed these spheres for themselves. These Beings required conditions of existence which could be fulfilled on the planets named. Then the Sun detached itself, with the highest Beings, and Earth-plus-Moon was left. This sphere continued its development until the Moon was ejected in the manner described. But of the beings who went with the Sun, not all were capable of keeping pace with solar evolution. It is difficult to find words to describe these events in our prosaic language, and the use of analogies is sometimes necessary. We may therefore say that when the Sun separated from the Earth, certain beings believed themselves capable of traveling in the Sun's escort. In reality, however, only the highest beings could do so; the others were compelled to separate at a later stage, and by their creation of new spheres of activity for themselves, Venus and Mercury came into existence. We see the separation of Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars before the exit of the Sun from the Earth; afterwards Venus and Mercury detach themselves from the Sun, and finally the Moon leaves the Earth. Thus we have gathered this evolution from spiritual worlds and placed it before us. We have understood the development of our solar system in the sense that we find various grades of spiritual beings upon the different heavenly bodies. Having placed these facts before our soul, we can find the answer to the question: What became of those spiritual astral beings who wished to incarnate as men and found only hardened bodies which they could not enter? Being insufficiently mature they could not all unite with the Sun spirits, and it thus happened that, being compelled to abandon the bodies on the Earth, they withdrew for a time to Saturn, Jupiter and Mars. While the Earth below was growing desolate and produced bodies incapable of harbouring human souls we have the fact that the souls betook themselves to planetary heights there to await the time when human bodies would again be available for them.

Only very few, only the most robust human beings were able to receive into themselves souls and preserve their existence during the Moon crisis; the other souls ascended to the other heavenly bodies. Then the Moon was ejected from the Earth. This enabled the Sun forces again to work upon the human forms; the latter received a new impulse and once more became soft, pliable, and plastic; and into these now plastic human forms, the souls which had been waiting on Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars could again enter. Whereas these souls had been compelled to abandon the Earth, they now returned by degrees, after the expulsion of the Moon, and peopled the rejuvenated human bodies. Thus, following upon the exit of the Moon, we come to a period during which new bodies appear in increasing numbers. During the Moon crisis the number of human beings was very small. These were never without descendants, but when the souls returned to Earth they found the bodies unfit for use and left them to perish. By degrees the human race died out. But when the rejuvenating process set in, the progeny of the human beings who had outlived the Moon crisis were once more able to receive the souls from Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars. The Earth gradually became peopled with souls. And now you can understand the profound importance of this decisive event — the exit of the Moon. Strictly speaking, everything was changed by it.

Let us once more consider evolution before the Moon's exit. We referred to Man as the first born of creation, for he appeared during Saturn. The Sun brought the animal kingdom, the Moon the vegetable kingdom, and finally the mineral kingdom came into existence on the Earth. But now, subsequently to the Moon's expulsion, things became different. The Earth was saved from mummification by the exit of the Moon. Everything then revived and was rejuvenated. What was the manner of this rejuvenation?

The lowest of the kingdoms, the mineral, required little help. The vegetable kingdom was in a sense withered, but could soon revive; the animal kingdom, too, was capable of gradual progress. The human beings were the last to recover so as to be fit to receive the souls which descended upon them from the highest regions. Thus, through the expulsion of the Moon, the whole process of evolution becomes reversed. Whereas originally the human kingdom was first to come into existence, then the animal kingdom, later the plants, and last of all the minerals — the mineral kingdom is now the first to show the full benefit of the rejuvenating forces; then follows the vegetable kingdom, which develops to its highest forms; next the animal kingdom, leaving the human kingdom last in order to evolve to the highest forms possible to it. After the exit of the Moon, the whole sense of evolution is reversed. The beings who wait longest before uniting their spiritual to their physical form, were precisely those who, in the highest sense of the word, ascended to a more spiritual sphere after the separation of the Moon. Others who completed their spiritual development earlier, remained behind on the Earth at an earlier stage. After the separation of the Moon the laggards appeared first. You will easily understand the reason. Let us consider some human soul or some being which was unwilling to incarnate earlier owing to the prevailing hardening of substance. In the words of our language, such a being might deliberate as follows: 'Shall I incarnate now or shall I wait awhile?' Let us suppose that the Moon was only a short while separated and the substances still very hard. The being is in a hurry to incarnate; it descends at all costs and puts up with the still undeveloped bodies. As a result it is condemned to remain

upon a lower level. Another being might reflect as follows: 'I prefer to wait awhile in universal space, till the Earth has still further refined and rarefied its physical being.' This being waits for a later epoch and, as a result, succeeds in giving form and shape to the body in which it incarnates, and makes it a physical image of itself. Hence all beings who incarnate too soon must remain upon subordinate stages; others who can wait, attain the highest stages. Our higher animals remained upon the animal stage because they were unable to wait long enough after the exit of the Moon. They put up with such bodies as were available. The next to descend formed their bodies up to the level of the inferior human races, which are already extinct or are dying out. Then followed a time when the right moment was at hand for the union of souls and bodies, and when beings were brought forth which were really capable of human development. Thus we see the desolation of the Earth until the Moon's exit, followed by a revival after that event. Thenceforward the beings who had left the Earth because of its excessive deterioration, descend once more. This applies not only to the beings who are exclusively concerned with the development of higher humanity, but also to others who descend for quite other purposes. In this case, too, it is essential for a being to await the right moment to enter a body.

Let us go back to the Indian epoch. At that time there were men at a high stage of development. Even as souls descending from Mars, Saturn, and Jupiter sought suitable bodies, higher beings sought still more highly developed bodies in order to work in the inner nature of man. Let us take the great teachers of the ancient Indians, the holy Rishis. They placed a part of their being at the disposal of certain higher beings, who took up their abode in them. Other high beings, however, said: 'No, we shall wait awhile until there are other beings down there who are themselves experiencing a higher development; we prefer not to descend; we remain above until men have further matured their soul; then we shall descend; for the present we find the inner nature of man but little prepared for us.' In the Persian period certain higher beings said: 'We can now descend into the human nature in its present stage of development.' The same thing happened in Egyptian times. But He who was the highest of all the Sun Beings still waited. From without, this Being sent down His forces upon the holy Rishis. They looked up to Him whom they called Vishva Karman, saying: 'Vishva Karman is beyond our sphere.' But He waited, saying: 'The human soul is not so perfectly prepared that I can abide therein.' Then came the Persian period. Zarathustra looked up to the Sun and beheld Ahura Mazda. And still this mighty Spirit refrained from descending into earthly space. Then came the Egyptian period and the civilization of the people which had waited longest. And then came the man who had waited longest, who had developed his inner nature through many incarnations. The Sun-Spirit looked down and beheld the inner nature of this man who dwelt in Jesus of Nazareth and who had made his soul ready. The highest Sun-Spirit looked down and said: 'As the lowest beings once descended to build up the bodies, I now descend and take residence in the inner nature of the man who waited longest.' To be sure higher beings had already united themselves with men; but he who had waited longest received into himself the Christ. At the Baptism in the Jordan he was so advanced that the Spirit who had hitherto sojourned in the realms of universal space, could descend upon him and unite with his inner nature. From the time of the Baptism by John, Christ dwelt in the body of Jesus of Nazareth, because the individuality of Jesus of Nazareth had waited through successive incarnations until it was ripe to receive this high Spirit. The Christ-Spirit was always there; but after the separation of the Moon it was necessary that all beings should first attain a certain degree of maturity. The first to appear were the lowest beings which, as regards their spiritual part, had been least able to wait; then came beings of higher and higher grade. And when man appeared and his inner nature attained ever higher development — until at last Jesus of Nazareth was so far advanced — then he who had eyes to see could say: 'I saw the Spirit descend!' And he upon whom the Spirit descended, what could he say when the Spirit now within him gave utterance? For that Spirit was none other than He whom the Rishis knew as Vishva Karman. How must Vishva Karman have spoken of himself — not in the words of the Rishis but in his own words? For he is the great Sun-Spirit, who, as Spirit, is active in light. He would have said: 'I am the light of the world!' What would Ahura Mazda have said, had he spoken of himself? 'I am the light of the world!' What were the words spoken by the same Spirit when a human being had become ready to receive Him into himself? He who was once in universal space, how does He now speak from out of a human being? 'I am the light of the world!'

When the divine Being Himself had made His dwelling within a human being, we hear the same utterance, which had once resounded on the Earth from celestial choirs, now re-echoed from a human soul, as the truest characterization of Himself by the guiding Cosmic Deity. It resounds, as it must, from Jesus of Nazareth, in whom is the Christ:

'I am the Light of the world.'

## LECTURE V

When man is considered in his present form, composed as he is of physical, etheric, astral bodies and Ego, clairvoyant consciousness observes the important fact that, as far as their upper part is concerned, man's physical and etheric bodies are approximately the same in size and form. The human head, especially, as it appears to physical sight, coincides almost exactly with the etheric head; the latter extends only slightly beyond the physical head on all sides. In the animal this is by no means the case. Even in the higher animals there is an enormous difference between the form and size of the etheric and physical parts of the head. If, for instance, you observe a horse with clairvoyant consciousness you will see that its etheric head stretches far beyond the physical head and differs considerably from the latter in form. If I were to sketch for you the formation above an elephant's trunk and head, you would be greatly surprised. What physical sight sees of the animal is merely the dense physical part in the middle. Let us now enquire into this fact.

Strictly speaking, the perfection of the human being on the physical plane is due to the fact that the etheric body so closely coincides with the physical body. This was not always the case. In the course of earth evolution there were periods in which the human etheric body by no means corresponded in its outline with the physical body, as at present. Indeed the progressive development of man consists in the fact that the etheric body, once ranging beyond the physical body, gradually crept into the latter, as it were, and came to coincide with it. Now it is essential to keep in mind that the interpenetration of the physical and etheric bodies necessarily took place at a definite point of time. To understand this, we must examine more in detail the course of evolution, which we contemplated in its general outline yesterday and the day before.

Let us again call to mind that, in the beginning of its development, our Earth was united with Sun and Moon. At that point man had arisen once more out of the earliest germ which comprised physical, etheric, and astral bodies; he appeared, so to speak, in his first earthly form — the only one possible to him while the Earth still contained both Sun and Moon. This period of Earth evolution, which man experienced in common with his planet, is usually called in the literature of spiritual science, the `Polarian' period. It would lead too far to explain today why this period is called `Polarian'; meanwhile let us simply accept the term. Then comes the time when the Sun is preparing to quit the Earth; when the beings who cannot abide the grosser substance of the Earth separate from the latter with the finer substances of the Sun. `Hyperborean' is the name we give to this age. Then comes the time in which the Earth is still united with the Moon and becomes increasingly desolate. We saw yesterday how the human souls abandoned the Earth, upon which only stunted human forms remained. In the literature of spiritual science this is called the `Lemurian' age. The separation of the Moon from the Earth took place in this period and there ensued a revival of all the kingdoms which had their foundation upon the earth. The mineral kingdom needed but little reviving; the vegetable kingdom somewhat more; the animal kingdom still more; while the human race needed the highest and most powerful forces for the furtherance of its development. This revival began simultaneously with the exit of the Moon. We find then, as we said yesterday, only a small number of human beings, and these consisted of the three principles they had acquired in the evolution of Saturn, Sun, and Moon. To these the first beginning of the Ego was added on e. But at the time of the Moon's exit from the Earth, man did not yet exist in the fleshly substance which he assumed later. He was clothed in the finest substance of that age. In the Lemurian age our present minerals were largely still in a fluid state, being dissolved in other substances which, as fluids, exist separately today, for instance, water. The atmosphere was still permeated with dense vapours of the most various substances. Pure air, pure water in our sense of the word, did not exist at that time, or at any rate only to a very slight extent. The human being of those times cast his tenuous delicate body in the purest substances available. Had he used coarser substances, his body would have assumed a definite outline, and its form a sharply defined contour; the latter would have been bequeathed to his descendants and the human race would have remained stationary. Thus the coarse substances were inadmissible; indeed, man had to provide that the matter assumed by his body should freely move in accordance with the impulses of his soul. The matter in which man's body was cast at that time was so soft that it followed the impulse of his will in all directions. You can stretch out your hand today, but you cannot prolong it three yards by an act of will. You cannot subject matter to your will, because its present form is inherited. This was not the case at that time. Man could assume any form at will; he could cast the form as his soul willed. It was conditional to his further development that, after the Moon's exit, he should incarnate in the softest substances, so that his body remained plastic and flexible, and followed the soul in every respect. Then came the time in which certain parts of matter which are so necessary for our present existence — water and air — were gradually purged of the denser matter they contained, so that the substances which were initially dissolved in the water, now separated from it. As substances in solution fall when the water cools, the dissolved substances fell, as it were, to the Earth's crust. The water became clear and the air was freed from matter; air and water came into existence. Man was able to use this refined matter for the formation of his body. This third (Lemurian) period gradually led to an epoch which we call `Atlantean' because the chief part of the human race then lived on a now submerged continent which extended between America and Europe and Africa — the area now covered by the Atlantic Ocean. When the Lemurian period had lasted a while, humanity pursued its development on the Atlantean continent. Here everything took place which I am about to describe, as well as much that was mentioned yesterday.

Only very few of the human souls who incarnated later, were present at the time of the Moon's exit, for these souls were then distributed over the various planets. They descended again during the late Lemurian and early Atlantean times. Few human beings, as I said, had lived through the crisis of the Lemurian epoch, for only the strongest souls could reside in the hardened substance, and survive the Moon crisis. But when the substance began to soften, after the Moon's exit, and when descendants were produced who were not confined within a hard and fast, inherited form, but were flexible, the souls gradually descended from the various planets and took possession of the bodies. The forms, however, which became physical soon after the Moon's exit, retained their fixed form through inheritance, and were therefore unable to receive into themselves human souls, even after the Moon's exit.

We can readily imagine what took place when these souls experienced the desire to descend to the Earth. Down below forms of every description (the offspring of the forms which had survived the Moon crisis) were to be seen, and among these all stages of densification were to be found. The human souls, indeed all soul-beings, who felt least impelled to unite themselves entirely with matter, chose the most plastic of the forms and abandoned them soon after. On the other hand, the other soul-beings who united themselves thus early with the hardened forms, were imprisoned in them, and consequently remained behind in their development. The animals nearest to man came into existence in consequence of the descent from space of souls who were unwilling to wait; they sought the bodies on Earth too early and turned them into hard and fast forms before they were fully penetrated by the etheric body. The human form, however, remained plastic until it could perfectly adapt itself to the etheric body. It was in this way that the coincidence of the physical and etheric bodies, of which I have spoken, came about; it was accomplished roughly in the last third of the Atlantean period. Prior to this, the human soul, having descended, retained the body in a fluid state and took care that the etheric body did

not mingle completely with any part of the physical body. The interpenetration of the physical and etheric bodies took place at quite a definite point of time. Not until the Atlantean period did the human physical body begin to assume a definite form and to harden. Now had nothing else happened during Atlantean evolution, had no new factor intervened, human development would have taken another course. Man would have passed somewhat rapidly from an earlier to a later state of consciousness. Before the complete union of his soul with his physical body, man was a clairvoyant being, but his clairvoyance was dull and shadowy. He could behold the spiritual world but he could not say 'I' to himself; he could not distinguish himself from his environment. He was without consciousness of himself. The latter first appeared when the physical and etheric bodies became united. And had nothing else happened, the result would have been as follows.

Before this point of time, man was conscious of the spiritual world. Though his vision of plants, animals, and so on, was not clear, the spiritual element surrounding them was distinctly visible to him. He could not have distinguished clearly the form of an elephant, but the etheric body extending beyond the animal's physical body would have been plainly visible to him. This form of consciousness would have gradually disappeared; the Ego would have developed, when the physical and etheric bodies had coincided, and man would have seen the world confronting him from another side. Whereas he had formerly beheld clairvoyant pictures, he would have henceforth perceived an external world and, together with it, the spiritual beings and spiritual forces upon which this world is founded. He would not have seen the physical picture of the plant as we now see it; together with the physical picture, he would have seen the spiritual being of the plant. Now why was the former dim clairvoyant consciousness not simply replaced, in the course of evolution, by a consciousness of objects which included a simultaneous perception and knowledge of the spiritual world?

The reason why this did not happen is because, during the revival of the human beings in the period of the Moon crisis, certain beings gained an ascendancy over man — beings who, though higher than man, must nevertheless be described as backward in their evolution. We have acquainted ourselves with several of these higher beings; we know that some ascended to the Sun and others to other planets. But there were also spiritual beings who had failed to perform the task allotted to them on the Moon. These beings, inferior to the gods, higher than man, are named Luciferic beings, after their leader, the highest and most powerful among them.

At the time of the Moon crisis man was so far developed that he possessed physical, etheric, astral bodies and Ego. The latter he owed to the Spirits of Form, as he owed his astral body to the Spirits of Motion, his etheric body to the Spirits of Wisdom, and his physical body to the influence of the Spirits of Will or Thrones. Thanks to the Spirits of Form (Exusiai or Powers in the language of Christian esotericism), the addition of the embryonic Ego to the three other principles was rendered possible. Now if evolution had pursued a normal course, and had all the beings around man fulfilled their appointed tasks, certain beings would have worked upon his physical body, others upon his etheric body, others again upon his astral body, and yet others upon his Ego; all in due order, we may say, every hierarchy working upon the principle to which it belonged. But now these laggard beings were there — the Luciferic beings. Had their further activity been of the right kind, they would have been called to work upon the Ego; but they had only learnt (on the Moon) to work upon the astral body, and this led to results of great consequence. Had these Luciferic beings not been there, man would have received into himself his Ego in its embryonic state, and evolved until the last third of the Atlantean period in such a way as to exchange his dim clairvoyant consciousness for a consciousness of external objects. As it was, however, the influence of the Luciferic beings penetrated, like forceful rays, into his astral body. Wherein did their influence consist?

The astral body is the bearer of impulses, desires, passions, instincts, and so on. Man would have become quite different as regards the structure of his astral body had the Luciferic beings not made themselves felt. He would have developed none but impulses fitted to lead him in safety and guide him forward. The higher Spirits would have led him to behold the world as a world of objects, behind which the spiritual being would have been visible. But freedom, enthusiasm, the feeling of self-dependence, and passion for the higher world would have been lacking in him. Man would have lost his old clairvoyant consciousness; having become a part of the deity, he would have beheld the glory of the world, and this vision would have produced its reflection in his intellect with great perfection. But in his perfection man would have been nothing but a great mirror of the universe. Now, however, before this happened, the Luciferic beings poured into his astral body passions, impulses, and desires, which mingled with whatever man had received into himself in the course of his evolution. Thus he could not only behold the stars, but also become aglow for them; he could kindle within himself enthusiasm and passion; he could not only follow the deified impulses of the astral body, but also develop his own impulses in personal freedom. All this had been poured into his astral body by the Luciferic beings. At the same time, however, they had conferred upon him something else: the possibility of evil, and the ability to sin. He would never have acquired the latter had he been led, step by step, by the sublimer gods. The Luciferic beings made man free and implanted in him enthusiasm, but at the same time, they conferred upon him the possibility of lower desires. Under normal circumstances, man would have associated normal feelings with every single object; but now the things of sense could please him more than was right, and he could devote his whole interest to them. As a result, he was overtaken by a hardening of his form, earlier than would otherwise have been the case. Strictly speaking, man should have descended from an airy to a dense form in the last third of the Atlantean period; but as it was, he descended earlier and became prematurely a being of dense form. This is described in the Bible as the Fall of Man. But apart from this we find, in the times we have been considering, high spiritual beings at work upon the Ego, which they have bestowed upon man. In proportion as the human beings descend and unite with the human bodies, these beings direct the flow of forces which bring man forward on his path in the Cosmos; they hold their hands protectingly over humanity. On the other hand, the other beings who had not risen sufficiently to work upon the Ego, now work upon the astral body and kindle in man certain definite instincts.

The physical life of man at this period presents the picture of these two antagonistic powers; the divine spiritual powers at work upon the Ego and the Luciferic beings. If we observe the spiritual side of this process, we may say that during the time of desolation on Earth, the human souls ascended to the various planets belonging to our solar system, and returned to Earth in proportion as they found bodies in the line of physical heredity. If you bear in mind that the Earth was most thinly populated at the time of the Moon-cleavage, you will readily understand that the branches of the human race issued from a small number of ancestors. The population grew by degrees inasmuch as souls descended in increasing numbers to take possession of the bodies which appeared on the Earth. For a long time there were none but descendants of the few human beings who lived at the time of the Moon-cleavage. They were worked upon by the Sun-forces themselves, for they had retained sufficient power of resistance to offer a point of approach to the Sun-forces, even during the time of the lunar crisis. These human beings and their descendants felt themselves to be `Sun-men'. Let us clearly realize this. For the sake of simplicity picture to yourselves that there was only one human pair during the lunar crisis (I will not decide whether this was really the case). This pair had descendants, who again had other descendants, forming the branches of the human race. Now as long as the population was strictly confined to the descendants of the old `Sun-men', there prevailed among men a definite state of consciousness, due to their old clairvoyant faculty. Human memory covered more than the experiences since birth, or as at present, from a point subsequent to birth; a man remembered everything that his father, grandfather, and so on had experienced. His memory extended back to his ancestors, indeed to all with whom he was connected by blood. This was because the Sun-forces overshadowed all those who were related by ties of blood and could trace their descent to the survivors of the Moon-cleavage. The Sun-forces, having awakened Ego-consciousness, kept it alive through the line of descent. Now the human race increased, as the souls who had ascended into cosmic space returned to Earth. Those, however, in whom the Sun-forces were strong enough, still felt these forces, although they had descended to Earth and were related to spheres very different from the Sun. In later times, these souls, living as later descendants, lost their connection with the Sun-forces and, with it, the common memory with their ancestors. In proportion as the human race multiplied, this living consciousness inherent in blood-heredity was lost. It was lost because the Powers who guided man onward in his evolution and implanted the Ego in him were confronted by the Luciferic powers who worked upon the astral body. These powers worked against everything that cemented man to man. Their desire was to confer freedom and independence upon man. After the separation of the Moon the consciousness of the oldest human beings was such that the word `I' referred to the experiences of their forefathers as well as to their own. They felt the Sun-being working in the blood common to them all. When this feeling had died out, those who had come from Mars, for instance, felt the bond uniting them with the guardian Spirit of Mars, and their descendants, being recruited precisely from Mars-souls, felt the protecting influence of the Mars-Spirit. The attacks of the Luciferic spirits were directed against this group-consciousness bound up with blood relationship; the further we advance in time, the more does that consciousness disappear and the more does the individual feel his independence, being impelled to cultivate his individual Ego as against the common or group-Ego. Two worlds are thus at work in the human being: that of the Luciferic beings, and that of the divine spiritual beings. The latter lead men to one another, by the ties of blood; the Luciferic beings seek to separate men and divide one from the other. These two forces operated throughout the Atlantean period and we find them still at work when the Atlantean continent was overwhelmed by great upheavals, and Europe, Asia, and Africa — and America on the other side — assumed their present form. They are still at work in the fifth period of the Earth and into our own epoch.

We have thus described five evolutionary periods of the Earth: the Polar, in which the Earth was still united with the Sun; the Hyperborean, in which the Moon was still united with the Earth; the Lemurian, the Atlantean, and finally, the post-Atlantean, our own time. We saw how the Luciferic spirits intervened and worked in opposition to the divine spiritual powers who drew men together. Indeed we must say that human evolution would have taken quite a different course had the Luciferic powers not intervened. The old clairvoyant consciousness would have been replaced by an object-consciousness, such, however, as would have also been alive to the spirit. As it was, the Luciferic spirits led man earlier to a hardened body; man beheld the physical world earlier than would otherwise have been possible for him. As a result he entered upon the third and last phase of the Atlantean period in a totally different condition than would have been the case had the divine spiritual powers help undisputed sway. Instead of a world aglow with the spirit of higher beings, he now saw only a physical world. The divine world had withdrawn from him. The Luciferic beings had interfered with his astral body. Man having now united himself with the sensible world, other beings — the Ahrimanic spirits of Zarathustra (also called Mephistophelian) now interfered with his external perception and with the relation of his Ego to the outer world. Man's physical, etheric, and astral bodies are not so constituted as they would have been had the higher Gods alone worked upon them. The beings known as Luciferic gained admittance into man's astral body and caused his premature fall from Paradise. The consequence of this Luciferic influence was the perversion of man's perception of the outer world by the Ahrimanic or Mephistophelian (Satanic) spirits. The latter now showed the outer world merely in its physical form, and not as it truly is. Hence the Hebrew name for these spirits who deluded man with a vain show: `Mephez-Topel'; `Mephez' the vitiator and `Topel' the liar. That is the derivation of the name Mephistopheles. He is the same spirit as Ahriman. Now what was the effect of Ahriman's influence as distinguished from Lucifer's?

Lucifer caused the undue deterioration of the forces of the astral body, and the premature densification of man's physical substance. To be sure, man attained thereby the freedom which would otherwise have been denied him. The Mephistophelian spirits cast a veil over the spiritual foundation of the world and mocked man with a world that is an illusion. Mephistopheles infused into man the belief that the world is merely a material existence, and that there is nothing spiritual in and behind all matter. The scene which Goethe depicts so wonderfully in his Faust is continually being enacted in humanity as a whole. We see Faust, on the one hand, seeking the way to the spiritual world; on the other hand, Mephistopheles who describes the spiritual world as `nothing', because it is in his interest to represent the world of sense as everything. Faust retorts in words which every spiritual investigator would have used in a similar case: `In thy Nothing I hope to find my All!'

Only when we are aware that in every particle of matter there is spirit, and that the idea of matter is a lie; only when we recognize in Mephistopheles the spirit who vitiates thought in the world, then only can we conceive the outer world in its true form. Now what was necessary for humanity, to help it onward and prevent it being overwhelmed by the fate prepared for it by Lucifer and Ahriman?

Even in Atlantean times efforts had to be made to mitigate the influence of the Luciferic beings. There were men, even in early Atlantean times, who worked upon themselves to the effect of preventing the Luciferic influence in their astral body from becoming unduly great. They avoided everything that came from Lucifer, and sought out in their own soul the passions, instincts, and desires proceeding from him. What resulted from the uprooting of the Luciferic attributes? It enabled these men to behold in its true form, what men would have beheld, had they not been subjected to the influence of the Luciferic and later of the Ahrimanic spirits. Certain individuals in Atlantean times sought, by purity of life and careful self-knowledge, to cast out of themselves the Luciferic influence. By their mode of life it was possible for them, in those times, while remnants of the old clairvoyance still existed, to see into a spiritual world, and to behold a higher world than other men, in whom the Luciferic beings had caused physical matter to harden. Such exceptional individuals, whose strength of character and thorough self-knowledge had enabled them to extirpate the Luciferic influence, became the leaders of the Atlantean epoch; we may call them the Atlantean initiates. Now what had Lucifer actually brought about?

Lucifer had directed his attacks principally against all that united human beings, against the love inherent in the ties of blood. Now those individuals, by combating Lucifer's influence, acquired the power of beholding spiritually the true facts. They could affirm that man's progress is by no means furthered by separation or isolation, but by everything tending to unite. These individuals therefore sought to re-establish the conditions which prevailed before Lucifer's power had imperiled the higher spiritual world. Their effort was to extirpate the personal element: 'Destroy that which gives you a personal Ego, and look back to those ancient times in which the ties of blood spoke so eloquently that the descendant felt his Ego reaching back to his earliest ancestor — when the first forefather, long dead, was worshipped.' The leaders of the Atlantean age sought to lead men back to the times of primeval human communities. Throughout that evolutionary period such leaders appeared again and again and admonished the people, saying, 'Strive to resist the influences which would thrust you into the personal Ego; strive to know what bound men together in olden times; then shall ye find the way to the divine spirit!'

This attitude of soul had been preserved in its purest form by the people whom we know as the old Hebrews. Try to understand aright the exhortations of those who were the leaders of that old Hebrew people. They said to the people: 'You have reached a stage in which every man lays stress upon his personal Ego, and seeks his being in himself alone. But you further the progress of humanity if you deaden the personal Ego and spare no effort to become conscious that you are all united and descended from a common father, Abraham; that you are all members of a great organism extending to Abraham. When you are told: "I and father Abraham are one" and you accept these words, leaving aside everything personal, then you have the right consciousness, which will lead you to the Divine; for the way to God is through the first forefather.' The Hebrew people preserved longest the fundamental principle expressed in the leadership of those who combated the Luciferic influence. But mankind had been entrusted with the mission to cultivate and develop the Ego, not to destroy it. The old initiates had nothing to bring forward against the personal Ego except that the way to the Gods of old led through the ancestors of the race.

When the great impulse, the Christ Impulse, came upon the Earth, as described yesterday, there resounded for the first time, clear and distinct, a new speech. This could be heard precisely within the Hebrew nation, because the latter had most recently preserved what we may call an echo of the teachings of the old Atlantean initiates.

Christ transformed the speech of the old initiates and said: 'It is possible for man to cultivate his own personality; it is possible that he should not obey the physical bonds of blood relationship alone; but that he should look into his Ego, there to seek and find the Divine!' In that impulse which we have called the Christ Impulse, lies the power which enables us, if we have united ourselves therewith, to establish a spiritual bond of brotherhood from man to man, in spite of the individuality of the Ego. Thus the power of Christ was different from that which prevailed in the community into which He was led. Here it said: 'I and Father Abraham are one! This I must know if I would find my way back to God.' But Christ said: 'There is another Father through whom the Ego shall find the way to the Divine; for the Ego or "I am" and the Divine are One! There is an eternal being which thou canst find if thou remainest within thyself.' Hence Christ spoke of the power which He sought to bestow upon mankind, in the words of St. John, saying: 'Before Abraham was, was the I AM.' I AM was none other than the name Christ applied to Himself. And if a consciousness of these things is kindled in man, so that he says: 'There lives something within me which existed long before Abraham; I need not go back to Abraham; I find in myself the divine Father-Spirit,' then he can transform into good all that Lucifer brought for the development of the Ego, but which led to the obstruction of humanity.

Let us suppose that only the higher, divine spiritual beings had been at work, the beings who had restricted love to the ties of blood and only demanded of man: 'Thou must ascend through the whole line of ancestry if thou wouldst find the way to the Gods!' In this case men would have been herded together in one community, and they would never have acquired a full consciousness of their freedom and independence. The Luciferic spirits inoculated the human astral body with these qualities before the appearance of Christ. They separated human beings from one another and taught them to stand on their own feet. But Christ turned to good the evil which necessarily must have resulted had the Luciferic influence been carried to its extreme. In this case humanity would have fallen a prey to lovelessness. Lucifer brought

freedom and independence; but Christ turned that freedom into love. And by the union with Christ men are led to spiritual love.

Viewed from this standpoint a new light falls upon the deed of the Luciferic spirits. Dare we still characterize as negligence and indolence the circumstance that they remained 'in arrears' with their evolution? No; they remained behind in order that they might fulfil a definite mission in the evolution of the Earth: to prevent men being forged together into a mere mass through natural (blood) ties alone, and to prepare the way for Christ. It is as though they had said, in the Moon period: 'We will renounce the fruits of our lunar evolution, that we may serve on Earth in the work of progress!' This is one of the examples which show how an apparent evil, a seeming error, can nevertheless be turned into good in the whole chain of events encompassing the world. In order that Christ might intervene at the right moment in the evolution of the Earth, it was necessary that certain lunar spirits should sacrifice their lunar mission and prepare for Him. From this we see that Lucifer's failure on the Moon may with equal justice be regarded as a sacrifice.

In this way we draw ever nearer to a truth which should be inscribed in the human soul as a lofty maxim of morality: When thou seest evil in the world, say not: 'Here is evil and therefore imperfection!' Enquire rather: How can I rise to the knowledge that this evil can be transformed into good, on a higher sphere, through the wisdom which is in the Cosmos? How can I reach the point at which I can say: 'If thou seest imperfection here, it is because thou art not yet able to see the perfection, even in this imperfection!' When the human being sees an evil, he must look into his own soul and ask himself: 'How comes it that here, where I am faced with evil, I am not yet able to recognize the good in it?'

## LECTURE VI

We said yesterday that mankind had great leaders even in that early period of human evolution called the Atlantean; and we saw that this period ran its course on a continent situated between the present Europe and Africa on one side, and America on the other, and was called the old Atlantis. We also mentioned how different human life was at that period, especially as regards the state of human consciousness. We could conclude from yesterday's lecture that the consciousness of the present day has evolved by degrees, man having started with a kind of shadowy clairvoyance. We know that the human physical bodies of the Atlantean period were of an essentially softer, more flexible and plastic substance than is today the case; and we also know, taught by clairvoyant consciousness, that the man of that time was not yet able to perceive solid objects in sharp outline, as we see them today. The Atlantean could indeed distinguish the objects of the outer world — the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms — but vaguely and indistinctly. As we now see the street lamps on a foggy autumn evening, as if fringed with colour, man then saw something like coloured borders surrounding the objects — 'auras', as we say. These were indications of the spiritual beings who belonged to the things. At certain moments during the day the perception of these spiritual beings was very indistinct; but at others, especially in the intermediate state between waking and sleeping, the perception of them was very distinct.

If we wish to have a vivid idea of the consciousness of an old Atlantean we must say to ourselves: He could never have seen a rose, for instance, as we see it today, in sharp outline. It was all vague and indistinct; in the intermediate state between waking and sleeping it became still more indistinct, indeed it disappeared altogether. On the other hand he could clearly see what we must describe as the 'rose-spirit' or 'rose-soul'. It was thus with all objects of the surrounding world. The progress of evolution consisted in the fact that the external objects became increasingly distinct, while the perception of the spiritual beings who belonged to the things became increasingly indistinct. On the other hand man developed his consciousness of himself to an increasing extent, and learnt more and more to feel his own existence. We indicated yesterday the moment at which a distinct feeling of the Ego came to the fore. We said that the etheric body came to coincide with the physical body at the dawn of the third phase of the Atlantean period. As you may imagine, human leadership was also very different before this. The sort of understanding between man and man, when one appeals to the judgment of the other, was altogether non-existence in Atlantean times. In that age of shadowy clairvoyance, the understanding consisted of a subconscious influence which passed from man to man. What we know today as a last (often misunderstood) vestige of a former state, existed then in a high degree. This was a kind of suggestion, a subconscious influence from man to man, which made but little appeal to the cooperation of the other soul. When we look back to the early times of Atlantis we see that a powerful influence was exerted, when some image or sensation rose in the soul, and one man directed his will upon another. All influences were powerful, and the will to receive them was also powerful. Today there are but remnants of this condition. Picture to yourselves a man in those days moving past another and making certain movements. The other, the spectator, need only have been a little weaker, and the effect produced on him would have been to make him try to reproduce or imitate all the movements he had seen. A last heritage of this condition today is the inclination for one person to yawn when he sees another do so. In those days the tie between man and man was far more intimate, the reason being that humanity lived in a quite different atmosphere. In our time the air in which we live is not impregnated with water unless it rains heavily. At that time it was always charged with dense vapours; and at the beginning of the Atlantean period the substance of man's body was no more solid than that of certain jelly like animals which can scarcely be distinguished from the water in which they live. Such was the human being; his densification was a long and gradual process. But we know that man was nevertheless exposed to influences, not only from the higher spiritual beings who, dwelling on the Sun or the various planets of our solar system, were his rightful leaders, but also from the Luciferic spirits who influenced his astral body. We have already described the manner in which

these influences made themselves felt, and how the appointed leaders of the Atlantean people had to combat these Luciferic influences in their own astral body. Human consciousness being at that time still spiritual and clairvoyant, men could perceive everything in the nature of spiritual influences at work within themselves. Nowadays, a person who knows nothing of spiritual science would laugh if he were told that the influences of the Luciferic spirits are embedded in his astral body. He does not, of course, know that these beings exert a far stronger influence upon him when he pays no heed to them.

'The Devil, your good-folk ne'er scent,  
E'en though he have them by the collar.'

That is a very deep saying in Goethe's Faust, and many a materialistic influence would not be there today, if people knew that the Luciferic influences were not yet eradicated from the human soul. At that time, the leaders and their pupils were strictly on the watch against everything which excited passions and desires, with the tendency to infuse into man a deeper interest in his physical surroundings than was good for his progress and development in the Cosmos. Thus, the would-be leader had, above all things, to exercise self-knowledge and keep intensely alert for everything that might reach him from Lucifer. He had to study closely these Luciferic beings in his own astral body. By doing so he could keep them at a distance, and this again enabled him to see the other, higher, guiding spiritual beings, especially those who had transferred the scene of their activity from the Earth to the Sun or to one of the other planets. The spheres seen by men corresponded to the origin of their descent. There were human souls who, let us say, were descended from Mars; when they, in keeping with their development, proceeded to combat the Luciferic influences in their astral body, they were led to a higher grade of clairvoyance — to a good, pure seership — and they beheld the higher spiritual beings in the sphere from which they had descended — the Mars sphere. Souls from the Saturn sphere became capable of seeing the Saturn beings; others from Jupiter or Venus, saw the beings of those planets. Each soul saw the region corresponding to itself; but the most advanced among the human beings (those who had survived the lunar crisis) were able to prepare themselves gradually to see, not only the spiritual beings of Mars, Jupiter, and Venus, but those of the Sun itself, the high Sun beings. Having descended from the various planets, the initiated could not perceive the spiritual spheres of these planets. You will therefore understand that there were institutions or schools in ancient Atlantis, in which the descendants of Venus were taught the Venus Mysteries. If we give these schools a later name of 'Oracle', we may say that in Atlantis there was a Mars-oracle, in which the Mars Mysteries were investigated, a Saturn-oracle, a Venus-oracle, and so on. The highest of all was the Sun-oracle, and the highest initiate of the Sun-oracle was the highest of all the initiates.

Since suggestion and the influence of the will were modes of intercourse in those days, it follows that instruction was given in quite a different way. Let us try to form an idea of the intercourse between teacher and pupil. Let us assume that there were spiritual teachers, who had received their initiation by an act of grace. How did the later initiates, their pupils, receive their initiation in Atlantean times?

We may imagine that the initiated, by their very presence and the mere fact of their existence, exerted a tremendous influence on those predestined to become their pupils. No Atlantean initiate could show himself without setting a note vibrating in the soul of those who were to become his pupils, whereby the possibility of such discipleship was revealed to them. The influences which proceeded from man to man were entirely removed from objective, waking consciousness, and the kind of instruction familiar to us was not necessary. All intercourse with the teacher, everything that he did, worked hand in hand with the human imitative faculty. Much was unconsciously transmitted from the teacher to the pupil. Hence the essential thing for those who were conducted to the oracles, after having attained the requisite maturity, was the fact that they lived in the vicinity of the teacher. By observing the acts of the teacher, and by the impression made on their feelings and sensations, they were prepared — it is true in long, very long stretches of time. Then came the time when there was so intense a concord between the soul of the teacher and that of the pupil, that the whole knowledge of the higher Mysteries possessed by the teacher became transmitted to the pupil. It was thus in ancient times. Now what happened after the coincidence between the physical and etheric bodies had taken place?

Although this coincidence had been fully effected in the Atlantean period, the union between the physical and etheric bodies was not particularly close, as yet, and it required no more than an effort of will on the part of the teacher, for the etheric body to be withdrawn from the physical. It was no longer possible, even when the right moment had arrived, for the teacher's wisdom to pass, as though of itself, to his pupil. And now came the great cataclysm which swept away the Atlantean continent. Stupendous perturbations of air and water, vast upheavals gradually changed the whole face of the Earth. Europe, Asia, and Africa, of which only a small area was solid land, also America, arose out of the water. Atlantis vanished. The people wandered East and West, and many and various colonies came into existence. But after this tremendous catastrophe, the human race had advanced a step. Another change had taken place in the connection between the physical and etheric bodies: they were much more closely united in post Atlantean times. It was now no longer possible for the master to draw out the etheric body by an impulse of his will, and to transmit every observation to his pupil. Hence it was necessary that initiation leading to vision of the higher worlds, should now assume another form, which may be described somewhat as follows.

In place of the instruction based upon the immediate psychic influence passing from teacher to pupil, a new form of teaching was gradually adopted, which by degrees came to approach the method of the present day. As in Atlantean times, institutions were established by the great leaders of humanity, in which reminiscences of the old Atlantean-oracles were preserved. Mysteries, sites of initiation, were founded in post Atlantean times. And just as suitable candidates had formerly been received into the oracles, so were they now admitted into the Mysteries. Here the pupils were prepared by a

severe course of instruction, for it was no longer possible to work upon them as in former times. Through long periods of time we find such Mysteries in all civilizations. Whether we turn to the first period of post Atlantean civilization which ran its course in ancient India, or to the civilization of Zarathustra, or to that of Egypt or Chaldea, we find everywhere that pupils were admitted to Mysteries, which were something between church and school, there to undergo a strict course of instruction in thinking and feeling, not merely with regard to the things of the physical world, but to the facts of the invisible, spiritual world. Today we can describe exactly what was taught there; to a large extent it was the same as what we know as Anthroposophy; this was the subject of study in the Mysteries. It differed only in being more adapted to the manner and customs of that time, and it was strictly regulated. Whereas today the mysteries of the higher worlds are, to some extent, freely and rapidly imparted to those who are in a degree ripe for them, in those days the instruction was strictly graduated; at the first stage, only a certain sum of knowledge was communicated. Everything else remained an absolute secret. Not until the pupil had mastered the first steps was he entrusted with the knowledge belonging to a higher stage. Through this preparation, thoughts, ideas, sensations, and feelings relating to the spiritual world were implanted in the astral body of the pupil. This meant that he had to some extent combated the Luciferic influence. For all that is imparted in the form of spiritual science relates to the higher worlds, not to the world for which Lucifer would excite man's interest — namely, the world of sense along. Then, after this preparation, the time drew nigh when the pupil could be led to independent vision; he was himself to behold the spiritual world. For this it was necessary that he should be able to reflect in his etheric body all that he had elaborated for himself in his astral body. For vision in the spiritual world can be attained in only one way. The fruits of learning stored in the astral body must work upon the pupil so deeply, through certain feelings and emotions evoked by that learning, that not only his astral body but also the denser etheric body is influenced thereby. Before the pupil can rise from study to vision, the result of his instruction must first produce its effect. For this reason the course of instruction, throughout the Indian, Persian, Egyptian, and Greek periods, concluded with a certain ceremony consisting in the following act.

To begin with the pupil underwent a long course of preparation consisting not of study and learning, but of that which we call meditation, and of other exercises to develop self-possession, inner tranquillity, and a dispassionate attitude. The preparation was designed to fit the astral body in every respect to become a citizen of the spiritual world. Finally when the right moment had come, and as a final act of this preparation, the pupil was thrown into a death-like condition which lasted three and a half days. Whereas in Atlantean times, the etheric and physical bodies were so loosely joined that the former could be withdrawn with comparative ease, it was now necessary that the candidate for initiation should be thrown into a death-like sleep in the Mysteries. While this condition lasted, he was laid in a kind of coffin, or bound to a cross or something similar. During this time the Initiator or Hierophant, as he was called, had the power to work upon the astral and especially the etheric body; for during this procedure the etheric body was withdrawn from the physical. This is not what happens in sleep; for then the physical and etheric bodies remain in bed, while the astral body and Ego withdraw. But here, in this concluding act of initiation, the physical body remains, and the etheric body is almost fully raised out of it; only the lower portions are raised out of it and the candidate is then in a death-like condition. Everything that had been learnt by meditation and the other exercises was now impressed upon the etheric body in this condition. In these three and a half days the initiate actually roamed through the spiritual worlds, where the spiritual beings live. At the end of the three and a half days the Initiator called him back again, that is to say, he had to power to awaken him. The latter now brought with him the knowledge of the spiritual world. He could behold that world and announce its truths to his fellow-men, who were not yet ready to behold it themselves. Thus the teachers of pre-Christian times were initiated into the deepest Mysteries. They were led by the Hierophant during those three and a half days and were living witnesses of the reality of spiritual life, that is, of the truth that behind the physical world there is a spiritual world, to which man belongs, with his higher principles, and into which he must find his way. The form of initiation I have just described reached its climax in the period immediately following the Atlantean cataclysm. But in the course of time, as the union between the physical and etheric bodies grew increasingly close, the process of initiation became increasingly dangerous. Men were becoming ever more accustomed to the physical world of sense, with their full consciousness. Indeed it is the very purpose of evolution that man should accustom himself to live in the physical world, with all his inclinations and sympathies. The great progress of humanity consists in the fact that man actually developed this love for the physical world.

In the earliest period of post Atlantean civilization, there was a vivid recollection of the reality of the spiritual world. People said: 'We, the late descendants, can yet see into the spiritual world of our ancestors.' They still retained that dull, shadowy consciousness; they knew where the true world lay, which was their home. 'All that surrounds us in waking consciousness,' they said, 'is like a veil shrouding the truth; it hides from us the spiritual world; it is Maya or illusion.' They could not readily accustom themselves to what they now saw. It was difficult to understand that the consciousness of the old spiritual world must be lost. That is the keynote of the first post Atlantean civilization. It was therefore easy to lead the men of that time into the spiritual world, for they had a lively attachment to it. Of course this state could not continue; for it is the mission of this planet that men should become enamoured with the forces of the Earth and conquer the physical plane. Could you behold that India of the past, you would find an enormously high level of spiritual life. An understanding of the teachings propounded by the ancient teachers of humanity is only possible today when preceded by a study of spiritual science. Failing this, the teachings of the great and holy Rishis must appear nonsense or folly; for people cannot bring themselves to think that there is any sense in such teachings concerning the mysteries of the spiritual world. From their point of view such people are of course right, for people are always 'right' from their own particular standpoint.

There was an enormous capacity of spiritual contemplation, but the power of handling the simplest implement was lacking. Wants were satisfied in the most primitive manner. Natural science, or what is known by that name, did not exist; for in everything visible to him on the physical plane, a man saw Maya, the great illusion, and nothing but an elevation to the great Sun-being, or to Beings akin to him, could reveal truth and reality. But this condition would no last. It was

necessary that among the men of post Atlantean times there should be some who were desirous of conquering the kingdom of the Earth. A beginning was made in the time of Zarathustra. Indeed a mighty step forward can be observed in the transition from the ancient Indians to the ancient Persians. To Zarathustra the external world was no longer merely Maya or illusion. He showed the people that our physical environment has value, but that the spiritual is behind everything. Whereas the flower was Maya in the view of the ancient Indian, and he sought the spirit behind the flower, Zarathustra said: 'The flower is something to be prized, for it is a member of the universal All-spirit; the material grows out of the spiritual.' We have already mentioned that Zarathustra pointed to the physical Sun as being the sphere of spiritual beings. But initiation was hard of attainment and for those who, not content to hear from the initiates that there is a spiritual world, themselves desired to behold the great Sun-aura, more stringent measures were needed for the attainment of initiation. All human life altered little by little, and in the following period, the Egypto-Chaldean civilization, men devoted themselves increasingly to the conquest of the physical world. A purely spiritual science which investigates all that lies behind the physical world, was no longer man's sole interest. He observed the course of the stars and sought to discern in their position and movement — in all that is outwardly visible — the writing of the divine spiritual beings. He recognized in the characters traced between one object of sense and another, the will of the gods. Thus he studied the objects in their mutual relation. In Egypt we see the rise of a science of geometry applied to external things. In this way man becomes master of the external world. The Greeks progressed still further in the same direction. In this (Greek) period we see how that union is accomplished between the experience of the soul and external matter. All that man has won for himself flows out, as it were, into the world of sense. But inasmuch as man grew increasingly powerful in the world of sense, and his soul became ever more attached to it, he grew to the same extent more estranged from the spiritual world in the interval between death and a new birth. When the soul left the body in ancient India, and entered the spiritual world, there to fulfil its development till rebirth, there was still a vivid experience of spiritual life. For man's whole life was filled with longing for spiritual culture, and his feelings were fired by the declarations to which he listened concerning life in the worlds of spirit, even though he were not himself an initiate. Hence, when he passed through the portal of death, the spiritual world lay open before him; light and radiance surrounded him. But in proportion as man's sympathies were directed towards the physical world, and he grew more skilful therein — in the same measure did darkness shroud the interval between death and rebirth. In Egyptian times this was so marked that we can ascertain, with clairvoyant consciousness, that a state of darkness and dreariness became the lot of the soul upon leaving the physical body and entering the spiritual world. The soul felt lonely and isolated from its fellows; and a frosty chill pervaded the soul in its loneliness, as it strove in vain to gain contact with the other souls. The Greeks lived in a time when man, by the superb outer beauty of his culture, had made the Earth something altogether remarkable, but the interval between death and rebirth was most dark, dismal, and frosty for the souls of that period. The story of the noble Greek who, when questioned about the sojourn in the underworld, replied: 'Better a beggar in the upper world than a king in the realm of the shades!' is in accordance with facts and no mere legend.

Thus we can say that with the advance of civilization man became more and more estranged from the spiritual world. Initiates capable of beholding the higher regions became increasingly rare; for the procedure of initiation grew ever more dangerous, and it became increasingly difficult to survive the death-like condition for three and a half days, and to submit to the withdrawal of the etheric body without the risk of death.

A renewal now took place for the whole of humanity through that impulse of which we have spoken in our last lecture — the Christ Impulse. We have already described how Christ, the high Sun-Spirit, approached the Earth by degrees. We have seen that in the days of Zarathustra He was still to be sought in the Sun, as 'Ahura Mazdao', and that in the time of Moses He could already be seen in the burning bush and in the fire on Sinai. Gradually He entered the Earth-sphere in which so great a change was to be wrought. In the first place it was important for this Spirit that men should learn to recognize Him here on Earth. Now what was the essential condition in all forms of ancient initiation? That the etheric body should be raised out of the physical; and even in post Atlantean times it was necessary that the candidate should be thrown into a death-like trance, that is, that he should be physically unconscious. This entailed his subjection to the will of another Ego, which, again, was inseparable from initiation. The pupil's Ego was wholly under the dominion of his initiator. He quitted his physical body entirely; his Ego neither occupied it nor exercised any influence upon it. But the great goal of the Christ Impulse is that man should develop his Ego entirely within himself, and not descend to a state of consciousness lower than his Ego for the purpose of entering the higher worlds. That this might be fulfilled, it was necessary that one should offer himself as a sacrifice in order that the Christ-Spirit Himself should be received into a human body. We have already shown that an initiate who had prepared himself through many, many incarnations, became able, at a definite point of his life, to yield up his own Ego and receive into himself the Christ-Spirit. This is indicated in the Gospel of St. John, in the account of the Baptism in the Jordan. Now what was the meaning of this Baptism?

We know that this Baptism by the forerunner and herald of Christ Jesus, John the Baptist, was accomplished upon those whom he had prepared to receive Christ Jesus in the right way. We shall fail to understand what is written concerning the Baptism in the Gospel of St. John unless we bear in mind that the purpose of John's Baptism was the true preparation for Christ. If you think of a baptism of the present day, which is only an imitation of the original symbol, you will fail to understand it. It was not a mere sprinkling with water, but a complete immersion; the candidate lived for a certain time, long or short, under water. The meaning of this will be clear if we seek its clue in the mystery of the human constitution.

Call to mind again that man consists of physical body, etheric body, astral body, and Ego. In his waking state these four principles are firmly knit together; in sleep the physical and etheric bodies lie in bed, while the astral body and the Ego are outside. In death the physical body remains behind as a corpse — the etheric body withdraws and then, for a short time, the Ego, the astral body, and the etheric body are united. To those who have heard even a few of my lectures it will be

evident that an important experience is associated with this moment. The deceased sees his past life unfolded before him in a mighty tableau; the whole circumstances of his life stand out before him as though ranged side by side in space. For, as we know, the etheric body is also the vehicle of memory, and nothing but his physical body prevents a man from seeing all this during his lifetime. After death the physical body is cast aside, and everything that a man has experienced in his life just ended, can now enter his consciousness. Now I have also mentioned that a similar review of the past life takes place when a person finds himself in peril of death, from any cause, or when he is overcome by terror or by any great shock. You already know from narratives that when a man's life is endangered, say, by drowning or by a fall from a height, and he does not lose consciousness, his whole life hitherto appears before him as in a great panorama. What a man experiences, say, when in danger of drowning, was experienced by almost all who were baptized by John. The baptism consisted in the immersion of the candidate until he had experienced his life hitherto. This experience, however, was in the nature of a spiritual picture; and what the spirit experienced in this abnormal condition was seen to be connected, in a measure, with the rest of the spiritual world. So that he who was raised from the water after the baptism by John could say: 'There is a spiritual world! In truth, that which I have within me is something which can exist without a body!' After this baptism a man was convinced that a world indeed existed to which he belonged in the spirit. What then had John the Baptist accomplished by this Baptism?

Men had become more and more attached to the physical world; they came together more and more in it and believed ever more firmly that the physical world was actual reality. But they who came to the Baptist experienced their own life as a spiritual fact. After baptism they could say with conviction: 'I am something more than what I am through my physical body!' The mind of man, in its development, had become directed towards the physical world. John had evoked in men the consciousness that there is a spiritual world to which they belong with their higher nature. So that we need only clothe his exhortations in other words: 'Change your heart, which is directed to the physical world!' And indeed their heart was changed when they were truly and rightly baptized. Then they knew: 'I have spirit in me; my Ego belongs to the spiritual world!' The individual had gained this conviction while in his physical body; there had been no special procedure, as in initiation; he had experienced this while in his physical body; and, owing to the manner in which all the teaching since Moses had been received by men and united with their soul, the experience of the baptism by John acquired a special significance.

After the rite, the individual was not only conscious of his unity with the spiritual world; he also knew what that spiritual world was, which was now approaching the Earth. He who had proclaimed Himself to Moses as 'Ejeh asher ejeh' in the burning bush and in the fire on Sinai, the same, he knew, now permeates the Earth. 'Jahve' or 'Jehovah', 'Ejeh asher ejeh' or 'I am the I AM' — these words, he knew, rightly designated the spiritual world. Thus the disciple not only knew through the baptism by John that he was one with the spiritual world; he could also say with truth: 'The I AM, out of whom the spirit in me is born, lives in that spiritual world!' John had thus prepared his disciples by baptism. He had aroused this feeling in them, but of course only in a few; most of them were not ripe for such an experience during immersion. Nevertheless a few there were who recognized that He was approaching — the Spirit who was afterwards called the Christ.

Now try to compare what has been said today with what was said yesterday. The spiritual beings of old had effected love founded on ties of blood and physical relationship. But the Luciferic spirits sought to establish man in his individual personality. Lucifer and the high spiritual beings had worked simultaneously. Little by little the old blood ties were loosened, and this can be historically traced. Consider the conglomeration of races in the great Roman Empire; it was brought about by the loosening of the old blood ties, and the growing tendency of men to seek the firm standpoint of their own personality. As a result, however, they had lost their connection with the spiritual world; they had become merged in the physical world and had grown to love the physical plane. In proportion to the increase of self-consciousness through the influence of Lucifer, man had become centred in the physical world and had rendered desolate his life between death and a new birth. The Baptist had now prepared a great and momentous experience for mankind. Human personality was to be preserved and, by the immersion in water, man, though remaining in his personality, was to find the very beings whom he had formerly known as 'gods', when he himself lived in water, and the atmosphere was laden with water, mists, and vapours. The experience in the divine worlds was now repeated. Man, though an Ego, was now prepared to seek reunion with his fellow-men, and to be led back to love, now a spiritualized love.

This gives you the keynote of the Christ-event regarded from another point of view. Christ represents the descent to our Earth of the force of spiritual love, which is today but at the beginning of its work. If we pursue this thought with the help of the Gospels of St. John and St. Luke, we shall see that spiritual love is the very keynote of the Christ-impulse; we shall see how the Egos which had been sundered, are drawn together as regards their inmost being. From the beginning men have had but a dim presentiment of the significance of Christ for the world; as yet very, very little of this mission had been realized, for the separative influence (the after effect of the Luciferic powers) is still there, and the Christ principle has been at work but a short time. Though it is true that in our day a sympathetic cooperation is sought in certain external departments of life; in the most intimate and important things people have no inkling of the meaning of harmony and concord between souls, or at least they have it only in their thought and intellect, which matters least. It is indeed true that Christianity is only at the beginning of its mission; but it will penetrate ever deeper into the souls of men and ennoble the Ego ever more and more. Precisely the youngest nations recognize this in our day. They perceive that they must unite themselves with the power of Christ, and penetrate themselves with His force, if they would progress. A contemporary personality in Eastern Europe, the executor of the great Russian philosopher Solovioff, said: 'Christianity must unite us as a nation, otherwise we shall lose our Ego and, with it, the possibility of being a nation!' Powerful words which seem to issue from an intense intellect for Christianity. But it also shows how necessary it is that Christianity should pierce to the depths of the soul. Let us examine an outstanding case and we shall find that, as regards the inmost life of the soul, even

the most exalted and noblest are far from grasping what they will one day experience, when man's inmost thoughts, opinions, and feelings are steeped in Christianity. Think of Tolstoi and his work in the last few decades, as he strives to expose the true meaning of Christianity. Such a thinker must inspire the greatest respect, especially in the West, where whole libraries are filled with endless philosophical disquisitions on the same subject which Tolstoi treats in a few powerful touches in his one book *On Life*. There are pages of elemental strength in Tolstoi's works, which betray a deep knowledge of anthroposophical truths, certainly unattainable by a philosopher of Western Europe, or on which he must write an extensive literature, because something unusually powerful is expressed therein. In Tolstoi there is an undertone which we may call the Christ-impulse. Meditate on his words and you will see that the Christ-impulse it is, which fills him. Turn now to his great contemporary, who interests us for the reason that he soared upwards from a comprehensive philosophical conception of the universe to the boundary line of a life so truly visionary, that he could survey an epoch, as it were in perspective, apocalyptically. Even though his visions are distorted, because they lack the true foundation, Solovioff nevertheless rises to a visionary perception of the future; he places before us vistas of the future of the twentieth century. If we give him our attention, we find in his writings great and noble thoughts, especially with regard to Christianity. But he speaks of Tolstoi as of an enemy of Christianity, as of Antichrist! Thus two men of our day may believe in their deepest thoughts that they are doing the best for their time; their work may spring from the profoundest depths of their soul, and yet they may altogether fail to understand one another, and see, each in the other, nothing but an antagonist. No one today stops to think that if outward harmony and a life steeped in love are to be realized, the Christ-impulse must have penetrated to the utmost depths of human nature, so that human love becomes something entirely different from what it is at present, even among the noblest spirits.

The Impulse which was foretold, and then entered the world, is only at the beginning of its work, and an even deeper understanding for it must be shown. What is lacking to all those who, precisely in our time, cry out for Christianity and declare it to be a necessity, yet cannot bring it within their reach? Anthroposophy, spiritual science, is lacking to them — the present day way of comprehending Christ. For Christ is so great that each successive epoch must find new methods by which to know and understand Him. In earlier centuries other methods of striving for wisdom, and other forms were employed. Today Anthroposophy is a necessity, and, for long periods to come, what Anthroposophy now teaches will hold good for the purpose of understanding the Christ. For Anthroposophy will prove to be a stimulus for all human powers of cognition. Man will gradually find his way to an understanding of Christ. But even the anthroposophical presentation is only temporal: of this we are well aware. We know too that the great subject of our temporal representations will require still greater modes of representation.

## LECTURE VII

Our yesterday's lecture brought us to the point of understanding what the baptism by John, the forerunner of Christ Jesus, really was, and today we shall find it comparatively easy to grasp the distinction between the baptism by Christ, as we may call it, and that other baptism by John. The true nature of Christ's influence upon the world will be clear to us inasmuch as we explain the nature of the baptism by Christ and the Christ-impulse, as distinguished from the baptism by John.

Above all things it must be pointed out that the condition brought about by the John baptism was essentially abnormal, as compared with ordinary everyday consciousness. We have heard how the old initiation depended upon the partial withdrawal of the etheric from the physical body; the astral body being thus enabled to imprint its experiences on the etheric body. In the John baptism, too, it was necessary that an abnormal state of consciousness should supervene. The disciple was placed under water; this produced a partial separation of his etheric from his physical body, enabling him to review his life, and become conscious of the unity of his individual life with the realms of the divine spiritual world. To be more explicit, the disciple, having risen from the water after the successfully performed rite, could say: 'I have spirit in me! I am not merely a being in this physical and material body; and this spirit in me is united with the spirit that is behind all other things!' Furthermore he knew that the spirit he found there was the same as Moses had perceived in the fire of the burning bush and in the lightning of Sinai, as Jahve, as 'I am the I AM', as 'Ejeh asher ejeh'. All this he knew from his baptism by John.

Now how was this state of consciousness to be distinguished from that of an initiate of old? The old initiate, when thrown into the abnormal state which I described to you yesterday, perceived the divine spiritual beings of older times, who were connected with the Earth before the Being named 'Ahura Mazdao' by Zarathustra, and 'Jahve' by Moses, had united Himself with the Earth. The old spiritual world out of which man grew, which still surrounded him in old Atlantean times and for which the ancient Indian people yearned — the gods of old — were seen by man through the wisdom of ancient times. But the God who had dwelt remote from the Earth, waiting that He might appear with deeper effect, and sending His influence from outside throughout the ages, the God whom Moses perceived now gradually approaching, was still unknown to the initiate of old. The first to perceive something of the unity of all divine life were the initiates in the sense of Old Testament initiation. Let us consider the state of mind of an initiate who, besides the Persian or later Egyptian Mysteries, had also gone through the experiences associated with Hebraic occult investigation. Let us assume that this initiate had also gone through the Mount Sinai initiation in an incarnation during the old Hebrew period, let us say, or even earlier. He had been led to the knowledge of the old divine world out of which humanity issued. Gifted with knowledge of ancient wisdom and with the power of beholding the primeval divine world, he enters the school of Hebrew occultism. What he learnt here enabled him to say: 'The gods I once knew were united with the Earth before the Deity

Jehovah-Christ had united Himself with it. But now I know that the first and foremost Spirit among them, the guiding Spirit, is He who is now approaching the Earth.' The initiate thus learnt to recognize the identity of his own spiritual world with that other, in which the approaching Christ reigns. He did not require the immersion in water by John, but he learnt thereby that he was connected as an individual personality with the great Father-Spirit of the world. It is true that only a few could attain this result; for most it was no more than a symbol — something which served to convince them of the existence of Jehovah-God, and which they accepted in all faith and belief, under the influence of their great teacher John the Baptist. Again there were others among the immersed, who had prepared themselves in former incarnations to learn from individual observation. Nevertheless, the condition produced by the baptism by John was indeed abnormal. John baptized with water, and the effect was a momentary separation of the etheric from the physical body. But he wished to be no more than the forerunner of Him who `baptizeth with fire and with the Holy Ghost'. The baptism with fire and spirit came upon Earth through Christ.

Now what is the difference between the baptism by John with water and the baptism by Christ with fire and spirit? To understand the difference, we must first grasp the primary causes underlying it. For with regard to the understanding of Christ we are today still restricted to the first beginnings. This understanding will grow greater and greater, but only the rudiments can be grasped by humanity at the present time. Have the patience to begin with me at the A B C.

In the first place it must be pointed out that behind all physical occurrence ( and all human physical conditions) there are in truth spiritual processes. For modern humanity this is very hard to believe. The world will learn to do so in time, and only then reach a full understanding of Christ. Today even those who are prone to speak of spirit, do not themselves seriously believe that all physical processes in the human being are in the first instance directed from the spiritual world. They disbelieve it unconsciously, so to speak, even if they imagine themselves to be idealists. There is an American, for instance, who carefully collects facts to prove that, in abnormal conditions, man can rise into a spiritual world; he attempts to use these facts as a foundation for the most diverse conclusions.

This American — William James — goes to work in the most painstaking manner. But even the best of men are powerless against the spirit of the age. They are materialists without knowing it. The philosophy of William James has influenced more than one European thinker, and for this reason we shall cite a few grotesque sayings of his. It was he, for instance, who said: `Man does not weep because he is sad; he is sad because he weeps!' Hitherto it has always been the general opinion that a man must first be sad, that is, a psychic-spiritual process must first take place; this spiritual process then presses into the human physical body. When tears flow, there must be a process in the soul, the result of which is the shedding of tears. In our day when, we may say, everything spiritual is shrouded by the veil of materiality and must be rediscovered by a spiritual conception of the world; even now there are processes in us which are the heritage of the remote past, when the spiritual workings were more powerful — processes which show us in a significant manner how the spiritual forces operate. I generally call attention to two phenomena in this connection: the feeling of shame and the feeling of fear or terror. I may say at once that it would not be difficult to give you a list of the various hypotheses put forward to explain these species of experience. They do not concern us here, however. Would be objectors in this case need not think that the spiritual investigator is unacquainted with these hypotheses. With regard to the feeling of shame, we may say that when a person feels ashamed, it is as if he were anxious that something which is going on within him should not be seen by those around him; what takes place in a person who feels shame is like an attempt to hide something. And what is the physical result of this psychic experience? The blush of shame is driven to the cheeks; the blood mounts to the face. What takes place therefore under the influence of a psychic-spiritual experience, such as the feeling of shame? An alteration in the circulation of the blood! The blood is driven outward to the periphery, from within. The course of the blood is altered (this is a physical fact) by a psychic-spiritual fact. Again when a person is terrified, he seeks to protect himself against something which seems to threaten him, he grows pale, the blood retreats from the outer surface. Once more we have an external process produced by a psychic-spiritual experience — fear or terror. Remember that the blood is the expression of the Ego. What is a man likely to desire when he sees something threatening approach? He collects his forces and increases their strength in the centre of his being. The Ego, desiring to fortify itself, draws the blood back to the centre of its being. Here we find the physical, as the effect of psychic-spiritual processes. In the same way, the welling up of tears is a physical fact brought about by a psychic-spiritual process. It is not true that some kind of secret physical influence gathers there and presses out the tears, and that the individual, feeling the tears rise, grows sad. In this fashion the simplest matters are turned upside-down by the materialistic way of thinking. If we entered into details of many a thing (including bodily ills), which may affect a man in connection with psychic-spiritual processes, we might multiply such instances indefinitely. But what concerns us today is to understand that physical processes are the result of psychic-spiritual processes; and when a physical process is apparently unconnected with a psychic-spiritual cause, we may be certain that it is because we have not yet discovered the psychic-spiritual factor. In our time people are not at all inclined to recognize at once the psychic-spiritual. The scientist of today sees how the human being develops, from the earliest embryonic stages; first within, then outside the maternal organism; he watches the growth of the outer physical form and concludes, on the strength of modern methods of investigation, that the human being comes into existence with the first development of the physical form as he observes it at conception; he is by no means willing to entertain the idea that behind the physical, there are spiritual processes taking place. He does not believe that there is anything of a spiritual nature behind the physical human germ, or that the spiritual unites with the physical and elaborates the results of a former incarnation. Now someone who prefers theory to practice might say: `Well, yes, some higher knowledge or other might well lead to insight that there is a spiritual behind the physical world, but we human beings cannot, for all that, know of the spiritual behind the physical!' Some say this. Others say: `We do not care to exert ourselves in the prescribed way in order to arrive at a knowledge of a divine spiritual world. What difference can it make to the world if we know the spiritual or not?' But it is a fatal belief, nay, a superstition, to think that nothing in practical life depends upon this knowledge; indeed we shall try to show that a great deal in practical life depends upon it.

Consider the case of a man who refuses to entertain the idea that there is a world of soul and spirit behind all physical phenomena, and who cannot understand that the enlargement of the physical liver, for instance, is the expression of something spiritual. Another, perhaps, influenced by Anthroposophy, is quite willing to accept that the effort to penetrate the spiritual leads, first to a presentiment, then to a belief, and finally to knowledge and observation of the spiritual. Two men are thus before us; the one rejects the spiritual and is content with the observation of things through his senses; the other opens himself to what we may call the will to spiritual knowledge. The man who refuses to accept spiritual knowledge grows weaker and weaker; for, by withholding from his spirit the nourishment it requires (which is knowledge and nothing else), he lets his spirit starve, languish, and perish. Being thus enfeebled, he grows powerless against the processes in his physical and etheric bodies, to the existence of which he does not contribute; being independent of the spirit, these processes gain the upper hand and overpower him in his weakened state. The other on the contrary, who has the will to knowledge, gives nourishment to his spirit; the latter becomes fortified and gains the mastery over all that takes place independently of the spirit in his etheric and physical bodies. That is the point. We can immediately apply this to a case which plays an important role in our time.

We know that the human being enters the world from two directions. His physical body is inherited from his ancestors, from his father and mother and their ancestors. Good and bad characteristics come down to him from his ancestors, being transmitted in the blood from one generation to the other. But whenever any particular qualities are inherited by a child, the forces which the latter brings from its foregoing incarnations unite with these qualities. Now we know that when any particular illness appears, there is a great deal said about the person's 'inherited tendencies'. How grossly is this expression 'inherited tendencies' misused in our day, however justified it may be within narrower limits! Any special peculiarity which can be shown to have existed among a man's ancestors is always attributed to inheritance. And because people know nothing of spiritual forces coming from a former incarnation and operating in the human being, they believe that these inherited qualities are overpoweringly strong. Were people aware that there is a spiritual force coming from the foregoing incarnation, they would say: 'Very good, we quite believe in the inherited tendencies; but we also know of the inner, central forces in the soul, which issue from a former life; if these be strengthened and fortified, they will gain the ascendancy over the material factor, that is, over the inherited tendencies.' A man who is capable of rising to a knowledge of the spiritual world, would go on to say: 'However powerfully the inherited tendencies may affect me, I shall nourish the spirit in me, and by this means conquer the inherited tendencies.' But whoever refuses to work upon his spiritual nature and cultivate that part of himself which is not inherited, will fall a prey to his inherited tendencies, precisely through his unbelief; indeed, materialistic superstitions will be the cause that inherited tendencies gain more and more power over him. Men will stagnate in their inherited tendencies unless they fortify the spirit in themselves, and continually overcome whatever is inherited, by their own strength of spirit. Needless to say, in a time like our own and with the great achievements of natural science before us, the present strength of spirituality must not be over valued. You must not say: 'If that were so, all Anthroposophists must be perfectly healthy; for they believe in the spirit!' Man, as we see him in the world, is not an isolated being. He is a part of the whole world, and the spiritual must also increase in strength. But when the spiritual has become weak, however anthroposophical people may be, however abundantly they nourish their spirit, the latter cannot at once take effect and gain the victory over the material factor. But it will reveal itself all the more certainly in their health and strength in their next incarnation. Men will become weaker and weaker, if they refuse to believe in the spirit; for they yield themselves up to their inherited tendencies. They are themselves the cause of their weakness of spirit. For everything depends upon our attitude towards the spiritual world. Nevertheless it should not be thought that it is an easy matter to survey all the circumstances that here come into operation.

I will give you an example to show how absurdly a person may err when he judges merely by externals. He might say: 'I know of a man who was a great adherent of the anthroposophical conceptions. Now the Anthroposophists declare that health is always improved by their teachings and even that life is prolonged by them. Fine teaching this! The man died at forty-three!' So much they know: that he dies at forty-three; they have seen it. But how much do they not know? They do not know the age at which the man would have died had he known nothing of Anthroposophy. Perhaps, without Anthroposophy, he might have died at forty! If the span of a man's life reaches to his fortieth year without Anthroposophy, it may very well extend to his forty-third with Anthroposophy. Inasmuch as Anthroposophy penetrates into life, its effects will also show themselves in life. Of course if a man wishes to see all the effects in one life and in every instance, he is an egoist; he desires everything for his own selfish ends. But if he makes Anthroposophy his own for the sake of humanity, it is his for all succeeding incarnations. Now we see that when a man gives himself up to that which verily comes from the spirit, so that his spiritual being is thereby influenced, he can at least supply fresh strength to his spirit and make it strong and healthy. This is what we must understand: that it is possible for us to be influenced by the spirit and thereby acquire increasing mastery over ourselves. And now let us seek for the most effectual means, in our present evolution, to render ourselves accessible to the influence of the spirit.

We have already pointed out how spiritual science supplies our spirit with strength through the medium of its research. This spiritual nourishment may perhaps seem but little, but we see that it may grow and grow in the following incarnations. This, however, is possible only on one condition, and in order to learn what this is, let us examine the anthroposophical conception of the world itself.

Anthroposophy teaches us the component principles of which the human being consists; it teaches us what is present, though invisible, in a human being standing visibly before us; it then shows us how man's inmost being passes from life to life and how the psychic-spiritual nature which we bring with us from a former life enters and organizes the physical and material part which we inherit from our forefathers. Furthermore it shows us how the human race has developed on Earth, through the Atlantean period and other periods preceding and following it; how the Earth itself has undergone transformations, having passed through an 'Old Moon', an 'Old Sun', a 'Saturn' incarnation, and so on. Thus the

anthroposophical conceptions release us from our adherence to our immediate surroundings and to whatever we can see, handle, and investigate in the sense of modern science; we are led to the great, all-embracing facts of the universe, and, above all things, into the supersensible world. Anthroposophy bestows on man spiritual food, inasmuch as it leads him forth from the things of sense. Those who have been more closely associated with these anthroposophical conceptions know that we have studied minutely the transformations of the Earth and the life of man at the various stages of civilization. And when the opportunity offers, we will enter into these things in still greater detail. This gives us a panorama of supersensible facts which we must call up before our soul. Something more, however, remains to be said about it.

We have shown that, at a given moment, our Sun, together with the beings who were to continue their development upon it, separated from the Earth. The leader of these sun-beings is the Christ, and it is He who left with them, as their leader, at this separation. At first He directed his power downwards from the Sun to the Earth. But He approached ever nearer to the Earth. Zarathustra sees Him as Ahura Mazdao, Moses sees Him in the outer elements, and when the Christ appeared in Jesus of Nazareth the Christ-power was present in a human body. Thus, for Anthroposophy, the central figure in the whole tableau of reincarnation, of the nature of man, of the survey of the cosmos, is the Being whom we call the Christ. Rightly viewed, the anthroposophical conception of the world should induce one to say: 'I can contemplate all this, but I cannot understand it unless I see the whole picture tending towards and focused upon the great central point — upon Christ Himself. The teachings of reincarnation, of the leading human races, of planetary evolution and so on are variously depicted; but the being of Christ is here painted from a single point, and all the rest is thereby illuminated. It is a picture with one central figure, on which everything else depends. I understand the meaning and the expression of the other figures only when I have understood the central figure!'

This is the anthroposophical conception of the world. We compose a vast picture of the various facts of the spiritual world. Then we turn to the central figure, the Christ, and understand all the details of the picture for the first time.

Those who have shared in the development of our anthroposophical spiritual science will feel how everything is explained by it. Spiritual science will become more perfect in the future, and our present understanding of the Christ will give way to a far higher kind of understanding. The power of Anthroposophy will thereby become greater and greater; the development of those who open themselves to this power will be furthered, and the mastery of man's spiritual over his material nature will be heightened. Since man today is restricted to his inherited body, he can only evoke such manifestations as blushing, pallor, and phenomena like laughing and crying. In the future, however, he will gain increasing mastery over such phenomena; he will spiritualize, from his soul, the functions of his body, and take his place in the world as a powerful psychic-spiritual ruler. That will be the Christ-power. That is the Christ-impulse working through mankind — the same impulse which, even today, when sufficiently intensified, can lead to the same results as the old initiation.

The procedure of the old initiation was as follows: The candidate learnt in full measure everything which Anthroposophy teaches us today. This was the preparation. The whole course led up to a concluding ceremony, which consisted in placing the candidate in a grave, where he lay as if dead for three and a half days. His etheric body being then withdrawn, he traversed therein the realms of the spiritual world, and became a witness of that world. It was necessary for the etheric body to be withdrawn during initiation, in order that the candidate should obtain a vision of the spiritual world within the forces of this (etheric) body. These forces were formerly not at the disposal of man during ordinary waking consciousness; an abnormal state of consciousness had to supervene. Christ, however, brought these forces to the Earth also for the advancement of initiation, and it is possible for man today to become clairvoyant without the withdrawal of his etheric body.

When a man's development is so far advanced that he can receive an impulse from Christ which is strong enough to influence his circulation and express itself in a special circulatory movement of the blood — that is, when the Christ-impulse can extend its influence into the physical body, even for a short time, then man is in a position to be initiated within his physical body. This can be achieved by the Christ-impulse. He who can so intensely immerse himself in the events which occurred at that time, through the life of Christ Jesus in Palestine and the Mystery of Golgotha, that he can live in these events as in a spiritual reality, objectively visible to him; when the whole power of these events communicates itself even to the circulation of his blood, such a man will attain by this experience the same results which were once attained by the withdrawal of the etheric body.

Thus we see that the Christ-impulse brings something into the world which enables the human being to work upon the inner force which makes the blood pulsate in his veins. No abnormal event takes place and there is no immersion in water; the one and only influence at work here is the mighty power of the Christ-Individuality. The baptism is not in any material substance but in the influence of the spirit, and ordinary everyday consciousness undergoes no change. Through the spirit poured forth as the Christ-impulse, something flows into the body which otherwise can result only from physical and physiological evolution — through fire, an inner fire which expresses itself in the circulation of the blood. John immersed his disciples in water; the etheric body left the physical body and the disciple could behold the spiritual world. But when man opens himself to the power of the Christ-impulse, the experiences of his astral body are poured into the etheric body and clairvoyance ensues. Here we have an explanation of the expression 'to baptize with the spirit and with fire'. Here too you have before you an explanation of the difference between the baptism by John and the baptism by Christ, in accordance with the facts. Thus a new class of initiates was rendered possible by the Christ-impulse. Previous to this there were among men some few who were disciples of the great masters and were led into the Mysteries; their

etheric body was raised so that they should be witnesses of the spirit, and go forth among men and say: 'There is a spiritual world! We have seen it ourselves! As you see the plants and stones, so have we seen the spiritual world!' These were the eye witnesses. Issuing from the depths of the Mysteries, they proclaimed the Gospel of the Spirit, in accordance with ancient wisdom, it is true. They led humanity back to the wisdom out of which the human being was born; whereas through Christ there arose initiates who could arrive at an observation of the spiritual within their physical body and in waking consciousness. Through the Christ-impulse they discerned what the old initiates had discerned: that there is a spiritual world. To be an initiate in the new sense, and to proclaim the Gospel of the spiritual world in the sense of Christ, it was essential that the power which was in Christ should overflow as an impulse on to the disciple who was to be the evangelist of that power. When did a Christ-impulse in this sense first arise?

In the advance of evolution the new must always be connected with the old, and Christ accordingly guided the old initiation slowly to the new. It was His task, so to speak, to create a transition from the one to the other. He necessarily took into account some of the ceremonial of the old initiation, but in such a manner that everything which originated from the old gods was now flooded by the Christ-being. Christ proceeded to initiate that disciple who was afterwards to give to the world the Gospel of Christ in its profoundest form. An initiation of this kind is veiled by the story of Lazarus in the Gospel of St. John.

Much, very much has been written about this Lazarus story. But it has never been understood except by those who knew from their esoteric schools and from their own observation what was concealed behind it. I will now quote one characteristic sentence from the story of Lazarus. When Christ was informed that Lazarus was ill, He replied: 'The sickness is not unto death, but that the God in him should be made manifest!'

The purpose of the sickness is the manifestation of the God in him. The rendering of the Greek word *doxa* with 'to the glory of God' is due to a misunderstanding of the text. The imitation is not 'to the glory of God' but that the God in him should come forth from his concealment and be manifest. That is the true meaning of these words. It means that the divinity that is in Christ shall flow from Him into the individuality of Lazarus, that the divinity, the Christ-divinity, shall be made manifest in and through Lazarus.

The awakening of Lazarus becomes perfectly clear to us if understood in this way. But we must not think that the truths of the spiritual world, when disclosed, can be presented in such plain words that everyone can immediately understand them. The truth concealed behind a fact of spiritual science like the above, is communicated in all kinds of garnished and shrouded forms. This is necessary. For whoever desires to understand such a mystery, must first work his way through apparent difficulties, that his spirit be strengthened and fortified. And precisely because of the effort he must make to wind his way through the words, he reaches the spirit behind them. Remember that when there was question of the 'life' that had fled from Lazarus, and which the sisters Martha and Mary longed to have restored, Christ answers: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life!' The life was to return to Lazarus. You must take everything literally, especially in the Gospels, and we shall see what comes to light through such a literal interpretation. Do not theorize on the subject, but take the sentence word for word: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life!' What does Christ bring when He comes to raise Lazarus from the dead? What passes from Him to Lazarus? The Christ-impulse, the power which flows from Christ! Life is bestowed upon Lazarus by Christ, as He indeed said: 'The sickness is not unto death, but that the God in him may become manifest!' As all the old initiates lay as though dead for three and a half days, and the God in them then became manifest, so too Lazarus lay three and a half days in a death-like condition; but Christ Jesus knew well that the old initiations were now at an end. He knew that this apparent death led to a higher state, to a higher life, and that Lazarus meantime beheld the spiritual world. And inasmuch as Christ is the leader of that spiritual world, Lazarus had been filled with the Christ-power and the vision of Christ. (Further particulars will be found in my book *Christianity as Mystical Fact*, in which a chapter is devoted exclusively to the Lazarus miracle.) Christ poured out His power upon Lazarus and Lazarus arose a new man. A word in St. John's Gospel arrests our attention. It is said in the story of the miracle that the Lord 'loved' Lazarus. The same word is used for the disciple 'whom the Lord loved'. What does this mean? The Akashic records reveal this to us.

Who was Lazarus after he had risen from the dead? He was none other than the writer of the Gospel of St. John, the Lazarus who was initiated by Christ. Christ poured into the soul of Lazarus the tidings of His own existence, so that the message of the fourth Gospel — the Gospel of St. John — might resound through the world as a description of Christ's own being. This is also why the disciple John is not mentioned in the Gospel before the story of Lazarus. Let us read carefully and not allow ourselves to be misled by those remarkable theologians who have discovered that in a certain passage of the Gospel of St. John (in the thirty-fifth verse of the first chapter) the name John already appears, with reference to the disciple John. The passage is as follows:

'Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples.'

There is, however, not the slightest hint that the same disciple is here meant, of whom it was afterwards said that the Lord 'loved' him. This disciple does not appear until the passage in which Lazarus is raised from the dead. Why is this? Because he who is concealed behind the disciple 'whom the Lord loved' is the same whom the Lord loved before that event. The Lord loved him because he had already recognized him as his disciple, who should be raised from the dead and carry the message of Christ into the world. It is for this reason that the disciple, the Apostle 'whom the Lord loved', is mentioned only from the story of Lazarus onwards. He had only then become the disciple in question. The individuality of Lazarus had been transformed into the John-individuality, in the sense of Christianity. Thus we have a baptism in the

highest sense fulfilled upon Lazarus by the Christ-impulse. Lazarus became an initiate in the new sense of the word, though the old forms, including the lethargy, were retained in a measure, a transition being thus created from the old to the new initiation.

From this we see in what profound manner the Gospels reproduce the spiritual truths which can be investigated independently of all documents. With regard to everything in the Gospel, the spiritual investigator is bound to know that he can discover it beforehand for himself, apart from the documents. But when he finds again in the Gospel of St. John his own previous investigation, that Gospel becomes in his eyes a document bequeathed by one who was initiated by Christ Jesus Himself. For this reason the Gospel of St. John is a most profound writing.

Nowadays people emphasize the fact that the other Evangelists differ in many respects from St. John. There must be a reason for this; but we shall find it only if we penetrate to the very heart of the other Gospels, as we have done with the Gospel of St. John. We then find that the divergence is due alone to the fact that the writer of the Gospel of St. John was initiated by Christ Jesus Himself. By virtue of that initiation the Christ-impulse could be described as St. John described it. Similarly we must investigate the relation of the other Evangelists to Christ, and see how far they received the baptism of fire and spirit. The inner relation of the Gospel of St. John to the other Gospels will then be discovered, and we shall penetrate ever deeper into the spirit of the New Testament.

## LECTURE VIII

Our considerations yesterday taught us that the Christ-impulse, after having worked through the person of Jesus of Nazareth, united itself with the evolution of the Earth. Thenceforward its influence in earthly evolution is such that man is today as powerfully affected by it as, in earlier days, by that procedure which, as we have seen, became increasingly dangerous — namely, the withdrawal of the etheric from the physical body for three and a half days during initiation. The Christ-impulse works as strongly upon human consciousness as the abnormal condition of former times. Now you must understand that such a change could take effect only slowly and by degrees in human evolution; it could not operate with full power from the very beginning. Hence it was necessary that a kind of transition should be provided through the resurrection of Lazarus. Lazarus was in a condition resembling death for three and a half days; nevertheless you must realize that this condition was different from the one to which the old initiates were subjected; it was not produced artificially by the initiator as in olden times, when the etheric body was withdrawn from the physical by processes which I may not here describe. With Lazarus this withdrawal happened in a natural way. You learn from the Gospel itself that Christ had associated with Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary, for it says: 'The Lord loved him' — that means that Christ Jesus had for a long time exerted a powerful influence on Lazarus, who was sufficiently prepared and ripe for it, and the consequence was, that it was not necessary, in his initiation, to induce artificially the three and a half days' trance, but that, in his case, the condition came of itself, under the powerful influence of the Christ-impulse. Lazarus was, as it were, dead for three and a half days; he had experienced in this time the most important things of all, so that only the last act, the resurrection, was undertaken by Christ. And whoever is acquainted with what happened there, recognizes the echo of the old initiation ceremony, in the words used by Christ Jesus:

'Lazarus, come forth!'

The resurrected Lazarus was, as we have seen, John, or rather the writer of St. John's Gospel — he, that is, who could bring into the world the Gospel of the Being of Christ, as the first initiate in the Christian sense. We may therefore presume that this Gospel, which is nowadays so maltreated by purely historical and theological criticism, and is put down as being only a lyrical hymn, a subjective utterance of its author — we may presume that it gives us an insight into the deepest mysteries of the Christ-impulse. For the materialistic Bible commentators of today, this Gospel of St. John is a stumbling block, when it is compared with the other so-called synoptic Gospels. The Christ-figure which they construct for themselves out of the three other Gospels is very flattering to the learned gentlemen of our time. It has been stated (even in theological quarters) that we are concerned here with the 'simple man of Nazareth'. It is emphasized again and again that Christ is here shown to us as perhaps the noblest man who ever trod the earth, but still a man. Indeed, the tendency is to simplify everything as much as possible; to the extent of saying: a Plato, a Socrates, and other great men have existed; and even various grades in their greatness may be allowed. In truth, the representation of Christ given us by the Gospel of St. John is very different!

There it is said at the very beginning, that He who dwelt for three years in the body of Jesus of Nazareth was the Logos, the eternal Word, also called the 'eternal creative wisdom'. It cannot be understood in our time that a man in his thirtieth year could be so advanced, that he offered up his own Ego and received into himself another being, a positively supersensible being, the Christ whom Zarathustra had addressed as 'Ahura Mazdao'. Thus the theological critics believe that the writer of St. John's Gospel is only describing in a kind of lyrical hymn his own attitude to his Christ, and nothing more. There is St. John's Gospel on the one hand, and the other three Gospels on the other; but if an average representation was required, the Christ could indeed be described as the 'simple man', although of historical greatness. It does not please the new critics that a divine being should be found in Jesus of Nazareth.

We learn from the Akashic record that, having reached his thirtieth year, the personality whom we know as Jesus of Nazareth was so far advanced in maturity, through the sum of his experiences in former incarnations, that he could offer up his own Ego. For that is what happened. Being baptized by John, Jesus of Nazareth resolved, as an Ego, to step out of his physical, etheric, and astral bodies. There was left a noble frame, a precious physical, etheric, and astral body, penetrated through and through by the purest and most highly developed Ego. It was a pure vessel, and could take into itself, at the baptism by John, the eternal Word, the creative Wisdom. This is told us by the Akashic record, and, with good will, we can recognize it in the description given in the Gospel of St. John.

But are we not bound to discuss the beliefs of our materialistic age? It may perhaps surprise some of you that I speak of theologians as of materialistic thinkers, thought they are concerned with spiritual things. But a man's belief and the subject of his investigation do not matter as much as the way he investigates, regardless of the subject. When people will have nothing to do with a spiritual world and with what concerns us here, and confine their attention to the documents, records, and so on of the material world, with the object of constructing therefrom the picture of the world, such people are materialists. It all depends on the means used for investigation, and we must still discuss these.

If you read the Gospel you will see that there are certain contradictions in them. Nevertheless, as regards the main points (which may be described from the Akashic record as essentials) we may say that the Gospels coincide in a remarkable manner. They all agree as regards the baptism of Jesus of Nazareth by John, and they all assign the greatest conceivable importance to it. Again they coincide in the facts of the Crucifixion and Resurrection. These are precisely the facts which strike the materialistic thinker of today as being the most marvellous. On these points there is no discrepancy in the Gospels. But how shall we deal with the other seeming contradictions?

Two of the Evangelists, Mark and John, begin with the baptism by John. They relate the last three years of the life of Christ Jesus, confining themselves to what happened after the Christ-spirit had taken possession of the threefold covering of Jesus of Nazareth — of his physical, etheric, and astral bodies. Then we have the two Gospels according to Matthew and Luke. They give in addition the earlier history, which, in the sense of the Akashic record, is the history of Jesus of Nazareth before the sacrifice of himself to the Christ. The seekers for contradiction find, to begin with, that Matthew gives a line of ancestors back to Abraham, while Luke gives a genealogy reaching back to Adam, and from Adam to the father of Adam, God Himself. Another contradiction could then be found in the fact that, according to Matthew, three wise men or Magi, led by a star, came to greet the new born Jesus, while Luke tells of the shepherds' vision, of their adoration of the Child, and of the presentation in the Temple, against which Matthew tells of Herod's persecution, the flight into Egypt, and the return. These and many other details might strike one as contradictions. We can deal with these if we go further into the facts supplied to us by the Akashic record independently of the Gospels.

The Akashic record tells us that about the time given in the Bible (the difference of a few years does not matter) Jesus of Nazareth was born. In his body there lived an individuality who had experienced high degrees of initiation in earlier incarnations, and had gained a profound insight into the spiritual world. Yes, the Akashic record, which furnishes the one and only real history, tells us still more, but I will merely indicate it in outline to begin with. We are told that he who appeared in Jesus of Nazareth had gone through various earlier incarnations in various parts, and we are led back to the time when this bearer of the later name 'Jesus of Nazareth' had attained, in the Persian world, a remarkably high state of initiation and performed a work of the highest significance. The Akashic record shows how this individuality had already worked in the spiritual world of the ancient Persians, how he looked up to the Sun and addressed the high Sun-spirit as 'Ahura Mazdao'. We must realize that it was into the bodies of this individuality, who had gone through these incarnations, that Christ entered. What does that mean, 'Christ entered into the bodies of this individuality'? It simply means that the Christ used these three bodies — the astral, the etheric, the physical — for His life and work upon Earth. All that we think and express in words, all our feelings and sensations depend upon our astral body. It is the bearer of all this. For thirty years Jesus of Nazareth lived as an Ego in this astral body, imparting to it all that he had experienced and assimilated in earlier incarnations. In what form, then, could this astral body shape its thoughts? It adapted and joined itself to the individuality which lived in it for thirty years. When Zarathustra, in ancient Persia, looked up to the Sun and spoke of Ahura Mazdao — that imprinted itself upon the astral body. Into this astral body Christ now entered. Was it not natural, therefore, that when Christ used images of thought and vented His feeling, He should clothe these expressions in what his astral body offered Him? For if you wear a grey coat, you appear to the outside world in a grey coat. Christ appeared to the outside world in the body of Jesus of Nazareth (in his physical, etheric, and astral bodies), so that His thoughts and feelings were coloured by the thoughts and feelings which were in the body of Jesus of Nazareth. What wonder, then, that in many of His utterances, as related in the Gospel of St. John, we catch the echo of ancient Persia and of expressions used in ancient Persian initiation! For the impulse which was in Christ passed over to His disciple, to the resurrected Lazarus. Thus it is as though the astral body of Jesus of Nazareth were speaking to us through St. John in his Gospel; no wonder that we catch the tone of much that is Persian, and that expressions are used which recall the old Persian initiation and its forms of thought. In Persia they did not address the spirits that are connected with the Sun only as 'Ahura Mazdao'; the expression 'Vohumanu' was also used, that is, the creative Word or the creative Spirit. The 'Logos' in the sense of 'creative power' was first used in Persian initiation, and we meet it again in the very first verse of St. John's Gospel. Many other things in this Gospel will be intelligible to us when we know that Christ Himself spoke through an astral body that had served Jesus of Nazareth for thirty years, and that this individuality was the reincarnation of an old Persian initiate. It could be clearly shown in many instances how the Gospel of St. John, this most intimate of the Gospels, by using words derived from the secrets of initiation, thereby reflects the old Persian mode of expression transmitted into later times.

Now what can be said in this respect of the other Gospels? To understand this, we must recall some of the facts explained in the foregoing lectures.

We have already heard that there were high spiritual beings who transferred their scene of action to the Sun when the latter separated from the Earth. We also remarked that the outer astral forms of these beings were to a certain extent the counterpart of certain animal forms here on the earth. There was the form of the 'Bull-spirits', the spiritual counterpart of the animal species having the functions of nourishment and digestion as the essential characteristic of their development. The spiritual counterpart is of course of high spiritual nature, however low the earthly image may appear. Thus we have high spiritual beings who, having transferred their scene of action to the Sun, work from there upon the Earth-sphere in the nature of 'Bull-spirits'. Others appear as 'Lion-spirits', whose counterpart is seen in the animal species in whom the organs pertaining to the heart and the circulation of the blood are pre-eminently developed. Then we have the beings whose animal counterpart we meet in the eagle species — the 'Eagle-spirits'. Finally we have the beings who unite the other natures in a harmonious synthesis — the 'Man-spirits'. These were in a certain sense the most advanced of the beings. Now let us return to the old initiation. It made it possible for men to see face to face the high spiritual beings who progressed ahead of men. But inasmuch as men had descended in earlier times from Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and Venus, they were ere initiated in correspondingly different ways. Even in Atlantis there were many and various oracles. There were some in which spiritual vision was as directed especially towards the beings we have described as 'Eagle-spirits', while others saw the 'Lion-spirits', the 'Bull-spirits', and others again the 'Man-spirits'. This was determined according to the special character of the candidates for initiation. These differences were one of the peculiarities of Atlantean times and their echo persisted even in our post Atlantean times. There were sanctuaries in Asia Minor and Egypt in which the initiated saw the high spiritual beings as Bull-spirits or Eagle-spirits. These Mysteries were the source from which outer civilization issued. Those who perceived the high spiritual beings in the 'Lion' form, created for themselves a kind of image of what they had seen, in the body of the lion. Then they said: 'These spirits have a share in the genesis of man', and gave the lion's body a human head. This was the origin of the Sphinx. Those who had seen the Bull-spirits introduced Bull worship <Crect during decadence in Spain> in token of their vision of the spiritual world; this led to the worship of the Apis Bull in Egypt and the Mithras Bull in Persia. For all the outward religious practices of the various peoples had their rise in the rites of initiation. There were everywhere initiates whose spiritual vision was directed pre-eminently towards the Bull-spirits, while others were concerned with the Eagle-spirits and so on. We can also indicate to a certain extent the difference between the various kinds of initiation. The initiates to whom the spiritual beings appeared in the form of Bull-spirits were particularly instructed in the secret properties of human nature pertaining to the glandular, that is, to the etheric system. Furthermore they were initiated in yet another region of human nature — the part which clings to the earth, being firmly forged to it. This was seen by those who were initiated into the 'Bull' mysteries.

Let us try to put ourselves into the temper of mind of such an initiate. From his great teacher he had heard how man descended from divine heights, the first men being descendants of divine spiritual beings. The first men were thus traces back to their father

God. So man descended to Earth and passed from earth-form to earth-form. These initiates were especially interested in the earth-bound element and in all that men experienced at a time when they counted the divine spiritual beings as their ancestors. With the Eagle-initiates it was different. They saw those spiritual beings who are related to men in a peculiar way. But to understand this we must first say a few words concerning the spiritual nature of the bird species.

In animals we see beings whose lower organization makes them rank below man; for they became prematurely hardened and failed to retain their physical substance in a soft and flexible state, until the moment when they might have assumed human form. In the bird species we have beings who did not assume the lowest functions, but skipped over that point. They did not descend low enough, as it were; they kept themselves in too soft a substance, while the others lived in too hard a substance. As evolution progressed, outward circumstances compelled them to densify. So they densified in a manner suitable to a nature that was too soft and had not descended low enough on to earth. That is a somewhat crude and popular way of expressing it, but it gives the facts. The spiritual prototypes corresponding to these bird natures are beings who overstepped the mark in an upward direction; they persisted in too soft a substance and, in the course of their development, flew over what they might have become at a particular moment. They err in an upward, and the others in a downward direction. The Lion-spirits occupy the middle position, they and the harmonized spirits who rightly conformed with the trend of development — the Man-spirits.

Now, as we have realized, those who had something of the old initiation were receptive for the influence exerted by the Christ-event. They had formerly possessed insight into the spiritual world in accordance with their particular initiation. The initiates of a great part of Egypt, who had partaken of the 'Bull' initiation, could say: 'We can see into the spiritual world; the high spiritual beings appear to us in the counterpart of the Bull-nature in man.' But those who had come into contact with the Christ-impulse could now add: 'But now the Lord of the spiritual realm has appeared to us in His true form. Our earlier vision, to which we ascended through the stages of initiation, showed us a preliminary form for the Christ. Christ, it is, whom we must now place in the centre of our vision. If we bear in mind everything that we have seen, everything that the spiritual world has by degrees disclosed to us, where would all this have led us, provided our level had been already high enough at that time? It would have led us to Christ!' Such an initiate described the way into the spiritual world in the sense of the Bull-initiation. But then he added: 'The truth, which is in the spiritual world, that is Christ!', and the Lion- and Eagle-initiates spoke likewise.

All these initiation Mysteries had definite rules as to how the candidate should be led into the spiritual world. The ritual according to which the spiritual world should be entered, differed, in different places. In Asia Minor and Egypt there were Mysteries of many and various shades, in which it was the practice to lead the initiates to a perception of the 'Bull' nature, or the 'Lion-spirits' and so on. And now let us understand, from this point of view, those whose former initiations had rendered them ripe to feel the Christ-impulse and comprehend Christ in the right way. Let us consider an initiate who had gone through the stages leading to the perception of the 'Man-spirit'. He could say to himself: 'The true Lord of the spiritual world has appeared to me. He is Christ, who lived in Jesus of Nazareth. What has led me to him? My old initiation!' He knew the steps which led to the vision of the 'Man-spirit'. Thus he described what a man experiences in order to attain initiation, and above all to recognize the Christ-nature. His knowledge of initiation was in accordance with the directions given in those Mysteries which led to the 'Man'-initiation. Therefore the high initiate who was in the body of Jesus of Nazareth (before the Christ descended) appeared to him in the symbol of the Mysteries which he had gone through and which he knew. His description accorded with his own view of the subject, and that is the case with Matthew's description. Hence an older tradition is altogether to the point when it connects the writer of the Gospel of St. Matthew with that one of the four symbols shown here on the capitals of the columns, on the right and on the left — the symbol which we designate as the 'symbol of man'. <Ed. These two columns and the seven-armed candelabra decorated the lecture room, which also contained a plastic figure by Professor Bernwitz representing the Archangel Michael.> An older tradition connects the writer of the Matthew Gospel with the 'Man'-spirit, for the reason that he adopted at his point of departure the initiation of the 'Man'-mysteries into which he was acquainted. For at the time of the Gospels it was not customary to write biographies as people do nowadays. What appeared of primary importance to people in those days was the fact that a high initiate was there, who had received the Christ into himself. They were chiefly concerned with the question, how a man becomes an initiate and what he experiences as an initiate. Therefore they pass over the outward daily events which appear so important to the present day biographer. What does a modern biographer leave undone in order to gather sufficient material! Frederick Theodore Vischer once used a very good simile at the expense of a learned gentleman, in ridiculing the way in which modern biographies are written. He said: 'A young scholar once set out to write a disquisition of Goethe. He first devoted himself to the preparatory work and gathered all the material he needed. But not content with that, he went into all the houses in all the towns where Goethe had lived, rummaged about in every loft, searched in every room, raised dust from all the corners, upset evil smelling dust bins, and all in order to find everything there was to find with a view to writing a dissertation "On the Connection of Frau Christiane von Goethe's Chilblains with the Mythological, Allegorical, Symbolic Figures in the Second part of Faust"!' That is putting it rather strongly, but, in spirit, it fits the writers of modern biographies. Authors who wish to write about Goethe poke about in every possible rubbish heap in order to write their biographies. The word 'discretion' has become an unknown quantity nowadays.

Very different was the manner in which the writers of the Gospels described the life of Jesus of Nazareth. For them, all ordinary events sank into insignificance when compared with the successive stages which Jesus of Nazareth had to traverse as an initiate. This was the subject of their narrative, but each described it in his own way and as he himself knew it. Matthew describes it in the manner of one who has been initiated into the Mysteries of the 'Man-spirit.'

This initiation was closely related to the Egyptian wisdom. We can also now understand how the writer of the Gospel according to St. Luke arrived at his particular description. He was one of those who in former incarnations had been initiated into the Mysteries of the 'Bull-spirit'. He described the facts which corresponded to such an initiation, saying: 'Such are the stages which a great initiate must have traversed!' And he gave his own colouring to his description. He was one of those who in former incarnations had lived chiefly within the Egyptian Mysteries, and it is therefore not surprising that he should mention a trait which is characteristic of the Egyptian type of initiation. He said to himself: 'In the individuality who was in the body of Jesus of Nazareth there lived a high initiate. I have learnt the path which leads through the Egyptian Mysteries to the "Bull"-initiation. Of that I am sure. An initiate of so high a grade as Jesus of Nazareth must have passed through an Egyptian initiation in addition to all the other initiations, in his former incarnations.' Thus we have in Jesus of Nazareth an initiate who had experienced Egyptian initiation. The other evangelists were of course also aware of this, but they did not attach special importance to it, because they were not so familiar with this particular aspect of initiation. Hence a particular characteristic of Jesus of Nazareth did not strike them. I said in the first lectures that something unusual is connected with the reappearance of an initiate on earth. Certain definite events take place which seem like a repetition in the other world of former experiences. Let us assume a man had been initiated in ancient Ireland; he must now be reminded of this old Irish initiation by some outer event in his life. This would ensue, for instance, if he were induced by circumstances to make a journey to Ireland. This Irish journey would be a striking incident in the eyes of one closely acquainted with Irish initiation, while others would think less of it, being unfamiliar with that initiation. The individuality who lived in Jesus of Nazareth had been initiated also in the Egyptian Mysteries. Hence his journey to Egypt. Who therefore was likely to be particularly struck by the 'Flight into Egypt'? One who knew such a journey by personal experience and described this particular incident because he was aware of its significance. It is described in the Gospel of St. Matthew because the writer knew from his own initiation what a journey to Egypt meant for many initiates in olden times. Again since we know that the writer of the Gospel of St. Luke derived his knowledge of initiation especially from the Egyptian Mysteries with which Bull-worship was connected, you will agree that the association of this evangelist with the symbol of the Bull, according to an older tradition, is not without justification. For certain good reasons which cannot be given here for lack of time, he does not describe the journey to Egypt. But he mentions typical events the importance of which could best be estimated by one familiar with Egyptian initiation. The writer of the Gospel of St. Matthew gives a more external description of the career of Jesus of Nazareth, as in the 'Flight into Egypt'; the writer of St. Luke sees the whole course of events in the spirit conferred by an Egyptian initiation.

Now let us consider the writer of the Gospel according to St. Mark. He omits all preliminary history and describes in particular the life and work of Christ in the body of Jesus of Nazareth for the period of three years. In this respect the

Gospels of St. Mark and St. John are in complete agreement. The writer of St. Mark passed through an initiation closely resembling the initiations of Asia Minor or even Greece, and it may be said that these European-Asiatic, heathen initiations were at that time the latest. Their reflection in the outer world was in the sense that a high personality who had experienced a certain initiation, owes his origin not merely to a natural but to a supernatural event. Remember that those who venerated Plato and desired to think of him in the right way, were not especially interested in the identity of his earthly father. In their eyes, the soul of Plato in the body of Plato is born as a high spiritual being fructifying his lower humanity. Hence they ascribed to the god Apollo the birth of that Plato who was so precious to them — the awakened Plato. To them, Plato was the son of Apollo. Precisely in these Mysteries it was usual to pay no special attention to the previous life of the person in question but to concentrate upon the point of time when he became what is called a 'son of God', as we find so often mentioned in the Gospels. Plato a son of God! Such was he called by those whose veneration for him and whose knowledge of his nature was of the noblest kind. At the same time we must realize to what extent this manner of regarding the gods affected the human life of such sons of God on Earth. It was precisely in this (fourth) period of civilization that men became most attached to the world of the physical senses and learned to love the Earth. The old gods were dear to them because they could show in what manner the highest sons of Earth were 'sons of the gods'. These personalities sojourning here upon Earth were to be described in this way. The author of the Gospel according to St. Mark was a writer in this sense. His description is confined to what happened after the baptism by John. His initiation has led him to the knowledge of the higher worlds in the image of the 'Lion-spirit'. Hence in the old tradition, this writer had been associated with the symbol of the Lion. And now let me turn once more to the Gospel of St. John.

We have said that the writer of this Gospel was initiated by Christ Himself. He could therefore give his work something which contained in germ the active influence of the Christ-impulse, both for the present and for remote future ages. What he proclaims will hold good in the most distant future. He is one of those of whom we have spoken as 'Eagle' initiates, who had transcended the normal point. The normal instruction for that time is given by the writer of St. Mark. All that transcends that time, all that reveals to us the working of Christ in the far future, soaring above earthly attachments — all that is found in St. John. Tradition therefore associates him with the symbol of the Eagle. Thus we see that an old tradition like this, associating the Evangelists with what may be said to constitute the real nature of their own past initiation, cannot possibly be founded upon mere fancy, but that it springs from the deepest foundations of Christian evolution. Thus deeply must we penetrate beneath the surface of things! We then understand that the chief events in the life of Christ Jesus are narrated in the same manner by all the Evangelists, but that each described Christ Jesus as he understood Him and according to the character of His initiation. This has been touched upon in my book *Christianity as Mystical Fact*, but in a way suitable for an unprepared public; for the book was written at the beginning of our anthroposophical movement and takes into consideration the contemporary lack of understanding in respect of occult facts.

We realize therefore that light is thrown upon the Christ-figure from four sides: by each of the Evangelists from the side he knew best. That Christ has many sides you will readily believe, in view of the mighty impulse which He has given. But this I said: All four Gospels agree on the following points: that the Christ-Being Himself descended from divine spiritual heights at the Baptism by John; that He dwelt in the body of Jesus of Nazareth; that He suffered death on the Cross and conquered death. We shall return later to the Mystery of the Death on the Cross, but let us think of it today in the light of the question: 'What is the most striking feature in the Death on the Cross as regards the Christ-Being?' To this we must answer that the characteristic feature of this event is the fact that there is no difference between the life that preceded and the life that followed it. The essential factor in the Death of Christ is that Christ passed through death unchanged, that He remained the Same, that He was the One who demonstrated the insignificance of death, so that all who were acquainted with the true nature of the Death of Christ believed in the living Christ.

Seen from this point of view, what was the meaning of the vision on the road to Damascus, when he who was called Saul became Paul? Paul knew from what he had formerly learnt that the Spirit first seen by Zarathustra on the Sun as Ahura Mazdao, and then beheld by Moses in the burning bush and in the fire on Sinai, was gradually nearing the Earth; he also knew that this Spirit must enter a human body. But Paul, while he was still Saul, could not understand that he who was to be the bearer of the Christ must needs suffer the shameful death on the Cross. He could only imagine that when Christ came, He must come in triumph and, once He had approached the Earth, must abide in all that the Earth contains. Paul could not imagine that he who had hung upon the Cross had been the bearer of the Christ. The death on the Cross, its shame and everything connected therewith, prevented Paul from recognizing that Christ had truly been there upon Earth. Hence it was necessary that something should happen to convince him that the Individuality in the body of Jesus of Nazareth, hanging on the Cross, was the very Christ, the Christ who had been on Earth. Clairvoyant, that is what Paul became on the road to Damascus; and his vision convinced him of the truth! To the eye of the seer the spiritual world appeared changed after the Event of Golgotha. Before that event the seer did not find Christ in the spiritual worlds; after Golgotha He could be seen in the aura of the Earth. That is the difference. And Paul said to himself: 'As a seer, I can be convinced that in him who hung upon the Cross and lived as Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ was present, who is now in the aura of the Earth!' In the aura of the Earth he saw the Being first seen by Zarathustra as Ahura Mazdao on the Sun. Now he knew that He who hung upon the Cross was risen. He could therefore say: 'Christ is risen! He has appeared to me, as He appeared to Cephias, to the other brethren, and to the five hundred at the same time!' And Paul now became the herald of the living Christ, for whom death has not the same meaning as for other men.

When doubt is cast on Christ's death on the Cross, one who knows the truth will agree with the Suabian author of the book entitled *Origins of Christianity*, which contains all the most reliable historical material bearing upon the subject. Gfrörer, the writer to whom we refer, justly laid stress on the Death of the Cross, and we can sympathize with him when he says in his somewhat sarcastic manner, that if anyone were to contradict him on this point he would look him critically

in the face and ask whether something was not 'out of order beneath his hat!' This is one of the most certain facts of Christianity. The Death on the Cross, and that which we shall describe tomorrow as the Resurrection, and as the effect of the words, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!' — these facts constitute the essence of Paul's teaching. For him, the Resurrection of Christ is the starting-point of Christianity. We might say that it is only in our own day that people have begun again to reflect a little upon these things, not as the subject of theological controversy, but as the vital question of Christianity. The great philosopher Solovioff assumes, strictly speaking, the Pauline standpoint when he says: 'Everything in Christianity centres upon the idea of Resurrection; and if this idea be not believed or understood, a Christianity of the future is impossible.' He repeats, after his fashion, Paul's words: 'If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and our faith is also vain!' Then the Christ-impulse is impossible. Indeed, there could be no Christianity without the risen, living Christ.

It is a striking fact, and we may therefore draw attention to it, that isolated profound thinkers come to recognize the truth of this Pauline saying, purely from their own philosophy and quite without occultism. If we devote some attention to such minds we see that, in certain cases, ideas are being formed, already in our time, of what will one day constitute human belief and human conceptions of the world — that is, of the knowledge which spiritual science must bring. But without spiritual science, even a profound thinker like Solovioff cannot get beyond empty conceptual forms. His systems of philosophy are like conceptual receptacles into which must be poured the content they require and for which they have fashioned the mould — the content they do not possess, for it can be derived alone from the anthroposophical movement. Anthroposophy will pour that living water, the message of the facts of the spiritual world, occult knowledge, into these vessels, and bring its gifts to the noble minds who show that they require Anthroposophy, and whose tragic fate it is that they have not been able to find it. Of such minds it is not too much to say that they thirst for Anthroposophy, but they have not been able to find it. Anthroposophical knowledge must flow into such prepared vessels, and enable these minds to form clear and true ideas regarding such cardinal events as the Christ-event and the Mystery of Golgotha. On these subjects only Anthroposophy or spiritual science can enlighten us with its revelation of the realms of the spiritual world. Indeed, the Mystery of Golgotha cannot be understood in our day save through Anthroposophy or spiritual science.

## LECTURE IX

At the close of yesterday's lecture we referred to our impending consideration of the cardinal event within the Christ-impulse: the Death upon the Cross and its significance. But before we proceed to the narration of the Death of Christ, which represents the culminating point of these lectures, it will be necessary to say something today concerning the actual meaning and importance of much that is contained in the Gospel of St. John, and of the relation of this Gospel to the others. We have attempted in the last few days to gain an understanding of the Christ-impulse on the basis of a clairvoyant study of the Akashic record, and to establish that impulse as an actual fact in the evolution of mankind. Moreover we referred only to those parts of the Gospels which appear to confirm the facts previously ascertained and verified by clairvoyant research. But today, in order to facilitate the progress of our considerations, let us glance at the Gospel of St. John itself, and describe that momentous document from the point of view of its own value. This Gospel, of which we said yesterday that modern theological criticism (in so far as it is infected by materialism) can come to no satisfactory conclusion concerning it, and is powerless to understand its historical truth, will reveal itself to us, when studied in the light of spiritual science, as one of the most marvellous documents in possession of the human race. It may be said that it is not only one of the greatest religious documents but that of all literary productions — if this profane expression be allowed — it may be accounted as one of the best. Let us now approach the contents of this document from the literary standpoint.

When we understand it aright and know the true meaning underlying the words, we find it, from the very first chapter, to be one of the most finished productions, as regards style and composition, existing in the world. Of course, something more than a superficial examination is required to detect this. We find immediately, on a casual glance, that the writer — we now know his identity — reckons exactly seven miracles up to the Raising of Lazarus. (The significance of this number seven will be dealt with in the course of the next few days.) Which are the seven miracles or signs?

1. The sign at the marriage at Cana in Galilee.
2. The sign given in the healing of the nobleman's son.
3. The sign given in the healing of the man 38 years in his infirmity, at the pool at Bethesda.
4. The sign given in the feeding of the five thousand.
5. The sign given in the vision of Christ walking on the water.
6. The sign given in the healing of the man born blind, and finally

7. The greatest of the signs, the initiation of Lazarus — the transformation of Lazarus into the writer of the Gospel of St. John.

These are the seven signs. Now before going further, we must of course ask the question: What are we to understand under these signs or miracles? If you have listened attentively to the facts variously presented to you during the past few days, you will remember having heard that human consciousness has undergone a change in the course of our whole evolution. We glanced back to ages of the remote past and saw that man did not issue from the status of a mere animal, but from a form of existence in which the gift of clairvoyance was a natural human faculty. Men were once clairvoyant even at a time when their consciousness was such that they could not pronounce the words: 'I am.' The consciousness of himself (self-consciousness) was a faculty which man had to acquire by degrees; but it was purchased at the cost of his old clairvoyance. These are the three stages which humanity has in part traversed and still has to traverse. In Atlantis man lived in a kind of dream-consciousness (a clairvoyant consciousness, however); then he acquired, little by little, a consciousness of himself and of external objects, but forfeited thereby his old dreamy clairvoyance; finally, the man of the future will regain his clairvoyance, now united with self-consciousness. Thus the path of humanity leads from a primitive, dull clairvoyance, through a condition of opaque, objective consciousness, and ascends to self-conscious seership.

Not only the state of consciousness, everything in mankind has changed. The belief that things must always have been the same as they are now, is an instance of human short-sightedness. Everything has evolved. Nothing, not even the relation of man to man, was as it is now. As we have seen, the influence exerted by one soul upon another was far stronger in ancient times, up to the time when the Christ-impulse was implanted in human evolution, than at present. It was the natural human disposition. A man did not only hear the externally audible words addressed to him by another; he could inwardly feel or know what was meant, when the other was at all vivacious or intensive in thought and feeling. Love, though certainly more dependent on the ties of blood, was very different in former times from what it is today. True, it has now assumed a more intimate character, but it has grown weaker. It will regain its former strength when the Christ-impulse has entered into every human heart. When love was exercised in those times, it carried with it something like a healing force, flowing as a balm from one soul into the other. With the appearance of intellect and sagacity, which of course were also gradually developed, those old influences of soul upon soul disappeared. It was a gift peculiar to the peoples of ancient times, to exert an influence within the soul of another, to let the force within the soul overflow into the soul of another. Thus you must imagine that a far greater force was then transmitted from soul to soul and a much more powerful influence was exerted by one soul upon another. Though no mention of the fact is found in external records, though stones and monuments reveal nothing of it, the clairvoyant observation of the Akashic records shows, nevertheless, that the healing of the sick was extensively practised by the exercise of psychic influence by one human being upon another. Much besides could be achieved by the human soul in those times. Though it now sounds like a fairy tale, it was a reality in those days that, by exercising and training his will in a special way, a man could act soothingly on the growth of vegetation. He had the power to hasten or retard the growth of plants. Today there are but scanty remains of this. Thus human life was entirely different in those times. Given a right relation between human beings, it would then have caused no surprise if an influence of this kind were to pass from one person to another. To be sure, we must keep in view one thing — namely, that two or more persons were always necessary for the exercise of this kind of psychic influence. We might picture to ourselves in our days that a being gifted with the power of Christ might appear among men. Those, however, whose faith in Him was sufficiently strong would be few and far between, and He could not achieve a work which depends upon the influence passing from one soul to another. To this end it is necessary not only that the influence be exerted, but also that someone should be there who is ready to receive it. Since people who were ready for such influences were more numerous in former times, no one will be surprised to hear that precisely psychic influence was available as a means of healing the sick; moreover, that other effects which today are only wrought by mechanical means were brought about through psychic influence. At what epoch in human evolution did the Christ-event take place? It took place at a certain very definite point of time, and we must keep this well in view. Only the last vestiges remained of those psychic currents passing from one human being to another, as a lingering heritage of Atlantean times. Mankind was preparing to penetrate ever deeper into operation of such influences. That was the chosen moment for the Christ-impulse, which by its very nature could exercise an unbounded influence on those who were still receptive for it.

To one who really understands the evolution of humanity, it will be self-evident that the Christ-Being, having entered the body of Jesus of Nazareth, could unfold an extraordinary power therein, for this body was the result of a development reaching to the remote past. We mentioned yesterday that the individuality of Jesus of Nazareth was incarnated in an earlier life in ancient Persia; that the same individuality passed through repeated incarnations, rising to higher and ever higher stages of spiritual life at each incarnation. This rendered it possible that Christ should dwell in such a body and that this body could be offered to Him as a sacrifice. The Evangelists were well aware of this. For this reason their narrative is presented in such a manner that the eye of the spiritual investigator can readily comprehend it. But everything in the Gospels must be taken literally — that is, we must first learn to read them. Why are we told, for instance, with such emphasis, in the first of the signs (we shall learn the deeper significance of the miracles later), that the marriage took place at 'Cana in Galilee'? Search as we will, there is no other Cana in Palestine, in the regions that could be known at that time. Is an additional appellation necessary for a place which is the only one of that name? Why does the Evangelist, in speaking of this miracle, insist that it took place at 'Cana in Galilee'? Because it was essential to emphasize that the event in question must necessarily have occurred in Galilee and nowhere else. That is to say, Christ could not have found the persons necessary for this event in other regions, but alone in Galilee. I have already explained that in order to produce an effect, the active agent alone does not suffice; there must also be others who are capable of responding to the influence. Christ could not have performed His first miracle within the Jewish community itself; but it was quite possible for him to do so in Galilee, a district in which the most diverse peoples and tribes were mingled together. Precisely on account of this mixture of races from far and wide, there was far less blood relationship in Galilee than in Judea, in the more strictly

Hebrew circles. The people of Galilee were a medley of races. But what was the mission to which Christ felt Himself especially called, by virtue of His impulse?

We have pointed out that one of His weightiest sayings was given in the words: 'Before Abraham was, was the I AM!' And that other: 'I and the Father are One!' The meaning of these words is as follows: Among people who cling to the old forms of life, the Ego remains ensconced in the brotherhood of blood relations. In a true follower of the Old Testament, the words: 'I and the Father Abraham are One!' evoked a feeling very difficult for modern man to share. A man saw that his personal self, which is confined within the limits of birth and death, is transitory. But a true follower of the Old Testament — one who was affected by the widespread teaching of that time — would express himself as follows, not merely allegorically, but as a fact: 'As regards my person I am a unit; but I am a member of a great organism, of a great living complex, extending as far back as Father Abraham. Even as my finger depends upon my body, so too the fact that I can remember, depends upon my feeling myself a member of a great racial organism extending back to Father Abraham. I am a part of the great body of my people, precisely as my finger is a part of my body. Cut away my finger and it ceases to be a finger; it exists only as long as it is a part of my hand, my hand a part of my arm, and my arm a part of my body; my finger is meaningless when separated from my hand. In the same way I am bereft of significance unless I feel myself to be a member of all the generations along which the blood descends from Father Abraham. That is my safe refuge. My separate Ego is transient and fleeting. But this great organism of my people, stretching back to Father Abraham, is not transient. When I feel myself entirely contained by it, I conquer my temporal, transitory Ego; then I am merged in one great Ego, the Ego of my people, which comes down to me in the blood of the succeeding generations from Father Abraham down to myself!'

Such were the sentiments of the followers of the Old Testament, and it was the power of the inner experience embodied in the words 'I and Father Abraham are One!' which gave life to everything which appears to us so great and wonderful in the Old Testament. But the time having come in which this state of consciousness was no longer suitable to man's stage in evolution, it was gradually lost. Christ could not go to those who had lost the ability to work by that magic force inherent in the ties of blood, and who yet retained an exclusive faith in their community with Father Abraham. For He could not find among these the faith which He Himself needed, so that His power should pass from His soul into the soul of the others. Hence He had perforce to go to those who, by reason of their mixed blood, no longer clung to the old belief — the Galileans. His mission necessarily began there. Though the old state of consciousness was generally on the decline, He found precisely in this people a mixed race which stood at the beginning of the mixing of blood. Different tribes, which had previously been under the sway of the old blood-ties, assembled there from all parts. They had come in order to find the transition from the old order to the new. The feeling was still alive in them, expressed in the words: 'Our fathers still possessed the old state of consciousness, they still possessed the magic forces which act from soul to soul.' Among these people Christ could inaugurate His mission, which consisted in giving to man an Ego-consciousness which could say: In myself I find the communion with the spiritual Father — with the Father whose blood does not flow physically through the generations, but who sends His spiritual force into every individual soul. The Ego that is in me, and is in direct communion, with the spiritual Father, it was before Abraham was. It is for me then to pour into my soul a force which is strengthened by the consciousness of my connection with the spiritual Father-Power of the world. 'I and the Father are One,' not, 'I and Father Abraham,' an ancestor in the flesh, 'are One!' And Christ came to those who had just reached the point at which they could understand this, to those who, having broken down the ties of blood, stood in need to find, in the individual soul, the power which enables man by degrees to give expression to the spiritual in the physical. Do not say: 'Why do not such things happen now, as in those days?' Apart from the fact that anyone who is willing to see such things can do so, we must realize that the human race has advanced beyond this state of consciousness, and that men have descended into the world of matter. Those times marked the boundary between two epochs, and Christ reverted to the last representatives of a humanity which was in a state of transition, in order to demonstrate the power of the spirit over physical matter. The signs that were wrought at that time were to serve as a pattern and a symbol — as a symbol of faith for men, while the old state of consciousness, though still present, was in the act of disappearing.

Now let us consider this marriage at Cana in Galilee — the miracle itself. Were I to develop all the details, word for word, as actually given in the Gospels, fourteen lectures would certainly not suffice; it would require several years. Such a detailed exposition of the subject would, however, do no more than confirm the indications which I am able to give you shortly in these lectures.

In the first place we find, in this first sign, the words: 'There was a marriage at Cana in Galilee.' Now we may be quite convinced that there is not a word in the Gospel of St. John which has not a special meaning. Why then is a 'marriage' mentioned? Because a marriage brings about a circumstance which is eminently affected by the mission of Christ: people are drawn together in marriage. And a marriage in Galilee? It was in Galilee that the old ties of blood were severed, and the blood of strangers mingled together. What I am about to say will certainly sound strange to you. What must people have felt in very ancient times in a similar case, in times when consanguineous marriage prevailed, or what may be called, in the sense of spiritual science, 'near marriage'. The explanation of the near marriage lies in what I have already told you. You will find the same usage among all ancient peoples; marriage outside the tribe or family would have been a breach of tribal law. Inter-marriage within the tribe and among blood relations was the rule, and this consanguineous marriage brought about that wonderful result which can be ascertained at any moment by spiritual scientific research — namely, the power to exercise great magical force. The descendants of a tribe of blood relations, by virtue of this consanguineous marriage, possessed magic powers which worked from soul to soul. Had we been called to a wedding in ancient times, what would we have seen there? Let us assume that the customary beverage — wine — had all been used. What would have happened? Given the right conditions of blood relationship among the members of this wedding party, we might have experienced, for instance, that the water which, at a later moment of the feast, had been offered in the place of wine,

had been experienced as wine by the guests, through the magical force of consanguineous love. Wine, not water, would have been drunk, had the proper magical conditions prevailed among these persons. Do not say: 'This wine would have been water none the less!' A reasonable man must say to himself that the things of the world are not valued by him according to their appearance but according to their significance to him and their manner of imparting themselves to his organism. I believe that many a wine-lover of the present day would rejoice if, when given water to drink, the water could, through some kind of influence, be made to taste like wine and to have the effect of wine upon his organism. More is not necessary, than that the water should taste like wine. What then was required in ancient times for such a sign to be accomplished and for the water contained in the vessels to be found to taste like wine? The magical force which took effect by virtue of the blood-tie was necessary. The power to experience in this manner prevailed among those who were present at the marriage at Cana in Galilee. Only a connecting link was required.

It is said in the Gospel of St. John: 'And the mother of Jesus was there! And both Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the wedding.' And as the wine failed, the mother of Jesus called His attention to it, saying to Him: 'They have no wine!'

As I said, it was necessary that a connecting link should be created for such an event to come to pass. The psychic force required some means of support. What could this be? We now come to a passage which, as it is usually rendered, is nothing less than a blasphemy. For I think that no person of refined feelings could fail to be repelled when, in answer to these words: 'They have no wine!' the reply is made: 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come!' It is absolutely impossible that such words should be accepted in this document. Think of the ideal of love held up to us, in the Gospels, in the relation between Jesus of Nazareth and His mother, and then let us ask if He would have used the expression: 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' It is needless to say more on this point; the rest must be left to the feelings. But these words are not there at all! Look at the passage in the Gospel of St. John. We need only turn to the Greek text and there we find neither more nor less than the words in which Jesus of Nazareth indicates something: 'O woman, this passeth there from me to thee!' He points precisely to this subtle secret force from soul to soul, passing from Him to His mother. At that moment He needed that force. At that moment He could perform no greater sign; the time must gradually ripen for this. Therefore He said: 'My time, the time when I shall work through my force alone, is not yet come!' That magnetic bond passing from the soul of Jesus of Nazareth to His mother was still necessary. 'O woman, this passeth there from me to thee!' After such a speech as: 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?', how could the mother say to the servants: 'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it?' It was necessary for her to be in possession of the old forces, of which people have no longer any understanding, and she knows that His words point to the blood-tie between mother and son — that tie which is to form a link across to the others. She knows that something holds sway here, like an invisible spiritual force, which produces certain effects. And now I beg you really to read the Gospel. It would be interesting to know how those who believe that something really took place (it is not clear what they really suppose to have happened) can explain the Gospel satisfactorily; how they imagine that, the six ordinary water-pots being there, as they say, 'after the manner of the purifying of the Jews', and without the further circumstance just explained, — how they imagine, according to this very ordinary view, that the water should have turned into wine in an outward manner.

What took place? And again what is the belief held by him who is now speaking to you with regard to this miracle, the belief which anyone can hold with regard to a miracle: that one substance was here transformed into another? But an ordinary interpretation will not here suffice.

We must suppose that the water-pots standing there were not filled with water. There is not a word to show that their contents had been poured out. No such thing is said. Had the water-pots been emptied and refilled (for we read that they were filled) we should have to believe that the water which was at first in the water-pots had also been changed into wine, if indeed the water had actually been changed into wine, as one might say, by slight of hand. This explanation is inadequate. It does not agree with the rest of the story. We must realize that the water-pots were obviously empty, and for a good reason: they were empty because a special significance was to be given to the filling of them.

'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it!' the mother said to the servants. What kind of water was required by Christ? He needed water drawn from the sources of Nature. Hence it must be expressly stated that the water had been freshly drawn. Water that had not yet lost the inner life force which any element possesses so long as it remains united with Nature — such water alone could be suitable for His purpose. As I have said, not a word in the Gospel of St. John is without significance. Water freshly drawn was needed, because Christ is that Being who has approached the Earth and allied Himself with the forces at work in the Earth itself. Inasmuch as the living forces of the water work together with that force which flows 'from me to thee', the event described in the Gospel can take place: the ruler of the feast is called out and has the impression that something remarkable has happened — though we are expressly told that he does not know what happened. He has not seen what took place; the servants saw it, but the ruler did not, and now under the impression of the occurrence, he tastes the water as wine. This is clearly and distinctly stated; so that here, through the power of the soul, an influence took effect even in an external element — that is, even in the physical part of the human body. What must have been present in the mother of Jesus of Nazareth herself, in order that her faith be strong enough at that moment to produce such an effect? One thing she needed and this she certainly possessed — namely, the certainty that He who was called her son had become the Spirit of the Earth. Her power could then unite with His power 'which passeth from Him to her', and the mighty influence rendered possible the event here described.

Thus we have shown in the first miracle, with all its attendant circumstances, how results are brought about in the physical world on the strength on the concordance of souls and all that is connected with the ties of blood. This was the first of the signs, the one in which the power of Christ was shown in its smallest measure; it still needed strengthening by

association with the soul-forces of the mother and with the forces of Nature contained in the water — the forces which are always present when water is freshly drawn. The active power of the Christ-Being appears here in its smallest measure. But special importance is attached to the fact that the Christ-force has the power to prepare the other soul, so that these effects can show themselves. Christ rendered the wedding guests susceptible, so that they also tasted the water as wine. But everything in the nature of a real force becomes strengthened by its very exercise. When Christ is called upon a second time to exercise this force, it is already stronger. As the most ordinary force is strengthened by exercise, a spiritual force is strengthened when it has once been successfully applied.

The second sign, as you know from St. John's Gospel, is the healing of the nobleman's son. By what means is the nobleman's son healed? Here again you will recognize the truth if you read the Gospel aright and keep in view the words which are of greatest importance in the chapter in question. In the fiftieth verse of the fourth chapter we read, after the nobleman had made known his distress to Jesus of Nazareth:

‘Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.’

Here again was a union of two souls — Christ's soul and the soul of the child's father. What is the effect of Christ's words, ‘Go thy way; thy son liveth!’? The words kindle in the other soul the power to believe what the words express. These two forces work in unison. Christ's word had the power to fire the other soul, so the nobleman believed. Had the father not believed, the son could not have recovered. In this way one force works upon the other. Two are necessary for this purpose. But we find here the Christ-force in a higher measure. At the marriage in Cana the strong support of the mother was needed. Now Christ's power can impart to the nobleman's soul the word which kindles. An increase of Christ's power can here be seen.

Now let us pass to the third of the signs, the healing of the man 38 years in his infirmity at the pool at Bethesda. Here again we must read the most significant words, which throw a light upon the whole matter. It is the passage which reads:

‘Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk!’

The sick man had already spoken of his inability to move:

‘Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.’

But Christ spake unto him (and here again it is important that the event took place on the Sabbath, when a spirit of festivity reigns, and a kindly feeling prevails among men) and clothed His injunction in the words: ‘Rise, take up thy bed, and walk!’ We must place these words side by side with the others which are equally important:

‘Behold, thou art made whole: Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.’

What does this mean? It means that the sickness of the man who had been 38 years in his infirmity was connected with his sin. We need not enquire whether the sin had been committed in his present or in a former life. We are concerned with the fact that Christ poured into his soul the power to do something which moved the depths of his moral and psychic nature. Here again we have an increase of Christ's power. Hitherto its influence had produced physical effects, but here we have an infirmity of which Christ Himself said that it is connected with the sin of the infirm man. At that moment Christ can pierce to the man's very soul. Previously he needed the father. Now His power works into the soul of the infirm man, and a special note is lent to the event by the fact that the miracle was performed on the Sabbath. Modern man has lost the proper understanding for such things. For the Old Testament believer it was indeed significant that it happened on the Sabbath. This was quite unusual. For this reason the Jews were indignant with the man because he had carried his bed on the Sabbath day. This is an extremely important point. People must learn to think when they read the Gospels. They should not take it as a matter of course that the infirm man could be healed, or that one who had been unable to walk for 38 years could suddenly use his limbs. They should reflect on such a passage:

‘The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed.’

Not the restoration to health, but the carrying of the bed on the Sabbath day was to them the most striking feature in the incident!

Thus the whole situation and precisely the holy day were inseparable from the healing of this impotent man. In Christ Himself dwells the thought: If the Sabbath is truly sanctified to God, the souls of men must be especially fortified by the power of God on that day. By that same power He works upon the impotent man — that is, the power is transmitted to the man's very soul. And whereas the sick man had hitherto lacked in his soul the strength to overcome the consequence of his sin, he now has this strength through the working of the Christ-power. Here again there is a heightening of the Christ-power. And now let us proceed. As I said, the real nature of the miracles will be dealt with later.

The fourth sign is the feeding of the five thousand. Here again we must fix our attention on the words of supreme importance. What are they? In such matters we must always bear in mind that with the consciousness of the present day, there can be no question of exhausting the scope of such an event. If those who wrote about Christ at the time of the Gospel of St. John had believed what is now believed in our materialistic age, they would indeed have written differently; for they would have been impressed by quite different things than was the case. The most significant words, to which particular emphasis is lent (the rest did not strike them especially, not even the fact that five thousand could be fed with the small amount of food available), are the following:

‘But Jesus took the loaves; and gave thanks, and distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.’

What does Christ Jesus do here? Here, in order to accomplish what was to be done, He makes use of the souls of His disciples, who were with Him and who had by degrees ripened to the level of His greatness. The disciples are necessary and they are about Him. He can awaken in their souls a power of active goodness. His power flows forth into that of His disciples. (How the event here described could take place — of that we shall speak later.) But we notice here again an increase of Christ's power. On the preceding occasion He poured forth His power into the soul of the man 38 years in his infirmity; not this power passes over into the soul-power of His disciples — from the soul of the Master to the soul of the disciples. The power has extended from the soul of the One to the soul of the others, and has become heightened. In the souls of the disciples there now dwells that which also dwells in the soul of Christ. People who might be inclined to ask what such an influence can bring about, had better try and observe what took place when the mighty power which was in Christ did not work alone, but kindled the power in the souls of others and worked on further. No one today has this living faith; some may believe in theory, but not with sufficient strength: otherwise they could observe what happened then. Spiritual investigation knows full well what happened.

Thus we find a gradual increase, from step to step, in the power of Christ.

And further: the fifth sign, related in the same chapter, and beginning with the words:

‘And when evening came, His disciples went down unto the sea, and they entered in a boat, and were going over the sea until Capernaum. And it was dark and Jesus had not come into them. And the sea was rising by reason of the great wind that blew. When therefore they had rowed about five-and-twenty or thirty furlongs, they beheld Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the boat; and they were afraid.’

Publishers of the Gospels insert here a very superfluous heading: ‘Christ walketh on the sea’, as if that were anywhere stated in this chapter. Where is ‘Jesus walketh on the sea’? The words are: ‘The disciples beheld Jesus walking on the sea.’ That is the point. We must take the Gospels literally. The power of Christ had once more been strengthened. So great had it become, through its exercise in the last miracles, that it could now not only work from one soul to another — not only could the Christ-soul, in its power, communicate itself to other souls; Christ could not appear in His own living form to the souls of others who were duly prepared. What occurred therefore was as follows: someone is at a remote place; so great is his power that it works upon others who are far removed from that place. So mighty has the Christ-power now become that it not only evokes a force in the disciples — as when the power was transmitted to them who were with Him on the mountain, to perform the miracle; — it now enables them to see Christ and behold His very form, although they cannot see with physical eyes where He is. Christ could become visible to those distant from Him, with whose souls He had now united His own. His own form is now so distant that it can be beheld in the spirit. Inasmuch as the possibility of physical sight is removed from the disciples, spiritual sight becomes more and more possible for them, and they see Christ. This vision at a distance is of such nature that the image of the object seen, appears in the immediate vicinity. Here again we have an increase of the Christ-power.

The next sign is the healing of the man born blind. This healing of the man born blind, as we read it in the Gospel, is especially distorted by commentators. You have probably often read the story in the Gospel:

‘And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.’

Then He heals him. We need only ask: Does the following interpretation spring from a Christian feeling? Here is a man born blind. Neither the sin of his parents nor his own sin is the cause of his blindness; he has been made blind by God in order that Christ may work a miracle in him to the glory of God; therefore the man must be made blind by God in order that a sign may be ascribed to God.

This, however, is not the correct rendering. It is not stated ‘that the works of God should be made manifest in this blind man’. To understand this sign we must revert to the customary form of speech with regard to the word ‘God’. This you will readily find if you turn to another chapter, in which Christ is directly accused of having asserted that He was One with God. How does He answer?

‘Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said ye are Gods?’

That is, Christ answers: In the inmost recesses of the human soul there is the germ of the divine. It is something godlike. How often have we stated that the fourth principle (the Ego) in the being of man is the germ of the God in him. 'Ye are Gods!' That means: A divine principle dwells in you! This is different from the personality of man living here between birth and death; it is different also from that which man inherits from his parents. Whence comes this divine spark, this individuality of the human being? It passes from incarnation to incarnation through repeated lives on earth. It comes from a former life on earth, from an earlier incarnation. Thus neither his parents have sinned, nor has his personality, usually referred to as 'I'; but it was in a former life that he laid down the cause of his blindness in his present life. He became blind in order that the works of the God in him proceeding from a former life should reveal themselves in his blindness. Karma, the law of cause and effect, is here most clearly indicated by Christ. What part of the man must be worked upon, if this infirmity is to be healed? The influence must work, not upon the transitory Ego living between birth and death; it must pierce deeper, into the Ego that passes from life to life. The Christ-power has once more increased. Hitherto we have seen it working upon what is immediately before it; in the present case it works upon that which survives life between birth and death and passes from life to life. Christ feels Himself to be the representative of the I AM. Inasmuch as He pours His powers into the I am, and the high God of Christ announces Himself to the God in man, the man receives strength to heal himself from within his being. Christ has now penetrated to the inmost being of the soul. His power has pierced to the eternal individuality of the sick man, and thereby made it strong, so that Christ's own power comes to light in the individuality of the sick man and penetrates to the consequences of his former incarnations.

What further increase in the Christ-power can still be possible? None other than that Christ should approach a human being and awaken in him the bearer of His own impulse, so that this human being becomes a new man, a man permeated by Christ. That is what takes place in the Raising of Lazarus. Here we have yet another increase in the Christ-power. The power of Christ rises from stage to stage!

Where in the world could we find a lyrical document so magnificently composed? No other writer has produced such a work. Who could do otherwise than bend in reverence before this description of events, rising to a climax from step to step, in so marvellous a way! Considered alone from the standpoint of its artistic composition, the Gospel of St. John moves us to bow our head in reverence before it. Herein everything waxes great from stage to stage and reaches its climax.

One thing yet remains to be shown. We have singled out separate instances showing us the rise to a climax of power in the signs or miracles. But much besides is related between these events. How does this accord with the rest, so as to form an organic whole? Tomorrow it will be our task to show how, apart from the progression of power in the miracles, so admirably described, the remainder of the narrative in St. John's Gospel is inserted between the signs in accordance with a definite plan and intention. Indeed we realize that the insertion could not have been more skillfully executed than was done by the writer of St. John's Gospel. Today we have considered this Gospel from an artistic point of view, as regards its composition, and we see that it is indeed hardly conceivable that a work of art could be composed with greater perfection and be more beautiful in its manner of presentation, than the Gospel of St. John up to the description of the Raising of Lazarus. But only one who knows how to read it and who understands the point can be sensible of the great and mighty meaning conveyed in this Gospel. It is the mission of Anthroposophy to place this great meaning before our souls. But there is even more in this Gospel. Our explanations will be followed by others which, in their turn, will embody a higher wisdom than ours. But this wisdom will serve to find fresh truths. For thirty years our wisdom has served to find the truths which cannot be found without Anthroposophy.

## LECTURE X

Among the events in Palestine at the beginning of our era, there is one in particular to which attention has repeatedly been drawn; it is known as the Baptism of Jesus of Nazareth by John. It has also been emphasized that all four Gospels agree in all essential points with regard to this Baptism by John. Today it will be our task to concern ourselves once more with this event from one particular point of view.

As we have seen, the manner in which this Baptism by John is presented in the Gospels embodies an indication of that other event, also explained by the Akashic records, the event which we described in the words: When Jesus of Nazareth had reached about the thirtieth year of his age, the divine Being whom we call the Christ entered into the threefold bodily sheath of this same Jesus of Nazareth. We have therefore — this is the result of Akashic investigation — to distinguish between two stages in the life of the Founder of Christianity. In the first place, we have the life of the great initiate whom we call Jesus of Nazareth, in whom, as we have seen, there dwelt an Ego which had passed through many incarnations, had lived repeatedly on earth, had risen higher and higher in each succeeding life, and had by degrees developed the faculty for the great sacrifice. This sacrifice consisted in the following act: When Jesus of Nazareth had reached about the thirtieth year of his age, his Ego, having purged, purified, and ennobled his physical, etheric, and astral bodies, was able to renounce these, so that a threefold bodily sheath was left — a most pure and refined human envelopment, consisting of a physical, an etheric, and an astral body. At the Baptism by John this threefold bodily sheath received into itself that Being who had never before descended to earth nor passed through former incarnations. This is the Christ-Being, who up to that time could only be found in the universe beyond our earth. At the Baptism by John this individual Being united Himself with a human body and dwelt therein for a space of three years in order to accomplish in that time the work which we are called upon to describe in ever-increasing detail.

What I have just said is the result of clairvoyant observation, but the fact is clothed in the descriptions of the Baptism by John given us by the Evangelists. The meaning of these descriptions is as follows: whereas the others who were baptized by John underwent various experiences, in the case of Jesus of Nazareth what happened was that Christ descended upon him and entered his threefold bodily sheath. In the second lecture I explained that Christ was the same Being of whom it is said in the Old Testament: 'And the Spirit of God moved (or brooded) on the face of the waters.' This same spirit, the divine spirit of our solar system, entered into the threefold bodily sheath of Jesus of Nazareth. We must now discuss what took place at that moment, but I would beg you to realize from the beginning that it cannot be an easy matter to comprehend what actually took place at the Baptism by John, because it is indeed the supreme event in the evolution of the earth. Is it not natural to believe that the less significant events are easier to understand, and that the greatest of all events presents the greatest difficulty? For this reason, what I am about to say to you may in some respects shock those who are unprepared for such things. But even one who is unprepared should acknowledge that the human soul comes to Earth for the purpose of growing ever more perfect, also with regard to its knowledge, and that what may seem repellent at first sight, comes to appear perfectly comprehensible in the course of time; otherwise we should have to despair of the possibility of evolution for the human soul. We must therefore always remember that, whatever we may have already learnt, our soul is always capable of improvement and will acquire an ever increasing understanding of the subject.

We have therefore before us a threefold human vehicle, a physical, an etheric, and an astral body, into which the Christ, as it were, descends. This is indicated by the words which resound from cosmic space: 'This is my son, filled with my love, in whom I manifest myself!' For this is the rendering of the words. That mighty changes must have taken place in the bodies of Jesus of Nazareth when the God entered into him, we can well imagine. But we can also easily realize that great changes took place in the whole of the human being in the old initiations. After a long period of study and meditation, the pupil to be initiated into the divine mysteries was thrown into a deathlike state lasting three and a half days, during which his etheric body was separated from his physical body, so that the fruits which had been garnered in the astral body could be imprinted upon the etheric body during that time; that is to say, the initiate rose from the state of 'purification', as it is called, to the state of 'illumination', and his eyes were opened to the spiritual world. Moreover, an initiate of the old times acquired a certain power over his whole bodily organization, so that when he returned once more to his physical body, he could exercise a marvellous control over certain of its finer elements. Perhaps you may be inclined to ask: 'If one approached such an initiate, who had acquired an extraordinary mastery over his various bodies — even over his physical body — could one recognize this in his appearance, could one see this in him?' Yes! It could be seen by one who had acquired the ability for such vision; to the rest he usually appeared as an ordinary, unpretending man, with nothing remarkable about him. Why is this? Simply for the reason that the physical body, considered with physical eyes, is only the outer expression for that which is behind it; and the changes affect the spiritual part that is behind the physical body. Now all old initiates, in consequence of the special processes they had undergone, had succeeded in acquiring a certain degree of mastery over the physical body. There was one thing, however, which no old initiation had succeeded in bringing under the dominion of man's spirit. Here we touch the fringe, as it were, of a great secret or mystery. There was something in human nature to which the power of a pre-Christian initiate could not penetrate, namely, to the fine physical and chemical processes in the bony system. Strange as this may sound, it is nevertheless true. Before the Baptism of Christ Jesus by John, there had never been a human individuality in the evolution of the earth, either among the initiated or the uninitiated, who could exercise power over the physical and chemical processes of the bony structure. Through the entrance of Christ into the body of Jesus of Nazareth, the Individuality of Christ henceforward gained dominion over the bony structure itself. As a result, there once lived on earth a body able to use its forces in such a way that it caused the spiritual form of the bony structure to become embodied in the evolution of the Earth. The sum of everything that man has undergone in the course of his evolution would be irretrievably lost unless he were able to incorporate the noble form of his bony structure into the evolution of the Earth as an evolutionary law over which he could by degrees gain mastery. An old popular superstition is connected with this fact (as it so often happens that old traditions are connected with the occult), inasmuch as certain communities symbolize death by the image of the skeleton. This betokens that the laws governing the rest of the human organism were so perfect at the beginning of Earth's evolution that we find the same laws again, transformed and in a higher form, at the end of Earth's evolution; but no vestige of Earth's evolution would be carried over into the future, if the bony frame were not preserved. The form of the bony structure conquers death in a physical sense. Hence He who was to conquer death on Earth must necessarily gain dominion over the bony system in a similar way to the control I have indicated in respect of certain lesser qualities. Man's command over his circulatory system is very slight; when experiencing shame, for instance, he drives his blood from within outwards; that is, his soul works upon his circulatory system. When he turns pale, under the experience of fear, he drives the blood back to its centre, back to the heart. When oppressed with sadness, the tears rush to his eyes. All this denotes a certain mastery of the soul over the body. Far greater is this command over the bodily organization with one who has attained a certain degree of initiation; he acquires the power to control at will and in a definite manner the movements of the different parts of his brain and so on.

Thus the human body of Jesus of Nazareth came under the dominion of Christ, Who, of His own free will and choice, penetrated with His Dominion into the very bones; His influence extended even into the bony system for the very first time. The significance of this fact may be described in the following words: The present form of his bony structure was acquired by man upon Earth, and not in an earlier incarnation of our planet; yet he would lose that form had not the spiritual Power whom we call the Christ appeared. Had not Christ established His dominion over the bony system, man would have nothing to carry over into the future as the harvest and fruit of his earthly existence. It was therefore a stupendous power that penetrated the threefold bodily sheath of Jesus of Nazareth, piercing into the inmost marrow of the bones. We must retain the impression of this moment, for it is one of the great events that occurred at that time.

When an ordinary birth takes place, the fruits of a man's former incarnations unite with the elements which he inherits. The human individuality who was there in former lives unites with the physical and etheric bodily sheath which is provided for him. Something which comes from the spiritual unites with the physical and sensible. Those who have often heard lectures by me know that, with regard to external appearances in the spiritual world, everything there appears as in a mirror and reversed. When clairvoyance is developed in a man by rational methods and his eyes are opened to the spiritual world, he must slowly learn to find his way in that world, for everything there appears in a reversed form. When a number is seen, for instance 345, is must not be read as in the physical world, but as 543, that is, in reversed order. This applies not to numbers only, but to everything else as well. When Christ united Himself with the bodily sheath of Jesus of Nazareth, this event was revealed to one whose spiritual eyes were opened, also in a reversed sense. Whereas at a physical incarnation the spiritual descends from higher worlds and unites with the physical, in this case the element which was offered up in order that the Christ-Spirit might enter, appeared above the head of Jesus of Nazareth in the form of a dove. A spiritual principle appears as it detaches itself from the physical. This is an unquestionable clairvoyant observation, and it would be far from right to say that it is meant merely as an allegory or symbol. It is a real, clairvoyant, spiritual fact, actually visible on the astral plane to one gifted with clairvoyant sight. Even as the spiritual is drawn down at physical birth, this birth was a sacrifice, a surrender. The possibility was thus given for the Spirit 'that moved upon the face of the waters' at the beginning of our earthly evolution, to unite itself with the threefold bodily sheath of Jesus of Nazareth and to permeate it with fire and strength in the way we have shown.

Now you will understand that at that moment something more was engaged in that event than the small area in which the Baptism by John took place. It would be an instance of human short-sightedness to believe that an occurrence affecting any being is confined to the limits of eyesight. That is the great illusion to which people fall a prey when they trust their physical senses alone. What is the boundary of the human being for the outer organs of sense? Speaking superficially, his skin would be regarded as his boundary, for he comes to an end with his skin on all sides. One might even say: 'If I cut off your nose, which is a part of you, you are no longer a complete human being. By this I recognize that all your members are parts of your being.' This, however, is a very short-sighted observation. If we confine ourselves to what we can see with our eyes, we must hold that nothing belonging to the human being can be found a few inches distant from his skin. But only reflect that, with every breath you draw, you inhale air from the whole atmosphere surrounding you. If your nose is cut off you are no longer a whole human being; but you are just as incomplete if the air you breathe is cut off. It is an arbitrary view, to imagine that a man is bounded by his skin. Man's whole environment belongs to him, even in a physical sense. So that if something happens to someone in a particular place, it is not true that nothing but the spot occupied by the human body is engaged in the occurrence. If you poison the air to a sufficient extent at a distance of a mile from a man and in circumference, so that the vapours extend to him, you would very soon observe that the whole space for a mile round shared in his vital process. The whole earth participates in every life-process. Since this is true of a physical life-process, you will readily understand that, with an event like the Baptism by John, the spiritual world engaged therein in its widest periphery, and that a great, great deal was necessary in order that it should come to pass. If you vitiate the air for a mile in the periphery of a man so that his vital functions are affected, and then cause someone to stand near him, the latter will also suffer from the same effects. Perhaps the effect may vary in proportion to his nearness or remoteness from the vitiated zone. If far removed from it, the effect will be weaker, but some effect will be there none the less. Hence you will not find it strange that the question should be raised, whether there were no other effects in conjunction with the Baptism by John. Here we touch upon another profound mystery to which expression can be given only in words of awe and reverence: for mankind will only by degrees become fitted to understand such things.

The moment when the Spirit of Christ descended into the body of Jesus of Nazareth and the transformation already described took place, an effect was wrought also upon the mother of Jesus of Nazareth. This effect consisted in the circumstance that in the instant of the Baptism by John she regained her state of virginhood: that is to say, her inner organism reverted to the condition of the feminine organism before maidenly puberty. At the birth of Christ the mother of Jesus of Nazareth became Virgin (due to the transformation of her inner organs to the state in which they existed prior to her puberty).

These are the two most momentous facts, the great and awe-inspiring effects indicated to us, though in veiled terms by the writer of the Gospel of St. John. But when we read the Gospel aright we find that it is all there, in a certain sense. In order to recognize this we must revert to some of the points raised yesterday and considered under various aspects.

We said that in ancient times men were under the sway of 'near marriage'. This means that marriage was contracted only within the ties of blood and within the same tribe. It was only in the course of time that marriage outside the tribe and into a different race was introduced. The further we recede into antiquity the more do we find men under the influence of this blood relationship. Through the circumstance that family blood flowed in man's veins, intense magical forces were rendered possible in ancient times. As he looked back along his line of ancestry — a line of exclusive blood relationship — a man had magical forces working in his blood, so that influences could be exerted from soul to soul, in the way described yesterday. Even the simplest people were aware of this in former times. Now it would be entirely wrong to conclude that consanguineous marriage at the present day would produce similar conditions, and that magical forces would appear. There you would fall into the same error as the lily of the valley, if it said: 'I will no longer bloom in May; henceforth I will bloom in October.' It cannot bloom in October because the conditions necessary for the lily of the valley are then absent. It is the same with the magical forces. These cannot unfold at a time when the necessary conditions are no longer present. In our day the magic forces must develop in another way; what has been described holds good only for ancient times. Of course the learned materialist is unable to understand that the laws have changed in the course of evolution; he thinks that what he experiences today must always have happened in that way. But that is nonsense; for physical laws change. People who derive their beliefs from modern natural science would have marveled at the events

which occurred in Palestine as related by the Gospel of St. John, and have considered them something extraordinary. But those who have lived in the times of Christ Jesus were by no means so much astonished, for traditions of earlier times were then still alive — times in which such things were altogether possible. For this reason I mentioned yesterday that the people were not very greatly astonished by the sign performed at the marriage at Cana in Galilee. Why should they have been astonished? Outwardly it was only a repetition of something which they knew to have been observed again and again. Turn to the second Book of Kings, chap. 4, verses 42-44:

‘And there came a man from Baal-Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat.

‘And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat; for thus saith the Lord, They shall eat and shall leave thereof. So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord.’

Here we find related in the Old Testament the feeding of the five thousand in the corresponding situation for older times. Why should the people have marveled at the sign when their own documents bore witness that such a thing did not happen for the first time? It is essential that we should understand this.

Now what took place in one who had partaken of the old initiation? He gained entrance into the spiritual world, his eyes were opened to the spiritually operative forces; that is, he obtained an insight into the connection of the blood with these active spiritual forces. Others had a dim presentiment of these things; but the initiate could look back to his earliest ancestors from whom the blood descended to him. Such an one might reflect: the blood courses down through the generations and the whole Ego of a people finds expression therein, even as the individual Ego expresses itself in the blood of individual man. Such an initiate looked back to the source of the blood-stream which coursed through the generations, and he felt his soul identified with his folk-spirit, whose physiognomy was expressed in the whole folk-blood. One who thus felt himself united with the whole blood of his people had attained a certain grade of initiation, and was, to some extent, master over certain magical forces in the old sense.

Now we must bear something else in mind. The male and female elements cooperate in the propagation of the human race in a way which we may briefly describe as follows:

Were the female element to predominate, the development of human beings would be such that identical characters would continually appear. Children would invariably resemble their parents, grandparents, and so on. All the forces that bring about resemblance are inherent in the female principle. All that alters the resemblance and introduces differences is inherent in the male principle. When we find within a national community a number of faces that resemble one another, we may ascribe this to the female element; but in these faces there are certain differences distinguishing one individual from another; this is the male influence. If the female alone prevailed, it would be impossible to distinguish between one individual and another; on the other hand, if only the male element operated, you would never be able to recognize that a group of people were of the same stock. Thus the male and female elements cooperate to the effect that the male individualizes, specializes, separates, whereas the female generalizes. In which of these forces, then, do we find the element which is common to the whole folk? This element is inherent in the female principle. Or we might say: the forces of the woman bear along, from generation to generation, the element which is otherwise expressed by the blood flowing from generation to generation. If anyone wished to describe more explicitly wherein the magic forces connected with ties of blood actually lie, he would say that they are bound up with the female principle which pervades the whole folk and lives in every member of it. What, therefore, was the essential characteristic of a man who had acquired, through initiation, the power to wield the forces implanted by the female element in the blood flowing through the generations?

In the old initiation there were definite stages in the ascent to spiritual heights. To these stages certain names were attached, one of which — to use the expression peculiar to the Persian initiation — is of particular interest to us. The first degree of the Persian initiation was designated by the term ‘Raven’; the second was called the ‘Occult’, the third ‘Warrior’, the fourth ‘Lion’, the fifth degree was known in every nation by the name of that nation; thus it was said of a Persian who had ascended to the fifth degree of initiation that he was a ‘Persian’.

The initiate first became a ‘Raven’; that is, he observed the outer world and, being the servant of those who were in the spiritual world, he bore tidings to that world from the physical world. Hence the symbol of the raven as the messenger between the physical and the spiritual worlds, from the ravens of Elijah to the ravens of Barbarossa. The initiate of the second degree is fully within the spiritual world. The third degree is yet further advanced; here the initiate is called upon to enter the lists on behalf of the truth of occultism; he becomes a ‘Warrior’; an initiate of the second degree was not allowed to contend on behalf of the truths of the spiritual world. In the fourth degree the initiate becomes firmly established in the truths of the spiritual world. The initiate of the fifth degree was one of those who, as I explained, learnt to control the forces which were transmitted in the female element of reproduction and in the blood of the generations. What name then must have been given to one who had been initiated within the Jewish people? He was called an ‘Israelite’, just as he would have been called a ‘Persian’ in Persia. And now note well what follows.

Among the first to be led to Christ Jesus, in the sense of the Gospel of St. John, was Nathanael. The others who were already disciples of Christ said to him: ‘We have found the Master, He who dwells in Jesus of Nazareth!’ Whereupon

Nathanael answers: 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' But when they bring Nathanael to Christ, Christ says to him: 'Behold, truly an Israelite in whom there is no guile!'

Truly an Israelite in whom the truth dwells! He says this because He knows Nathanael's degree of initiation; and Nathanael recognizes that he is speaking with One who knows more than he and who is above him. And Christ says to him, in order to indicate that He is really alluding to the initiation: 'I saw thee not for the first time when thou camest to me, but before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee!'

The word 'fig-tree' is used here in exactly the same sense as by Buddha. The fig-tree is the Bodhi-tree — the symbol of initiation. Christ says to him: 'I know thee as an initiate of the fifth degree!' From this we see how the writer of the Gospel of St. John indicates that Christ sees through one who has been initiated to the fifth degree. We are led step by step, and are shown that in the body of Jesus of Nazareth One dwells who dominates an initiate of the fifth degree. Furthermore we have just seen that an initiate of the fifth degree can control the occult, magical forces inherent in the blood flowing through the generations. He becomes one with his folk-soul; and we have seen that the folk-soul expresses itself in the forces of the woman. Thus an initiate of the fifth degree has to do with the female forces according to the manner of antiquity. You must picture all this to yourselves in a spiritual way. But Christ deals in a manner entirely new with the female forces. He has to do with her who regained her virgin state at the Baptism by John and has within her again the fresh budding forces of virginity. This was the new element which the writer of the Gospel of St. John wished to indicate, when he said that a certain current of force passed from the son to the mother. It was familiar to all those who possessed occult knowledge at that time, that a son who had been initiated even only to the fifth degree was able to use magically the folk forces which express themselves in the folk-element of his mother. But Christ showed in a spiritually higher manner the forces of the woman who again became virgin.

We thus see what preceded the marriage at Cana in preparation of this event, and we understand that these actions must necessarily have been performed by an initiate who dominated the fifth degree of initiation. We are also shown that this is connected with the folk-element inherent in the female personality. A marvellous preparation precedes what the writer of the Gospel of St. John here shows us. (As I have said, we shall deal later with the conception of the miracles, in another way.) Now you can easily imagine that freshly drawn water is a very different thing from water that has stood for a while; just as a plant freshly plucked is different from one that has been withering three days. Of course a materialistic view of things does not make such distinctions. Water still connected with the forces of the earth is a very different thing from water used at a later moment. Relying upon the forces still inherent in freshly drawn water, an initiate of sufficiently high grade can operate through the forces now bound up with a spiritual relationship such as that of Christ with His mother, who had again become virgin. He carries on the work of the earth. The earth can change water into wine in the vine. Christ, who has approached the earth and has become the spirit of the earth, is Himself that spiritual force which works in the whole body of the earth. As Christ, He must be able to do what the earth does, what the earth does when it changes water into wine.

Thus the first of the signs performed by Christ Jesus, according to the Gospel of St. John, is one which stands in relation to what might have taken place in ancient times at the hands of an initiate who controlled the forces extending through the blood-ties of the generations.

But now the power which Christ develops in the body of Jesus of Nazareth increases apace — not the power which Christ has in Himself! Do not therefore ask: 'Does Christ then need to develop?' Of course not. What needed to be developed was the body of Jesus of Nazareth, however pure and ennobled it already was. Into that body were to be poured the forces which were to come to effect in the immediate future.

The next sign is the healing of the nobleman's son, and this is followed by the healing of the man 38 years in his infirmity at the pool of Bethesda. What increase was shown here in the forces with which Christ worked upon earth? The increase consisted in the fact that Christ could affect not only those who were present in His immediate environment. He had worked in this way among the guests at the marriage at Cana, so that when they drank water, it was wine. Here He had worked upon the etheric bodies of those surrounding Him. By sending forth this force into the etheric bodies of those assembled, the effect in their mouths was such that the water which they drank became wine — that is, the water was tasted as wine. But now the influence was not to affect the body alone, it was to extend to the depths of the soul. For not otherwise could He work upon the nobleman's son, through the agency of the father; and again, send His influence into the sinful soul of the man 38 years in his infirmity. It would not have sufficed had He poured His force merely into the etheric body. It was necessary to work upon the astral body, for it is the astral body which commits sin. By working upon the etheric body, it is possible to turn water into wine; but it is necessary to penetrate deeper in order to exercise a profounder influence upon another personality. For this purpose it was necessary that Christ should work still further upon the threefold sheath of Jesus of Nazareth. Note well: Christ Himself does not become changed by the process; He works upon the threefold sheath of Jesus of Nazareth, with the result that the etheric body becomes more independent of the physical body than it was heretofore. Thus there came a time when, within the threefold bodily sheath of Jesus of Nazareth, the etheric body became freer and more detached from the physical body. A greater mastery over the physical body was thereby possible; Christ could accomplish mightier works in the physical body; that is, He could use powerful forces really within the physical body. The tendency was given at the Baptism by John, and it was now to be developed with special intensity. But all this was now to be directed from the spiritual worlds. The astral body was now to work so mightily within the threefold sheath of Jesus of Nazareth, that the etheric body could obtain this power of the physical. Now by what means can the astral body act so powerfully? By the acquirement of, and devotion to, the right kind of

feelings with regard to everything that happens in our environment; above all, by the cultivation of the right attitude with regard to human egoism. Did Christ accomplish this with the body of Jesus of Nazareth? Did He act in such a way as to find the right relation to every form of egoism in His environment, so that the fundamental instinct of egoism in the soul was made plain to all? Yes, Christ did this. The writer of the Gospel of St. John relates how He comes forward as the purifier of the Temple, at the expense of those who exalt selfishness and who dishonour the Temple by selling all manner of merchandise therein. This enables Him to say that He had now made the astral body so powerful that, if the physical body were destroyed, He could build it up again in three days. This, too, is indicated by the writer of the Gospel of St. John:

'Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

'The Jews therefore said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?

'But He spake of the Temple of His body.'

This indicates that the vehicle which had been offered up to Him had power to govern its physical part and master it completely. Then too this body, which had become so free, could move about everywhere, independently of physical laws; regardless of the laws of the world of space, it could bring about and govern events in the spiritual world. This is indicated to us in the chapter following the account of the Purification of the Temple.

'There was a man of the Pharisees names Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; the same came to Jesus by night and said to Him. ...'

Why do we find the words 'by night'? It is of course the most trivial explanation imaginable to say that the Jew, being afraid to come to Jesus in the light of day, crept through the window at night. Anyone can give an explanation of that kind. 'By night' means here nothing less than that this meeting between Christ and Nicodemus took place in the astral world, in the spiritual world, and not in the world of ordinary day consciousness. That is to say, Christ could communicate with Nicodemus outside the physical body — 'by night' when the physical body is not there and the astral body is outside the physical and etheric bodies.

Thus the threefold sheath of Jesus of Nazareth was prepared by Christ for the deeds that were to come and for the work that was to be carried into the souls of men. To this end the soul in the threefold sheath of Jesus of Nazareth must be so free that its influence can be transmitted into other bodies. To direct an influence into another soul is, however, a totally different thing from the working of the signs which we considered yesterday. The next increase of power is shown in the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on the water. Something more was needed in order that Christ should be visible in the body, without being physically present, and indeed visible not only to his disciples; so mighty had the power in the body of Jesus of Nazareth become that Christ was also visible to those who were not His disciples. Only here again we must read the Gospels correctly, for it might be objected that one can believe this of the disciples but not of others.

'On the morrow the multitude which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there save one, and that Jesus entered not with His disciples into the boat, but that the disciples went away alone.

'Howbeit there came boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they ate the bread through the Lord's uplifting His thoughts to God.

'When the multitude therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither His disciples, they themselves got into the boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

I beg you expressly to note that it was the people who sought Jesus and that is then said:

'And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him, Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?'

This means exactly the same as in the case of the disciples. It does not say that every ordinary eye saw Him, but that they saw Him who sought and found Him through the heightening of their soul forces. When it is said that 'someone saw someone else', this is not the same as saying that the latter 'stood there as a fleshly form in space, visible to physical eyes.' What is usually called taking the Gospels literally is in reality anything but a 'literal' reading of the Gospels. And if you bear in mind that a climax is in every instance observable, you will understand that something else must have preceded this sign. Once more, something must have taken place showing us how Christ had worked in the threefold sheath of Jesus of Nazareth to the end that its forces should grow mightier and mightier. As a Healer did He work, pouring His forces into the souls of others! And He Himself now describes the manner of His work in the words spoken to the woman of Samaria at the well: 'I am the living water!' At the marriage at Cana He showed Himself to be one with the forces which are at work in the entire world. We find this in the chapter 'Jesus has power over life and death'; over life and death because He is master of the forces which are at work in the physical body. This chapter therefore precedes the sign in which His power must appear in heightened form.

Then we see how the power gains in strength. We pointed out yesterday how, in the sign known as the healing of the man born blind, Christ touches not only upon the part of the human being which is subject to birth and death, but upon the individuality of the human soul which passes from life to life. The man was born blind because the divine individuality in him manifested itself in its works; he was to recover his sight by the power poured into him by Christ — a power so great that it caused that to be effaced which was due, not to his personality between birth and death, nor to inheritance, but to the deed of his own individuality.

I have often explained that Goethe's beautiful words, which spring from a deep knowledge of Rosicrucian initiation, are based upon profound occult truth: 'The eye is formed by the light for the light.' I have pointed out that Schopenhauer is right when he says: 'Without the eye there is no light.' Yes, but where does the eye come from? Goethe quite rightly says: 'Without light there would never have been an organ sensitive to light — an eye.' The eye is created by the light. A single instance will demonstrate this. When animals possessing eyes migrate into dark caves, they soon lose the power to see, through lack of light. The eye was formed by light. If Christ is to pour into the man's individuality a power enabling him to render his eye sensitive to light, then Christ must have in Him the spiritual force which is in the light. This must be indicated in the Gospel of St. John. The healing of the man born blind is preceded by the chapter in which we read:

'Then Jesus spake again unto them saying: I am the light of the world.'

The healing of the man born blind is not mentioned until after the words 'I am the light of the world' have been spoken. Now turn to the chapter before the raising of Lazarus and consider the passage:

'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down myself. I have power to lay it down. ... If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. ...'

All that is said here concerning the 'good shepherd' is intended to show that Christ feels that He and the Father are One and that He will no longer speak of Himself as 'I' except in the sense of His union with the Father-forces. Having said previously 'I am the light of the world', He now says: 'I lay down my Ego-power and receive the Father into myself, that the Father may work in me, that the primal principle may flow into me and through me into others. I lay down my life that I may take it again.' This precedes the raising of Lazarus.

And now having concluded these reflections, let us try to grasp the Gospel of St. John with regard to its composition. Observe that up to the raising of Lazarus there is not only a wonderful climax of power shown in the body of Jesus of Nazareth, but we are also expressly told, before each increase of power, what is at work with regard to the body of Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed, everything in the Gospel of St. John is so firmly welded together that, when rightly understood, not a single sentence can be omitted. And it is thus wonderfully composed for the reason that it was written by one who, as we have seen, was initiated by Christ Jesus Himself.

We set out today from the question: 'What took place at the Baptism by John? And we saw how the conquest of death was first implanted in the world with the descent of Christ into the threefold sheath of Jesus of Nazareth. We have seen how the mother of Jesus of Nazareth was changed when Christ descended, and how the effect wrought upon her by the Baptism by John was such that she became again virgin. It is therefore a true belief, founded upon the Gospel of St. John: When Christ was born into the body of Jesus of Nazareth at the Baptism by John, the mother of Jesus of Nazareth became virgin.

Here we have the starting point of the Gospel of St. John. And if you understand it in the sense of the mighty cosmic event which was then enacted at the river Jordan, you will realize that the first description of such an event, in accordance with the true facts, could only be at the hands of one who had been initiated by Christ Jesus Himself — the risen Lazarus, 'whom the Lord loved', of whom it is henceforth always said that he was 'the disciple whom the Lord loved'. The risen Lazarus has transmitted the Gospel to us, and he alone was able to weld together all the passages in the Gospel because he had received the greatest impulse from the greatest initiator, from the Christ. He alone could show us the truth which Paul grasped in a certain way through his own initiation: that at that time the germ which was to grow into the conquest of death, was implanted in the evolution of the earth. Hence the significant words spoken of Him who hung upon the Cross: 'Not a bone of Him shall be broken.' Why not? Because they were not to touch the form over which Christ must retain His power. Had they broken a bone of Him, an inferior human force would have interfered with the power which Christ was to exercise over the very bones of Jesus of Nazareth. None must lay hands on that form! For it was to be altogether subject to the dominion of Christ.

Starting from this point, we can proceed tomorrow to the consideration of the death of Christ.

## LECTURE XI

The foregoing lectures of this course will have made it sufficiently clear to you that, in accordance with spiritual scientific research, the Christ-event must be regarded as the most momentous of all events in the whole evolution of mankind, an

event which provided an entirely new departure to the whole evolution of our earth. We found that, through the Mystery of Golgotha, through the events enacted in Palestine and everything connected therewith, before and afterwards, an entirely new element entered into human evolution; indeed, this evolution would have been essentially different had the Christ-event not taken place. To understand the Mystery of Golgotha, we must now pay some attention to the more intimate details of Christian evolution itself. Of course it is impossible, even in fourteen lectures, to exhaust a subject that embraces a whole world: we find this indicated by the writer of the Gospel of St. John himself. He says that much more might be written, but the world could not produce books enough to contain all that might be said. You will therefore not expect that everything connected with the Christ-event and its narration, both in the Gospel of St. John and in the other Gospels akin to it, can be stated in fourteen lectures.

Yesterday and the day before we saw how, through the entry of the Christ-Spirit, the Christ-Individuality, into the threefold sheath of Jesus of Nazareth and His sojourn therein, it was possible gradually to effect what is described to us in the Gospel of St. John, up to and including the chapter on the raising of Lazarus. We saw how it was necessary for Christ to develop, little by little, the physical, etheric, and astral bodies which had been offered up to Him by the great initiate Jesus of Nazareth. But to understand what was actually wrought by Christ in the threefold sheath of Jesus of Nazareth we must first call up before us the nature of the connection between the different principles of man's being. So far we have only roughly indicated that in waking condition man appears to clairvoyant consciousness as a being composed of physical body, etheric or life body, astral body, and Ego; all these principles interpenetrating and forming one whole. We have also seen that at night the physical and etheric bodies remain in bed while the astral body and the Ego are raised out of them. Now in order to arrive at a more detailed description of the Mystery of Golgotha, the question must today be asked: What exactly is the manner of this interpenetration of the four members of man's being in waking consciousness? In other words, in what manner do the Ego and the astral body actually enter the etheric and physical bodies when man awakes in the morning?

In the morning, when the astral body and the Ego descend from the spiritual world into the physical and etheric bodies, the process is such that, in all essentials (please note the word), the astral body penetrates the etheric, and the Ego penetrates the physical body. I said 'in all essentials' because of course all the principles interpenetrate in the human being; so that we can also say that the Ego is in the etheric body and so on. But an indirect interpenetration is now meant, one in all essentials.

We may now ask: What really happened at the Baptism by John? We said that at the Baptism by John, the Ego of Jesus of Nazareth issued from his physical, etheric, and astral bodies, leaving behind the threefold vehicle for the Christ. Jesus of Nazareth's Ego had left his physical body; in its stead Christ entered and took up His abode in the threefold sheath (again in all essentials) and principally in the physical body. It is true that we are now on the verge of a profound mystery. When we come to consider what actually took place at the Baptism by John, we must admit that it touches upon all the great circumstances of human life of which we have spoken in the last days. I have told you that everything of a general nature in man, all that produces similarity within a certain group, is found in the female element of heredity. The principle which (externally considered) tends to make one face resemble another within a group, is handed down by woman from generation to generation. On the other hand the male element, acting from generation to generation, is responsible for everything which distinguishes one man from another, for all that makes him an individual being here upon Earth and establishes his Ego upon a personal footing. Great thinkers who are in touch with the spiritual world have always had a true feeling for this; but the pronouncements of great men who stood in relation to the spiritual world cannot be known and valued aright unless we penetrate to the depths of these cosmic truths.

Man says to himself: Within me there lives an etheric body and in this etheric body an astral body. The astral body is the bearer of ideas, thoughts, sensations, and feelings; it lives in the etheric body. Now we have seen that the etheric body is the principle which acts immediately and in the fullest measure upon the physical body; it contains the forces which lend form to the physical body. We see therefore that the etheric body, being permeated by the astral body, contains everything that fashions man to be 'man', imprinting upon him a definite form from within, that is, from his spiritual parts. The element which produces resemblance among men comes from the forces at work within man; it is not merely external and therefore does not depend on the physical but on the etheric and astral bodies. For these are the inner principles. A man gifted with insight into such matters will therefore feel that the force permeating his etheric and astral bodies comes to him from the maternal element; while the force which gives his physical body the definite form imprinted upon it by the Ego (by the Ego in the physical body) must be regarded as a paternal inheritance.

'From my father I have my stature and life's most earnest conduct;  
From my mother a happy nature and delight in telling fables,'

says Goethe. You see, this is an interpretation of what I have said. 'From my father I have stature', that is, what is worked out by the Ego; from the mother, ideas and the gift of telling fables; these are inherent in the etheric and astral bodies. The utterances of great minds are far from being understood when people imagine they have done so with the help of trivial human conceptions. But we must now apply the truths which we have thus illustrated to the events connected with Christ. From this standpoint, the question must now be raised: What would have become of the human race had Christ not appeared upon the Earth?

Had the Christ-event not taken place, the course of human evolution would have continued as it began with the post-Atlantean period. We have seen that in remote antiquity human civilization was grounded upon that love which was

inseparable from the ties of ancestry and blood relationship. All who were related by blood loved each other accordingly. And we saw how in the course of human progress this bond of blood became sundered to an ever-increasing extent. Now proceed from those remote times of human evolution to the period in which Christ appeared.

Whereas in most ancient times marriage was always contracted within the tribe, we find consanguineous marriage becoming increasingly rare in the days of Roman supremacy — the days in which the Christ-event took place. The intermingling of the most diverse peoples, caused by the military expeditions of the Romans, led to the extensive substitution of marriage between strangers for the consanguineous tie. The ties of blood were necessarily sundered to an increasing extent in the course of human evolution, because man was destined to establish himself upon his own Ego.

Let us assume that Christ had not come to pour fresh power into men and to replace the old ties of blood by a new, spiritual love. What would have happened then? Love, the power which draws human beings together, would have gradually disappeared from the earth; the principle which unites men in love would have perished. Without Christ the human race would have reached the pass of seeing love die out among men, and men would have been driven into and isolated in their own individuality. That deep truths underlie this statement is of course not apparent when things are considered only in the light of external science. If the blood of human beings of the present day and of some millennia before the appearance of Christ were to be compared (not by chemical methods but by the means available to spiritual investigation), it would be found that the blood had changed and had assumed a character rendering it less and less fit to be the vehicle of love. In what light therefore must the future have appeared to an initiate of ancient times, who could see deep down into the process of human evolution and could foretell what would come to pass if evolution continued unchanged in the same direction as of old, without the intervention of the Christ-event? What images must be have used to bring home to the people what would come to pass in the future unless psychic love, Christ-love, replaced in equal measure the love conditioned by blood relationship? He would have said: 'If men become increasingly isolated from one another, each becoming hardened within his own Ego; if the dividing line separating soul from soul becomes increasingly sharp, so that souls become less and less able to understand each other; then mankind will to an increasing extent fall a prey to discord and dissension, and the strife of all against all upon the earth will usurp the place of love.' And this would indeed have ensued had the evolution of human blood pursued its course without the coming of Christ. All men would irretrievably become victims of the strife of all against all, the strife which indeed will come, but only for those who have not become penetrated by the Christ-principle in the right way. Such was the end threatening earthly evolution in the vision of a prophetic seer; a vision which filled his soul with dread, for he saw that when one soul no longer understands its fellows, then soul will rage against soul.

I have told you in the course of these lectures that human beings cannot be drawn together by the Christ-principle but by degrees, and I gave you an example showing how the opinions of two noble thinkers are so mutually opposed that while each of them, Tolstoi and Solovioff, believes he is proclaiming the true Christ, the one regards the other as Antichrist; for in fact Solovioff looks upon Tolstoi as Antichrist. The strife of opinions between soul and soul would by degrees come to expression in the external world — that is, man would rise up against his fellowman. This is inseparable from the evolution of blood. Do not raise the objection here that, in spite of the Christ-event, we still see discord and strife, and that we are far removed from any realization of Christian love. As I have already said, we are only at the beginning of Christian evolution. The great impulse was given for Christ to come and live in the souls of men and unite them spiritually, as earthly evolution proceeds. All the strife and discord which we still see, and which will lead to still greater excesses, is there because humanity has only to the very smallest extent become penetrated by the true Christ-principle. The condition handed down from former ages still holds sway in the human race. This can be overcome only slowly and by degrees, inasmuch as we see the Christ-principle flowing slowly and by degrees into mankind.

Such would have been the prophetic vision of one who, in pre-Christian times, could behold clairvoyantly the course of human evolution. He might have said: 'Last remnants of the old seership have descended upon man. In bygone days men could behold the spiritual world in dim, shadowy clairvoyance. This faculty disappeared little by little. But the possibility still exists, like a heritage of those olden times, to behold that world of spirit in abnormal, dreamy states of consciousness. There it is still possible to see something of what underlies the outer surface of things.' All old legends, fables, and myths (which truly contain deeper wisdom than modern science) tell us in what large measure the faculty of experiencing exceptional conditions once prevailed. It may be called a dream; but it was a dream in which future events announced themselves, though not to the extent of enabling man, by this wisdom, to guard against the strife of all against all. The old seer emphasized it in the sharpest conceivable way. He said: 'We have inherited the ancient wisdom, beheld in Atlantean times in abnormal conditions; even now individual men can behold it when they experience abnormal states of consciousness. This wisdom announces what will come to pass in the immediate future.' But men could derive no security from their experience in dreams; it was deceptive and will become more and more deceptive. Thus taught the teacher of pre-Christian times and instructed the people.

Having therefore realized the intensity and power of the Christ-impulse, we must now not fail to recognize a great truth. Without the Christ-impulse, and through the isolation, separation, and mutual antagonism prevailing among men, something resembling a struggle for existence would ensue, such as is falsely applied to the human race by those who forcibly propagate materialistic Darwinian theories — a struggle for existence which, however much it may prevail in the animal world, should nowise do so in the human world. Putting it grotesquely, we might say: 'At the end of the world, humanity on earth will present the spectacle depicted by certain Darwinian materialists inasmuch as they borrow their facts from the world of the animals!' But this Darwinian theory is false today, when applied to the human race. Applied to the animal kingdom it is right, because in that kingdom there is no impulse able to turn strife into love. Christ as a

spiritual power in humanity will refute all Darwinism by His Deed. Nevertheless we must first realize that human beings cannot avert from themselves the war of opinions, feelings, and actions in the outer world of sense, unless they combat in themselves and settle inwardly the antagonism which would otherwise flow into the outer world. Whoever first combats what is to be combated in himself, and establishes harmony between the different principles of his nature, will not combat another's opinion in another's soul. He will confront the outer world, not in a polemical spirit but in a spirit of love. The point is that the combat is diverted from the outside world to man's inner being. The forces governing human nature must combat each other inwardly. Of two antagonistic opinions we must say: This is the one opinion, it is possible to hold it; this is the other opinion, it is also possible to hold it. But if I hold only the one opinion to be justifiable and admit only what corresponds with my own wishes, while combating the other opinion, I become involved in strife on the physical plane. To insist upon one's own opinions exclusively, to hold one's own action to be alone justifiable, means being an egoist. Suppose I am willing to entertain another's opinion and endeavour to establish harmony within myself; my attitude towards my fellow-man would be quite different, for I would then begin to understand him. We might even describe the progress of human evolution as the diversion of the strife in the outside world to the work of harmonizing the inner forces of man. Through Christ man was to find the possibility of establishing harmony within himself, of harmonizing the antagonistic forces in his own inner being. Christ gives man the power first to conclude the strife in his own inner being. Without Christ this could never be done. In pre-Christian times one form of outer strife was rightly considered to be the most terrible — namely, the strife of a child against his father and mother. It was known in those days what course things would take without the Christ-impulse, and parricide was looked upon as the most terrible and abhorrent of crimes. The wise men of old, who foresaw that Christ would come, clearly showed this to be true. They also knew the fate in store for the world unless the struggle were first fought out in the inner being of man.

Let us look into our own inner selves. We have seen that the maternal element dominates where the etheric and astral bodies interpenetrate, while the paternal element comes to expression where the Ego is present in the physical body. That is to say: the mother, the female element, reigns in all that we have in common with our species, in everything which pertains to our life of thought and knowledge; while the father, the male element, predominates in all that arises from the union of the Ego with the physical body, in the inwardly differentiated form, in that which makes man an Ego. What then must the ancient sages, who viewed life in this way, have expected above all things of human beings? They required that man should come to a clear understanding of the relation of the physical body and Ego to the etheric and astral bodies — of the paternal to the maternal element. Inasmuch as man has an etheric and an astral body, the maternal element is in him; beside the external mother, so to speak, on the physical plane, he bears within him the maternal element, the mother; and beside the father on the physical plane, he has within him the paternal element, the father. To bring into harmonious relationship the father and mother in him was a great ideal. If this were not achieved, the disharmony between the paternal and maternal elements would be reproduced outside, on the physical plane, with disastrous results. The old sage therefore taught: 'It is the duty of man to establish harmony within himself between the paternal and maternal elements. The failure to do so cannot but show itself in the outer world as the most appalling crimes.'

How did the old sages present to humanity the truth which we have just expressed in anthroposophical language? They said: 'From bygone ages we have inherited an ancient wisdom; in abnormal conditions this wisdom is still accessible to man; but the possibility of attaining this condition grows ever fainter; and even the old initiation cannot carry humanity beyond a certain point in its evolution.' Let us once more consider what took place at an old initiation as described in the last few days.

In an initiation of this nature the etheric and astral bodies were withdrawn from the complex of physical, etheric, astral bodies and Ego. The Ego remained behind. It was for this reason that the candidate was without self-consciousness during the three and a half days of the initiation. His self-consciousness was extinguished, and another consciousness was infused into him from the higher spiritual worlds by the Priest-initiator, who placed his own Ego at the disposal of the candidate and acted as his guide in every sense. What actually happened then was expressed in a formula which will sound strange to you. They said: When a candidate was initiated in the old way, the maternal element went forth and the paternal element remained behind; that is to say, he killed the paternal element in him and united himself with the maternal element; in other words, he killed his father and wedded his mother. When therefore the initiate of old lay in the lethargic condition for three and a half days, he had 'united himself with his mother and killed his father.' He became fatherless. This was necessary, for he had to renounce his individuality and live in a higher spiritual world. He became one with his folk. In the folk-element was precisely the maternal element. He was one with the whole organism of his people; he became as Nathanael, and we have seen that this grade was always called by the name of the people in question — among the Jews an 'Israelite', among the Persians a 'Persian'. There can be no other wisdom in the world save that which flows into it from the Mysteries. In accordance with the old wisdom people were taught what they could attain by uniting themselves with the mother and killing the father in them. But this inherited wisdom could not bring man beyond a certain point in evolution. Something different and entirely new was needed to take its place. If no other wisdom were ever accessible to humanity save this ancient wisdom attained in the way described, then, as we have already said, the human race would be driven into the strife of all against all. Opinion would rise up against opinion, feeling against feeling, will against will, and the terrible picture of the future would be realized in all its horror, when man unites himself with his mother and kills his father. The old initiates who, though possessing initiation, nevertheless looked for the coming of Christ, depicted this future state in mighty images, the traces of which you will find preserved in the myths and legends. We need but recall the name of Oedipus and we are in touch with a myth in which the sages of old gave expression to what they had to say on the subject. That old myth, represented so powerfully by the Greek tragedians, runs as follows:

There was once a king of Thebes, Laios by name. Jocasta was his wife. For a long time they were childless. At last Laios asked the oracle at Delphi if he could not have a son. The oracle answered: If thou wouldst have a son, he will be one who

will put thee to death. And in a state of intoxication, that is, in a state of diminished consciousness, Laios begot a son. Oedipus was born. Laios, knowing that this was the son who should put him to death, resolved to expose him, and in order to ensure his perishing, caused his feet to be pierced; he was then left to die by exposure. A shepherd found the child and had compassion on it; he brought it to Corinth and there Oedipus was brought up in the royal palace. When he was grown older he heard of the oracle foretelling that he should kill his father and wed his mother. Its fulfilment could not be averted. He was compelled to leave the palace because he was considered to be the king's son. On his way he chanced to meet his real father and slew him unbeknown. He came to Thebes and here solved the riddle put by the Sphinx, so that this terrible monster, which had brought death to so many, was forced to kill itself. Thus he was at first a benefactor to his country. He was raised to the dignity of king and the hand of the queen was bestowed upon him — the hand of his mother! Without knowing it he had slain his father and wedded his mother. He now reigned as king. But because he had attained his power in such a way, and because this terrible fate clung to him, he brought unspeakable misery upon his country, so that he is presented to us in Sophocles' drama as blinded, as one who had himself destroyed his eyesight!

This is a story the imagery of which went forth from the ancient sanctuaries of wisdom. Its meaning is that Oedipus was still, to a certain extent, in touch with the spiritual world in the old way. His father had enquired of the oracle. These oracles were the last heritage of ancient seership. But the inherited remnants were inadequate to establish peace in the outer world. They could not give humanity the desired harmony between the maternal and paternal elements. The circumstance that Oedipus solved the riddle of the Sphinx clearly indicates that he is intended to represent one who has inherited a certain seership in the old style, and who possessed a knowledge of human nature in keeping with the remnants of ancient wisdom. This was powerless to avert that war of human passions typified by the parricide and the union with the mother. In spite of his connection with the ancient wisdom, he is unable to see through the complex of circumstances. The old wisdom no longer confers seership. Had it sufficed to open the eyes, as formerly, through the blood tie, the blood would have spoken when Oedipus met his father and again when he met his mother. The blood was silent! This represents to us in graphic manner the decay of ancient wisdom.

What then was necessary to come, to enable man finally to establish harmony and concord between the maternal and paternal elements in himself — between his own Ego (which contains the paternal principle) and the maternal principle? The Christ-impulse was to come! And now let us consider from yet another point of view certain deeper aspects of the marriage at Cana.

We read: 'The mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus was called and His disciples to the wedding.' Jesus, or rather Christ, was to represent to humanity the great Pattern of a being who has established within himself harmony and concord between his Ego and the maternal principle. At the marriage at Cana in Galilee he indicated the fact that 'something passeth from me to thee'. That was a new 'passing from me to thee'. It was no longer the old process but signified a renewal of the whole relationship. Here was once for all the great ideal of the inner balance and adjustment, without the slaying of the father, without quitting the physical body, that is to say, the harmony with the maternal principle was established within the Ego itself. The time had not come for man to learn to combat the excessive force of egoism (the Ego-principle) within himself and to bring it into true relationship with the maternal principle in his etheric and astral bodies. Thus the marriage at Cana was to represent to us in a beautiful image the relation of the individual Ego (the paternal principle) to the maternal principle, in the sense of the inner harmony and love which obtained in the outer world between Jesus of Nazareth and His mother. This was to be an image of the inner harmony established between the Ego and the maternal element within oneself. This did not exist formerly; the Deed of Christ Jesus first made it possible. But since it came into the world through that Deed, it provided the only practical means of repelling all that must have ensured under the influence of the ancient inherited wisdom — the slaying of the father and the union with the mother. What does the Christ-principle combat?

When the ancient sage, contemplating the Christ-Being, compared the old with the new initiation, he could say: 'If the union with the mother in the old style is persevered with, no good can accrue from it to mankind. But if the union is achieved in the new way as shown in the marriage at Cana, and the human being unites himself in this way with his own astral and etheric bodies, blessing and peace and brotherliness will appear to an ever-increasing extent among men, and the old principle of killing the father and wedding the mother will be repelled.' What then was the hostile element which Christ was to eliminate? It was not the ancient wisdom; it was unnecessary to combat this, for it had lost its power and was passing away of itself; indeed, we see how those who still placed their trust in it, like Oedipus, were led into disharmony precisely on its account. But the evil would not cease of itself, if men held aloof from the new wisdom — that is, from the way in which the Christ-impulse is given, and obstinately clung to the old principle. The greatest progress was seen in the fact that the old principle was abandoned and that men recognized what had come into the world through Christ. Is this, too, indicated to us? Yes, legends and myths contain the profoundest wisdom. There is a legend which, though not in the Gospels, is none the less a Christian legend and a Christian truth. It runs as follows:

There was once a couple who for a long time had no son. It was revealed to the mother in a dream (note this well) that she would have a son, that this son would kill his father and wed his mother, and bring terrible misfortune upon his whole tribe.

In this legend we have a dream, as with Oedipus there is an oracle — that is, a remnant of the old inherited clairvoyance. The events to come were revealed to the mother in the old way. Does this suffice to give her an insight into the affairs of the world, so as to prevent the evil which had been foretold? Let us consult the legend, it tells us further:

Under the influence of this wisdom coming to her through her dream, the mother brought the child, to which she had given birth, to the island of Kariot and deserted it there. It was found, however, by the queen of that country who adopted it and brought it up herself, she and her husband being childless. After a time a child was born to this couple. The foundling son felt himself displaced and, being of passionate temperament, slew the son of the royal couple. Thereupon, being unable to remain, he fled and reached the court of the Governor Pilate in whose household he soon rose to the rank of overseer. Here he became involved in dispute with his neighbour and, not knowing that his neighbour was his own father, slew him. Thereupon he wedded his neighbour's wife — his mother. This foundling was Judas of Kariot. Then, having become aware of his terrible situation, he fled once more and found compassion in Him alone who had compassion on all who approached Him; who not only sat at table with publicans and sinners but who, in spite of His universal insight, received this great sinner also into His company; for it was His mission to work, not alone for the good, but for all men, and to lead them away from sin to salvation. Thus Judas of Kariot came into the environment of Christ Jesus. And now he brought the curse which had been foretold and which now necessarily came into effect in the circle round Christ Jesus; as Schiller says: 'Therein lies the curse of the evil deed, that, continuing to generate, it must ever bring forth evil.' He betrayed Christ Jesus. Fundamentally the fate which was to be fulfilled in him had already been fulfilled in the murder of his father and the union with his mother. But he remained as an instrument, we may say, the evil instrument which was to be the cause of good, in order, so to speak, that he should accomplish yet another deed beyond the fulfilment.

The Oedipus legend presents us one who, having become aware of the evil he has wrought, immediately loses the sight of his eyes. But the other, who has the same fate through his connection with the old inherited wisdom, does not lose his sight; in fulfilment of fate he is destined to accomplish the deed which leads to the Mystery of Golgotha and causes the physical death of Him who is the Light of the World, and who brings about the light of the world in the healing of the man born blind. But He dies through one who, like Oedipus, was to exemplify the gradual extinction of the ancient wisdom in mankind and its inadequacy henceforth to bring peace, blessing, and love to men. That these might come, the impulse of Christ and His death on Golgotha were necessary. That, also, was first to be enacted which appears to us at the marriage at Cana as the external image of the relation of Christ Jesus to his mother. And something else was yet necessary which the writer of the Gospel of St. John describes as follows:

At the foot of the Cross stood the mother; there too stood the disciple 'whom the Lord loved', Lazarus-John, whom He had Himself initiated and through whom the wisdom of Christianity was to descend to posterity, through whom the human astral body was to be influenced in such a way that the Christ-principle could dwell in man. There, within the astral body of man, the Christ-principle was to live, and John was to direct its flow into that body. To this end it was necessary that the Christ-principle should first be united, from the Cross, with the etheric, maternal principle. Therefore Christ spoke these words from the Cross: 'From this hour, behold thy mother, and behold thy son!' That is to say, He binds together His wisdom with the maternal principle.

Thus we see how profound the Gospels are, indeed, how profound all the circumstances are, which are related to the practice of the Mysteries. For the old legends bear the same relation to the annunciations and Gospels of later times, as prophecy to fulfilment. One thing is most clearly shown us in the Oedipus and Judas legends: There was once a divine ancient wisdom. But it came to an end. And a new wisdom is needed. And this new wisdom will lead mankind whither the ancient wisdom would never have brought it. The Oedipus legend tells us what must have come to pass without the Christ-impulse. The Judas legend teaches us what was the antagonism against Christ — the stubborn clinging to the ancient wisdom. But the wisdom of which the old legends and myths had said that it was inadequate, is proclaimed to us in a new light in the 'new annunciation' in the Gospel. The Gospel gives the answer to the wise imagery of the old legends. These had declared that the future needs of mankind could never be satisfied by the ancient wisdom. But the Gospel brings us the new wisdom, for it says: I proclaim to you that which mankind needs, and which could never have come without the influence of the Christ-principle, without the Event of Golgotha!

## LECTURE XII

We have now reached an important point, the climax, we might even say, of our considerations. It goes without saying that we should have to surmount all manner of difficulties in the course of our study and explanation of the Gospels. Therefore, before continuing today, it might be well for me to give a brief review of what was said yesterday with regard to fundamental principles.

As we know, the development of mankind in ancient times was essentially different in form from that of the present day; we also know that the characteristics presented by man become increasingly different the further we revert to ancient conditions. We have already noticed that we can trace evolution backwards from our time (which we may call the central European civilization) to the Graeco-Latin period; thence to the Egypto-Chaldean period, and thence again to that age in which the ancient Persian people were led by Zarathustra. We then arrive at that remotely ancient Indian civilization, so very different from our own — a civilization which followed in point of time upon a great cataclysm. This cataclysm, which ran its course in storms and upheavals of the elements of air and water, led to the disappearance of that continent inhabited by the human race before the Indian civilization — ancient Atlantis, situated between Europe, Africa, and

America. It also led to the migration of peoples westwards and eastwards — westwards to settle in America and eastwards in the various countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa which had gradually assumed their present form. The Atlantic period, especially in its earlier portion, produced a humanity which, as regards the soul, was totally different from that of the present day. But precisely the conditions of soul are of greatest interest to us in the evolution of mankind. Now of what nature was the life of the soul in the old Atlantean period?

We know that man's consciousness at that time was totally different from what it was later; he possessed a certain ancient gift of clairvoyance, but not as yet the faculty of clear, distinct self- or Ego-consciousness. For Ego-consciousness is only acquired when man learns to distinguish himself from outer objects. Let us picture to ourselves what would happen in our time if a man were not able, under present conditions, to distinguish between himself and his environment. In answer to the question: 'What is the boundary of my being?' man is, from his present standpoint, to a certain extent justified in saying: 'My limit, as a human being, is where my skin separates me from the world outside.' Man believes that nothing belongs to him save what is bounded by his skin; beyond this are external objects which he sees before him and distinguishes from himself. He knows that he no longer is and can be a whole human being, if a part of that which is contained within his skin is removed. Now to say that a man is no longer whole if a piece of his flesh is cut off, is, from one point of view, correct. But at the same time we know that man inhales air at every breath, and that this air is all around us in our immediate environment; this is the very air which in the next moment will be within us. Cut off the supply of this air and you can no longer exist. You are less whole than you would be if the hand within your skin were cut off. Strictly speaking, therefore, we must admit that it is not true that we are bounded by our skin. The air surrounding us is part of us, we breathe it in and out continually and we have no right to make an arbitrary boundary of our skin. If people would acquire some understanding of this truth (it would have to be theoretical at first, not being provided by external perception), they would be obliged to reflect upon things that are not borne in upon them by the outer world itself. If it were possible for a man to watch the current of air flowing into him, expanding in him, being transformed in him and then leaving him, if he could see it at every moment, he would never dream of saying that it was any less a part of him than his own hand. He could reckon the air as belonging to himself and would regard it as an hallucination to claim that he was an independent being able to dispense with his environment. The Atlantean was safeguarded against this illusion, for his observation clearly showed him something different. He saw the objects of his environment not in firm outlines but surrounded by a great coloured aura, as we see the street lamps on a misty autumn evening. This was because there is spirit between and among all things in the outer world; spiritual beings whom the Atlantean could still perceive with the dull clairvoyant faculty of those times. As the fog fills the interval between the lamps, so too there are spiritual beings everywhere in space. The Atlantean saw the spiritual beings as you see the fog; and they formed themselves for him into something like a misty aura enveloping external objects. The objects themselves were indistinct; but since he saw the spirit, everything of a spiritual nature that passed in and out of him was also perceptible to him. He therefore also perceived himself to be a part of the entire world around him. He saw on all sides currents which you cannot see today entering his body. Air is but the densest of these; currents of a far subtler nature flow into the human being. Man has lost the ability to behold the spiritual because he no longer possesses the old gift of dim clairvoyance. The man of Atlantis saw the spiritual currents streaming in and out, as your finger, were it conscious, would see the blood streaming in and out of it, and could know that it must perish if it were cut off. Just as your finger would feel, so too the Atlantean felt himself to be the member of an organism. He felt currents flowing into him through eyes, ears, and so on, and he knew that if he were to force himself out of their reach, he would cease to be a human being. He felt as if he were poured out into the whole outer world. He saw the spiritual world but could not distinguish himself as a being apart from it, for he was without a strong Ego- or self-consciousness in the present sense of the word. This consciousness was developed when everything which revealed to him in a spiritual way his dependence on the surrounding world receded from his observation. Inasmuch as the spiritual became invisible to him, he found it possible to develop self-consciousness or egoity, and this was precisely the task allotted to post-Atlantean humanity. After the great Atlantean cataclysm, the spiritual world receded from the consciousness of man, as he was then constituted, and the physical world of sense became visible to him with increasing clearness. But things do not come all at once in the development of the world; they evolve slowly and by degrees. In the earliest post-Atlantean times clairvoyance was an ordinary human accomplishment; and whatever men beheld in the spiritual world was continually perfected, amplified, and kept alive by the initiates who, as we have seen, were led into the spiritual world by special methods already described, and thus became the messengers of that which had formerly been seen by all men more or less. Legends and myths, especially those related to the oracle-sanctuaries, preserve for us the truths of ancient times far better than any external historical research. In these places certain persons were thrown into abnormal states of consciousness — a dream or mediumistic condition we might now call it — a condition which was below the level of ordinary waking consciousness, and during which they indeed remained within the objects of the outer world but did not see these. This was not the original old clairvoyance but an intermediate state, half dreamlike, half clairvoyant. When people wished to know something concerning particular circumstances in the world; if they wished to know how to act upon some occasion or other, they consulted the oracle, where conditions of shadowy clairvoyance still existed as an heritage of the old faculty.

Thus wisdom was bestowed upon man at the beginning of his evolution; wisdom flowed into him. But the stream dried up by degrees; even the initiates, in the abnormal state to which they were subjected (for their etheric body was withdrawn when they were led into the spiritual world), even they by degrees could only attain uncertain results in their observation of the spiritual world. They, however, who had not only partaken of the old initiation but had advanced with their age, and were at the same time prophets of the future, recognized that a new impulse was needed in humanity. An ancient wisdom had been bestowed upon mankind when it descended from divine spiritual heights; but the light of this wisdom had grown dimmer and dimmer. Formerly all men had possessed it; then only a few, under special conditions in the oracles; then only the initiates, and so on.

'The day must come,' so said the initiates who knew the signs of the time, 'when the old stock of wisdom will have lost its power to lead and guide mankind. Humanity will then fall a prey to doubt and uncertainty affecting the will, the actions, and the feelings of men. And as wisdom gradually dies out, men will be led by their own folly; their Ego will grow increasingly powerful, so that, when all wisdom had withdrawn, each individual will begin to seek it in his own Ego, to develop his own feelings and his will — each for himself — and men will become ever more isolated, more estranged from each other, and ever less capable of mutual understanding. Since each individual would have nothing but his own thoughts, and these would not come to him from universal wisdom, no individual will understand the thoughts of his fellow; and since their feelings would not be guided by universal wisdom, men will become involved in conflict, and the same applies to their actions. Human beings will all act, think, and feel in mutual opposition, and humanity will be finally cleft asunder into a host of individuals at strife with each other.'

Now what was the outer sign expressing this phase of evolution? It was the transformation which humanity experienced in the nature of its blood. In early times, as we know, 'near' (consanguineous) marriage was the rule. Marriage was contracted within the kindred stock. But in time, the consanguineous tie was replaced to an increasing extent by marriage with strangers. Foreign blood became mixed with foreign blood and the heritage of ancient times became ever scantier. Let us once more recall Goethe's words which we quoted yesterday:

'From my father I have my stature and life's most earnest conduct;

From my mother a happy nature and delight in telling fables.

We saw yesterday that these words were an allusion to the fact that the content of man's etheric body is inherited from the maternal element, as handed down from generation to generation. So that every human being bears in his own etheric body the legacy of the maternal element, while his physical body harbours the heritage of the paternal element. So long as blood relationship was in force, the heritage handed down from etheric body to etheric body was strongly effective, and the old faculty of clairvoyance was bound up therewith. The offspring of consanguineous marriage inherited in their etheric body the old faculty of wisdom which was handed down to them with the family blood. But when the blood became mixed through the intermarriage of tribes foreign to each other, the possibility of inheriting the ancient wisdom grew increasingly rare. For, as we said yesterday, the blood of the race gradually altered, and its intermingling obscured the ancient wisdom to an increasing extent. In other words, the blood, the bearer of inherited maternal qualities, became less and less able to bequeath the old gift of seership. Through the evolution of their blood, men became less and less capable of seeing into the spiritual world. Physically considered, therefore, human blood underwent a change incapacitating it from being the bearer of the old wisdom which had guided mankind so surely, and developed an increasing tendency to fall into the other extreme and become the bearer of egoism — that is, of a quality which leads to isolation and mutual opposition among men. Hence blood became less and less capable of uniting human beings in love.

We are now of course still involved in this process of blood deterioration, for, having begun in ancient times, it will slowly pursue its course until the end of earth evolution. For this reason an impulse was needed in humanity to repair the evil wrought by this deterioration of the blood. Adherence to the principle of blood relationship could not but lead men into error and misery, as the old sages tell us in their myths and legends. Men could no longer rely upon the remnants of inherited wisdom. 'Even if thou dost consult the oracle and ask what is to happen, the answer thou receivest will most surely lead thee into the fiercest strife and conflict!' The oracle foretold, for instance, that Laios and Jocasta would have a son who would kill his father and wed his mother. Nevertheless, in spite of this heritage of ancient oracular wisdom, the blood tie could no longer be prevented from falling a victim to error: Oedipus slays his father and weds his mother; he commits parricide and incest (in spite of the oracle).

The old sage meant: Men once possessed wisdom; but even had it remained in their possession, the development of their Ego must necessarily have proceeded apace; and egoism would attain such power that blood would war against blood. With nothing but the old wisdom to guide it, the blood element is no longer adequate to lead humanity to a higher stage. Thus the clairvoyant initiate, to whom the original image of the Oedipus legend is due, wished to hold up to mankind a warning vision, saying: 'Such would be your fate if nothing came save the old wisdom of the oracles!' In the Judas legend we find still more clearly indicated what would have been the fate of this old oracular wisdom. The mother of Judas was also prophetically warned that her son would slay his father and wed his mother, whereby untold misery would be brought to pass. And it all happened as foretold. That is to say, the inherited ancient wisdom was incapable of guarding man from the danger into which he could not but fall, were no new impulse to come to mankind. Now let us enquire into the precise reason of this. Why was the ancient wisdom condemned to become gradually useless as regards its power over humanity? We shall find the answer to this question if we examine closely into the origin of the ancient wisdom in its relation to mankind.

I have already indicated that in early Atlantean times the connection between the human physical and etheric bodies was of very different nature than in later times. Considered today, the physical and etheric bodies may be said roughly to coincide; this is especially the case with the head portion. But this applies only to the present time. In early Atlantean times we find the human etheric head largely extending beyond its physical counterpart on all sides. The etheric body, especially as regards the head, was far outside the physical body. Atlantean evolution saw the gradual drawing in of the etheric body until both finally coincided. Now so long as the etheric body was outside the physical head, it was subject to very different conditions from those of later times. It was connected on all sides with other spiritual beings and with spiritual currents which, as they streamed in and out, endowed the Atlantean etheric body with the faculty of clairvoyance.

This clairvoyance, therefore, was due to the incomplete union of the etheric body with the physical head, whereby the head was exposed on all sides to the action of spiritual forces which endowed the etheric body with the faculty of clairvoyance. Then the time came when the etheric body drew into the physical body. It tore itself away from these forces, but not completely; it began to cut itself adrift from the influences which had bestowed upon it the faculty of clairvoyance and enabled it to behold the wisdom of the world. The contrary effect was obtained by the old initiations; here the etheric body was raised out of the physical, and the etheric head was once more brought into touch with the action of the surrounding forces, whereby clairvoyance again ensued. Now had this contact of the etheric body with its spiritual environment been severed at one stroke in the middle of the Atlantean period, the old clairvoyance would have disappeared far more rapidly; there would have been no remnants of it left over for the post-Atlantean period, and humanity would have preserved no recollection, in later times, of its ancient clairvoyance. As it happened, however, men did not lose every contact with the external forces and currents, and something else too occurred. Though it had wrested itself away from the action of its spiritual environment, the etheric body nevertheless retained something of its pristine wisdom — a last remnant of what it contained before it drew into the physical body — a 'small saving', if the expression may be used. It is as if a father earns money and his son continually draws upon him according to his needs. Man absorbed wisdom from his environment, as he needed it, until his etheric body broke away from the higher worlds. Now, to keep to our comparison, let us suppose that the son loses his father; only a part of his father's fortune is left to him, and he earns nothing himself. Thus a time must come when he will have exhausted this remnant and be destitute. This was the position in which man found himself. He had wrested himself from his Father-wisdom and, having added to it nothing by his own work, subsisted on it up to the Christian era; and even in our time he is still living on his inheritance and not on his own earnings. He is living, as we might say, on his capital. In the earliest period of post-Atlantean civilization, man still possessed a part of his capital, without having acquired this wisdom for himself; he was living on the interest and occasionally received an additional allowance from the initiates. Finally, however, the coin of the ancient wisdom lost its currency, and when Oedipus was paid in it, it was no longer of any value. The old wisdom could guard neither him nor Judas from the most terrible error.

This was the course followed by human evolution. Now how was it that man gradually consumed his capital of wisdom? It was because at an earlier time he had admitted into himself two kinds of spiritual beings; first the 'Luciferic' beings, and then, in consequence of these, the 'Ahrimanic' or Mephistophelian beings. These prevented him from adding anything by his own labour to the store of ancient wisdom. Their activity within human nature was such that the Luciferic beings degraded man's passions and feelings, while the Ahrimanic beings distorted his view of the world. Had the Luciferic beings not intervened in the evolution of the earth, man would never have acquired the excessive interest in the physical world which lowers him below his status. Again, had the Ahrimanic or Satanic beings not intervened (in consequence of the Luciferic beings), man would know and would have known that there is a spiritual part behind every object of sense. And he would see through the surface of the outer sense world to the spiritual world beyond. But Ahriman has clouded his perception with something like a dark veil of smoke, through which man cannot pierce to the spiritual world. Through Ahriman man is enmeshed in falsehood and entangled in a web of Maya or illusion. These two classes of beings hinder man from adding to the old store of wisdom that he once received; and so it dwindled away and became by degrees entirely unfit for use.

Nevertheless, in certain other respects, evolution proceeded on its course. In Atlantean times man descended into his physical body with his etheric body. It was, so to speak, his fatal misfortune to become 'God-forsaken' and to experience the influences of Lucifer and Ahriman in the physical world within the physical body. And it was precisely the influence of the physical body and of life therein which rendered the old store of wisdom unfit for use. How did this happen? In earlier times man did not live in his physical body; he drew from the old store of wisdom which belonged to his father; that is, the supply was outside his physical body, because he lived with his etheric body outside his physical body. This store was gradually exhausted. Man should have had a store in his own body, if his supply of wisdom was to be increased. But he had no such store, no source for the renewal of his wisdom in his own body, and the consequence was that every time he quitted his physical body at death, there was less wisdom in his etheric body. The etheric body became poorer and poorer in respect of wisdom after each incarnation. But evolution runs its course; and just as the etheric body drew into the physical, in Atlantean times, the development to which we are tending in the future will consist of the gradual detachment of the etheric from the physical body. Whereas the etheric body continually drew into the physical, until the coming of Christ, the moment was then at hand in which the course of evolution changed. The moment Christ appeared, the etheric body began to retrace its course, and at the present day it is less firmly united with the physical body than at the time of Christ's presence on Earth. The physical body has become thereby still coarser.

The future will see man's etheric body loosened to an increasing extent from the physical, and a stage will gradually be attained at which the etheric body will be as far outside the physical as in Atlantean times. We will pursue our comparison a little further.

If the son who lived from his father's bounty spends everything and earns nothing himself, his prospects will be increasingly gloomy. But if in his turn he has a son, the latter will not be in the same position as his father. His father had at least inherited something and could at any rate continue to spend it. But the grandson has nothing left him; he inherits nothing and is destitute. This was more or less the course of human evolution. When the etheric body entered the physical, taking with it a supply of divine wisdom from the store of the Gods, it brought wisdom into its physical body. But the Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings prevented this wisdom being increased and supplemented in the physical body. When the etheric body now again detaches itself from the physical, it takes nothing with it from the latter; and were nothing else to occur, the consequence would be that man would enter upon a future state in which his etheric body would indeed belong to him, but would contain no vestige of wisdom, no vestige of knowledge. And whereas the physical body would

dry up completely, the etheric body would also be destitute, because it could derive nothing from the physical in its withered state. If, therefore, the physical body is to be guarded from becoming withered in that future state, strength must be imparted to the etheric body — the strength of wisdom. As it is about to detach itself from the physical body, and while it is still in the latter, the etheric body must receive the power of wisdom. While still in the physical body it must receive something to carry away with it. And when it is outside, having received this wisdom, it reacts upon the physical body, brings life to it and prevents it drying up.

There are two possibilities for the future evolution of mankind. One of these is as follows:

Man might evolve without Christ. In this case his etheric body would derive nothing from the physical and would leave the latter in an empty state; moreover, being itself destitute, it could not vivify the physical body and prevent it from crumbling away and drying up. Man would gradually lose all the fruits of his physical life; his physical body having become sterile he would be obliged to abandon it. But man comes to earth precisely in order to receive a physical body. The germ of the latter was given in earlier times, and without the finished form of his physical body man would never fulfil his mission upon earth. Now the influences of Lucifer and Ahriman have appeared on earth. If man acquires nothing while in his physical body; if the etheric body, having exhausted the ancient store of wisdom, takes nothing new with it upon leaving the physical body, then the mission of the Earth is doomed; it is lost to the universe. Man would bring nothing with him into the future — nothing but the empty etheric skull which he brought replete into earthly evolution.

But now let us suppose that some event happened at the right moment, thanks to which, man was enabled to permeate his etheric body with wisdom, enlivening it as it quits the physical body. The etheric body would still detach itself in the future, but now, endowed with new life and vigour, it could apply these forces to the fortifying of the physical body. But it first must needs receive and possess this strength. Then, the etheric body having itself first received strength and life, the fruits of human earthly existence are saved. Then the physical body does not merely decay, but, though itself corruptible, it assumes the form of the etheric body, the incorruptible. And the resurrection of man, with the harvest reaped in the physical body, is assured.

An impulse, therefore, was necessary to earth whereby the dwindling treasure of ancient wisdom might be replenished and new life be instilled into the etheric body, so that the physical body, itself doomed to corruption, might put on incorruption and fill itself with an etheric body which renders it incorruptible and carries it safely out of earthly evolution. This very life, permeating the etheric body — it was Christ who brought it! To Christ therefore we owe it that the physical body, otherwise dedicated to death, is transformed and preserved from corruption, receiving the power to put on the incorruptible. Life, fresh life, was poured into the human etheric body by the Christ-impulse, the old life having been consumed. And looking into the future, man must say: `When one day my etheric body will be outside the physical, my development must have been such that my etheric body is entirely filled with Christ. Christ must live in me. In the course of my earthly evolution I must by degrees wholly permeate my etheric body with Christ!'

What I have just described to you are the deeper processes which elude external observation, the spiritual processes behind the physical evolution of the world. But what must the external form have been.

What was it that entered the physical body with the Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings? There entered the tendency to decay, to dissolution, in other words, the tendency to death. The germ of death entered the physical body. Had o Christ descended to earth, this death-germ would have developed its full power at the end of the earthly evolution. For then the etheric body would be powerless for all time to reanimate the human being; and earthly evolution having reached its end, everything in the nature of a physical body would fall a prey to corruption, and the very mission of the Earth would be overtaken by death. When we consider death today, our present life is at every moment a token of that universal death which would ensue at the end of earthly evolution. The endowment once bestowed upon mankind dwindles slowly and by degrees. Nothing but this fund of life bestowed upon man makes it possible for him to be reborn again and again, and to pass from incarnation to incarnation. The possibility of life externally considered in the succession of incarnations would not come to an end until the end of earthly evolution. But in the course of time it would become apparent that the human race was dying out. Member after member would be affected and the physical body would shrivel up. Had the Christ-impulse not been given, the human being would perish limb by limb as earthly evolution drew to its close. Now the Christ-impulse is only at the beginning of its development; it makes its way among men slowly and by degrees, and it will be left to future generations to show the full significance of Christ for humanity, on to the end of earthly evolution.

But the various human institutions and interests have not been equally affected by the Christ-impulse; there are many things in our day which have been left quite unmoved by it and must wait for a future time. A striking example will show how in our own day a whole region of human activity has been left quite untouched by the Christ-impulse.

About the sixth or seventh century before Christ, as the pre-Christian era was drawing to its close, the ancient wisdom and the ancient power, as they affected human knowledge, began to wane. In respect of other manifestations of life, the ancient wisdom long retained its youthful freshness and vigour, but in all that affected knowledge it was on the decline. From the eighth century before the Christian era and onward, there remained what might be called the remnant of a remnant. Had we retraced our steps to the days of Egypto-Chaldean, ancient Persian, or Indian wisdom, we should have found it everywhere imbued with true spiritual perceptions and the fruits of ancient seership. For those who were not themselves highly clairvoyant, there were the teachings of the seers. A `science' not founded upon clairvoyance did not exist and never had existed, either in Indian or Persian times, or later. In the earliest Greek times, too, there was no

science without underlying clairvoyant research. Then, however, the time approached when clairvoyant research came to an end, as far as human science was concerned. Then we see the rise of a new human science which is devoid of clairvoyance, or, at least, from which clairvoyance is cast out step by step.

Seership dwindles away; so too the belief in the communications of the seers; and a human science is founded, in the sixth and seventh centuries before the coming of Christ, from which the results of spiritual investigation are increasingly excluded. And so it goes on. With Parmenides, Herakleitos, Plato, and even Aristotle, in the writings of the old naturalists and physicians, it can be shown at every turn what we know as science was originally saturated with the results of spiritual investigation. But spiritual science dwindled away and became ever scantier. As far as the faculties of the soul are concerned, it still exists; as regards feeling and willing, it is still there, but in the region of human thought it was exhausted by degrees. Thus with regard to human scientific thought, the influence of the etheric over the physical body had begun to dwindle at the time of the coming of Christ. Everything proceeds by slow degrees. Then Christ came and gave the impulse; but of course this impulse was not received at once by all men; it was accepted in certain quarters and rejected in others; in the domain of science it was clearly repudiated. Take the science of the Roman Empire. See what Celsus, for instance, says. You will find all kinds of trivialities in his works regarding the Christ. Celsus was a great scholar but he had no understanding for the Christ-impulse in its effect upon human thought. Thus he relates that 'a couple named Joseph and Mary are said to have once lived in Palestine; these were the originators of the sect called the Christians. But everything related of them is nothing but superstition. The truth is that the wife of this Joseph betrayed her husband with a Roman captain named Pintera. Joseph did not know who was the father of the child.'

This was one of the accounts most widespread at that time. Anyone who follows our contemporary literature will know that certain individuals of the present day have not advanced beyond the standard of Celsus. It is true that the Christ-impulse gains ground in some departments of life, though slowly; but in the particular domain of which we are now speaking, it has made no impression hitherto. Here we see one part of the human being, to wit, something in the human brain, that is perishing; whereas science would experience a revival in a quite different form, if the brain were influenced by the Christ-impulse. Strange as this may sound in our time of scientific fanaticism, it is nevertheless true. That part of the human brain which is the chosen instrument of scientific thought is doomed to a lingering death. Here we see how the old heritage slowly and by degrees disappeared from scientific thought. We see that Aristotle still possessed a relatively large share; but in the course of time science is drained of its ancient heritage and, though enriched by its later acquisitions in the field of outer experience, it finally becomes God-forsaken as regards thought, and has nothing left of the old treasure. Indeed, we see that it is possible even for those who strongly experience Christ, to fail to find a connection between the Christ-impulse and man's conquests in the domain of science. There are visible proofs of this. Imagine a man in the thirteenth century intensely penetrated by the Christ-impulse, and that this man had said: 'We have the Christ-impulse. It comes to us from the Gospel like a flood of mighty new revelations, and we can penetrate ourselves with it!' Let us assume that this individual has singled out for himself the task of creating a connecting link between science and Christianity. Even in the thirteenth century he would have found nothing suitable for his purpose in contemporary science. He would have been obliged to revert to Aristotle, and with Aristotle alone, not with the science of the thirteenth century, he could have interpreted Christianity. For science was becoming less and less capable of union with the Christ-principle. For this reason the men of the thirteenth century were obliged to revert to Aristotle; he still possessed some of the ancient heritage of wisdom and could furnish the concepts by which science and Christianity could be reconciled. Science then became poorer and poorer in ideas precisely inasmuch as it became richer in observations. Finally the time came when all the conception of ancient wisdom vanished from science. The greatest of men are of course children of their age with regard to their science. Galileo himself could not derive his thought from the Absolute; he could only think the thought of his age. And his greatness is due precisely to the fact that he establishes purely 'God-forsaken' thought, purely mechanical thought. With Galileo a great revolution in thought takes place. The most ordinary phenomenon of physics was explained differently before and after Galileo. A stone is thrown. Today we are told that the stone continues its motion until the latter is arrested by the influence of another force, the power of inertia. Before Galileo, people thought entirely differently; they were convinced that if the stone continues its course, it must be impelled by someone; something active was behind the flying stone. Galileo revolutionized human thought and taught men to view the world as a mechanism. Today it is in every sense an ideal to explain the world from the mechanical standpoint, as a mechanism, from which all spirit is eliminated. This is due to the fact that those portions of the human brain which are the instrument and organ of scientific thought are today so deadened that they are unable to convey new life to the conceptions they form, and the latter becomes ever poorer and poorer.

As things are, it is a fact that science has not grown richer in ideas. The ideas of antiquity are far more replete with life, far loftier and grander. The ideas of Darwinism are like a squeezed lemon. Darwin merely collected data and connected these with the now impoverished concepts. This trend of science distinctly points to a process of gradual atrophy. There is a part of the human brain in process of decay — namely, the part which functions in modern scientific thought. And this is due to the fact that the part of the etheric body which should enliven this atrophied brain has not yet attained the Christ-impulse. Science will remain lifeless until the Christ-impulse flows into this part of the human brain also, whose function it is to serve science. This is grounded in the great laws of the universe. If science continues as heretofore, it will become increasingly poor in ideas. Ideas will die out more and more. And such types will appear to an increasing extent in science as are intent merely upon adding fact to fact, and have a terrible fright when someone begins to think. It is a terrible experience for a modern professor when a young candidate brings him a thesis containing even a modicum of thought. But we have an Anthroposophy today; an Anthroposophy which will bring home the Christ-impulse to mankind in ever clearer fashion, and thereby supply the etheric body with life to an increasing extent. It will supply such abundant life that the parched portion of the brain which is responsible for our modern scientific thought will be rendered supple. This is an example of the revitalization of the perishing human members by the Christ-impulse, as it gradually penetrates into the

life of humanity. As time goes on, this perishing process would spread to other parts of the human being; nevertheless for each perished part, the Christ-impulse will flow into mankind, and, at the end of human evolution, all the members which would have perished, failing the Christ-impulse, will be revitalized by it. That impulse will then have permeated the whole etheric body, and the latter will have become one with it. The first impetus to the gradual regeneration of mankind, the first impulse to the resurrection of man was given at a particular moment, beautifully described in the Gospel of St. John.

Let us picture Christ as a universal Being come into the world; let us think of the beginning of His great work as accomplished in an etheric body penetrated through and through by Himself. For the etheric body of Jesus of Nazareth had been transformed by Christ into precisely so perfect a vehicle that it could impart new life even to the physical body. The instant in which the etheric body of Jesus of Nazareth (in which Christ then was) had become capable of imbuing the physical body with new life in the fullest sense, in that instant the etheric body of Christ appears transfigured. The writer of the Gospel of St. John describes the moment:

‘Father, glorify Thy name. And there came a voice out of Heaven. I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.

‘The multitude therefore that stood by and heard it said it had thundered.’

It is said that the people who stood by heard the thunder; but it is nowhere stated that any person who had not been duly prepared could have heard it.

‘Others said an angel had spoken to Him.

‘Jesus answered and said, this voice hath come not for my sake but for your sakes.’

Why was this? So that all who are around Him might understand what had happened. And Christ speaks of what had happened, saying:

‘Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the Prince of this world be cast out.’

Lucifer-Ahriman was cast out of the physical body of Christ in that moment. The great example is there, which in future must be followed by the whole of mankind. The hindrances of Lucifer-Ahriman must be cast out of the physical body through the Christ-impulse. Man's physical body must be so vivified by the impulse of Christ that the fruits of the mission of the Earth may be carried over into the times which will follow the Earth-period.

## LECTURE XIII

Yesterday the significance of the Mystery of Golgotha for the evolution of man upon our earth was borne in upon our souls. Now every event in the world is connected by interminable ties with the evolution of the whole universe. A full understanding of the real nature of the Mystery of Golgotha is only possible when light has been thrown on the cosmic significance of that great event.

We already know that the Being whom we name the Christ descended from supersensible regions to our earth; that He had been seen in the Sun in His descent by the seer Zarathustra in ancient Persia; then by Moses in the burning bush and in the fire on Sinai; and finally by those who had experienced the Christ-event, when Christ was present in the body of Jesus of Nazareth. We know that the events upon our earth, and, above all, human evolution, are connected with our solar system. For we have shown that this evolution of man in the form which it has attained, could never have been accomplished had not first the Sun, and, at a later period, the Moon, once severed themselves from a single planet in which our present sun and moon were still united with our earth; whereby our earth was placed in a centre of equilibrium between sun and moon. Man being unable to keep pace with the rapid evolution of those beings who were forced to remove their centre of activity to the sun, it was necessary that the earth should be separated from the sun. On the other hand, had the earth remained united with the moon, the human race must have undergone a rapid process of hardening or ossification. On this account the moon, with all its substances and beings, was separated from the earth. By these events the regular evolution of mankind was rendered possible. We saw yesterday, however, that the remnant of a tendency to harden has nevertheless persisted, and that this remnant would suffice to bring upon mankind, at the end of earth evolution, a state resembling corruption, had not the Christ-impulse come. This will give us some insight into our whole evolution.

There was a time, therefore, in which sun, moon, and earth formed one planet. The sun then detached itself from the universal body, leaving earth and moon still united. The present moon then separated, leaving the earth to be the scene of human evolution. This was in the ancient Lemurian period, preceding the so-called Atlantean period, which we have now discussed from various points of view. In the succeeding phase of the earth's evolution the forces of the sun and moon worked upon the earth from outside; this lasted from Atlantean times till our own day. Let us now consider the further course of earth's evolution, up to the moment when the Christ-impulse came; let us fix our minds upon a particular

moment in which the Cross was raised on Golgotha and the blood flowed from the wounds of Christ Jesus. Let us concentrate upon this point in the evolution of our earth.

Up to this point of time the condition of humanity was determined by the entry into man's being of the united Luciferic and Ahrimanic Powers. This resulted in man's finding himself in a world of maya or illusion, for we have seen how Ahriman contrived that the outer world should appear to man, not in its true form, but as though it were only a material world and as if there were no spirit behind all substance. For a long period man found himself, and still finds himself to a large extent, in a condition which is the result of error, because he is confined to the sensible, material impressions around him and elaborates these in his thoughts and ideas. Thus, owing to the influence of Ahriman, man's picture of the outer world is a false one and his ideas of the spiritual world are illusory and untrue. But everything spiritual is connected with physical effects and we have seen that, as one consequence of the Luciferic and Ahrimanic influence, the blood of the human being became less and less capable of enabling him to obtain a right view of the outer world. Hence, with the deterioration and dispersal of blood — when consanguineous marriage was replaced by the intermarriage of strangers — there was an increasing growth of illusion. For man could no longer apply to the ancient wisdom which was his former heritage and which affirmed: 'It is not true that the outer world is mere matter; if you remain true to your old legacy of wisdom, it will tell you that a spiritual world is there behind the physical.' This heritage of wisdom was gradually lost and man grew ever more dependent on the outer world for the whole life of his soul and for his knowledge. Therefore all his physical impressions were transformed into illusion and deception. Had the Christ-impulse not intervened, man would have ultimately lost all his old heritage of wisdom and have been entirely thrown upon the outer world of the senses and the impressions derived from it. He would have forgotten that a spiritual world exists. This had to happen; man had to become blind to the spiritual world.

Now we must consider in all its gravity a truth of this nature, to the effect that man would to an increasing extent become a prey to delusion and error regarding the external world. This truth, this fall of man into error as regards the impressions of the world of sense, is not so simple a matter to envisage in all its gravity and import. Try for a moment to understand what it means, to recognize as illusion and deception all outer impressions of the senses, as they present themselves to us in the physical world. We must learn to say to ourselves: 'The facts and impressions in the world of senses, as they affect us, are false; we must learn to see behind the external impressions the true form of the latter.' I will mention one event to which it is, as a rule, difficult for people to apply the truth; it is hard for them to say to themselves: 'The form in which this event appears to us in the outer world is false, an illusion, maya.' What is this event? It is death. When it appears to us in the outer physical world, death shows certain peculiarities, inasmuch as it appeals to our knowledge which, as we have described, has become confined to outer physical events. Death has assumed an aspect in which it can be contemplated by man only from the standpoint of the outer physical world. It was precisely on the subject of death that man necessarily fell into the most erroneous, the most fatal views. We must therefore conclude that the form in which death presents itself to us is only maya, illusion, deception.

Before our eyes, in the outer physical world, the most diverse events take place. There we see the stars which fill space; here the mountains, the plants, the animals; there our whole mineral world; there too is man and everything else — the sum of facts which we can observe with our senses. When we ask whence come these facts, whence comes this outer physical world which presents itself to us as a material world, we must answer: it all comes from the spiritual part upon which our sense world is founded. For the foundation upon which our physical world rests is spiritual. And if we reverted to the primal form of the spirit, to the source of all that is sensible and physical, we should have to name it the 'foundation of all being', the divine 'Father-principle' of Christian esotericism. The divine Father-principle underlies all creation. What, therefore, was veiled from the human being when all things were plunged into maya or illusion? The divine Father-principle! Instead of the mirage of the senses, man should see everywhere and in everything about him the divine Father-principle to which he and all things belong. Thus the divine Father-principle does not show itself in its true form; by reason of the diminution of man's powers, of which we have spoken, it appears veiled in the great illusion or maya.

What is interwoven in this great illusion? Among all the facts which we apprehend, we are struck by one of especially fundamental nature — namely, Death. We must reflect that the outer things which present themselves to our senses are of a truth the Father-principle; they express the divine spiritual Father-element. And since death is interwoven in the whole world of sense, we look upon it as something belonging to the divine spiritual Father-element. Man's development having been such as it was, the divine Father-principle appears to him enveloped in many a veil, and last of all is the veil of death. What, therefore, must man seek behind death, as behind all sense-perceptions? He must seek the Father, the cosmic Father! As man must learn to say of everything: 'It is in truth the Father!', so he must learn to say: 'Death is the Father!' Why does the image of the Father appear to us distorted and disfigured to the extent of appearing as the illusion of death? Because the Lucifer-Ahrimanic principle is intermingled with our whole life. By what means, therefore, was it necessary to lead man from a deceptive, false view to a true conception of death?

It was necessary that man should be enlightened regarding death on the strength of facts. Something was necessary from which man could learn that whatever he felt and knew concerning death, all that he had been able to effect under the impulse of his conception of death was false. An event was to happen whereby the true form of death was made clearly perceptible to him; the false form was to be extinguished and replaced by the true form.

This was the mission of Christ upon earth: by His Deed to substitute the true form for the false form of death.

Death had become a distortion of the Father through the intervention of Lucifer-Ahriman in the evolution of mankind. Death was the consequence or effect of Lucifer-Ahriman. What, therefore, was to be done by one who wished to expel from the world this false form of death? It could never have been removed from human life had not its cause, Lucifer-Ahriman, been put aside. But no earthly being can indeed extinguish everything that has been wrought by earthly beings themselves, but he cannot eliminate the influence of Lucifer-Ahriman. That influence could only be destroyed by a being who was not yet on earth, but still in outer cosmic space, when Lucifer and Ahriman were at work, a being who had descended to earth at a time when Lucifer and Ahriman had fully entered into the body of the human being.

Now this Being did arrive upon earth, as we have seen, and did conquer Lucifer and Ahriman precisely at the right moment; He removed the cause of the presence of death in the world. Hence that Being was necessarily one who had nothing to do with any causes of death whatever among men. He must have had no part in anything that had been effected by Lucifer, and later by Ahriman, or which had been accomplished by individual men on earth in consequence of the Luciferic and Ahrimanic influence; in other words, He must have had no part in anything that had made man guilty and had caused him to fall into sin. For had that Being been subject to all these causes, there would have been grounds for the death which He suffered. But a death such as His, a groundless death, taken upon Himself by a Being without sin, an altogether guiltless death could alone annihilate all death due to guilt.

An innocent Being, therefore, was to suffer and become united with death. Having yielded Himself up to death, He brought into human life those forces which gradually and by degrees create for man the knowledge of the true nature of death — that is, the knowledge that death, as it appears in the world of sense, is devoid of truth, and that, if it came, it was for the sake of life in the spiritual world; indeed, it provides precisely the foundation for this life.

Thus by the innocent death on Golgotha the proof was furnished and will be gradually understood by men, that 'Death is the ever-living Father!' When we have understood that, through the event of Golgotha, death is made insignificant; that through the influence of Christ, who lived in the body of Jesus of Nazareth and with whom we can unite ourselves, this image of death which was indeed presented to us on the Cross, is but an external event, and that the life of Christ in the etheric body was the same after as before His death, and therefore that this death cannot injure life; if we have understood that we are in the presence of death which does not extinguish life, but is itself Life, then we have a token for all time, in that which hangs upon the Cross, that Death is truly the Life-giver. Just as the plant grows out of the seed, so also death is no destroyer but a seed of life; it is strewn like seed in our physical world in order that this world may not fall away from life, but may be raised into life. The repudiation of death was achieved on the Cross by the death which, being an innocent death, was a contradiction in itself. Now what was actually brought to pass by this event?

From the previous lectures we know that man possesses an Ego as the fourth principle of his nature, and that this Ego, as it develops, has the blood as its outer physical instrument. The blood is the expression of the Ego. For this reason the Ego fell ever more into error, into maya or illusion, inasmuch as the blood deteriorated. Therefore man owes the increased power of his Ego to the circumstances that he learned to distinguish himself from the spiritual world, and became an individuality. This capacity could not be bestowed on him save by cutting off from him for the time being all vision of the spiritual world. And it was precisely death which effected the severance. Had man always known that death is the seed of life, he would never have attained an independent individuality; for he would have remained united with the spiritual world. But death came and gave him the illusion that he was severed from the spiritual world, thus training him to independent egoity. This egoity, however, grew increasingly independent, to the extent of becoming exaggerated and strained beyond a certain point. This excess could be counteracted only by the withdrawal from the egoity of the force which had driven it beyond that limit. Thus the Ego had to be freed from the force which would have led it too deeply into egoism; the element which would have furthered egoism as well as egoity had to be expelled. And this element was indeed expelled at the moment of the death on the Cross on Golgotha, when the blood flowed from the wounds; so that in the course of time it can also be driven out of the individual Ego to an increasing extent.

Hence, in the blood flowing from the wounds of Christ, we see the actual symbol of the excessive egoism in the human 'I'. As the blood is the expression of the Ego, so the blood that flowed on Golgotha is the expression of the superfluous egoism in the human individuality. Had the blood not flowed on Golgotha, man would have undergone a spiritual hardening in selfishness and would have encountered the fate which we described yesterday. By the flowing of the blood on Golgotha the impetus was given for the gradual disappearance from the human race of that which renders the 'I' or Ego an egoist.

But every physical event has its spiritual counterpart. Inasmuch as the blood flowed from the Wounds on Golgotha, a corresponding spiritual event was taking place. It came about at that moment that rays of light streamed for the first time from the earth into universal space, where there had formerly been none; so that we have to picture to ourselves rays of light, created at that moment, streaming out from the earth into space. The earth had grown darker and darker in the course of time, until the event of Golgotha. Then the blood flows and the earth begins to radiate!

Had some being in pre-Christian times been able to behold the earth clairvoyantly from a distant planet, he would have observed how the earth's aura lost its radiance by degrees, being darkest at the time preceding the event of Golgotha, and how it then shone forth in new colours. The deed of Golgotha suffused the earth with astral light which by degrees will become etheric and then physical. For every being in the world is in process of evolution. The present sun was once a planet; and just as the old Saturn evolved into the Sun, so our Earth, now a planet, is evolving into a Sun. The first impetus towards becoming a Sun was given to our earth when the blood flowed from the wounds of the Redeemer on

Golgotha. The earth then began to glow, first astrally and visible only to the seer; but in future ages the astral light will become physical light and the earth will be a luminous body — a Sun-body.

As I have often told you, a planetary body does not arise through the aggregation of physical matter, but through the creation of a new spiritual centre and scene of activity by a spiritual being. The formation of a planet begins in the spiritual world. Every physical heavenly body was first spirit. Our earth, in a future state, will be the astral aura which began to radiate at the moment described. That was the first beginning of the future Sun-earth. What a man would then perceive with his deceptive senses would be an illusion. It is devoid of truth; it dissolves and ceases to exist. The more the earth becomes 'Sun', the more is this maya consumed in the Sun-fire and is dissolved therein. Through the suffusion of the earth with the rays of a new force (being the first impulse for the transformation of the earth into a Sun), the possibility was afforded for mankind to be irradiated by the same force. What I described to you yesterday received then its first impetus — namely, the radiating of the Christ-force into the human etheric body. Thanks to this astral force streaming into it, the etheric body could begin to absorb new vitality such as it will need in the distant future. If you compare a future condition of humanity with the point of time at which the Deed of Golgotha was accomplished, you may conclude that at the time of Christ's coming the condition of the earth was such that it could not of itself radiate light into the etheric bodies of men. A short time after this event the etheric bodies of those who had found access to the Christ-impulse became radiant; having understood Christ, they absorbed into themselves that radiant force, that new illuminative force which has been in the earth ever since. They received into their etheric bodies the Christ-light. The Christ-light streams into the etheric bodies of men.

And now the Christ-light being always present, to some extent, in the etheric bodies of men ever since that time, what is the consequence of this? What takes place after death in that part of the etheric body which has absorbed into itself the Christ-light? What is it that has gradually made its way into the human etheric body in consequence of the Christ-impulse?

Since that time it has become possible for something new to show itself in the etheric bodies of men, as an effect of the Christ-light; something which exhales life and is immortal, and can never fall a prey to death. But if it does not fall a prey to death (while man still continues being a victim of the illusion of death), it will be saved from death and will not participate therein. Since that time, therefore, there has been something in the etheric body of man which does not share in his death and is not subject to the earthly forces of dissolution. And that something, which does not die with the rest and which man gradually wins for himself through the influence of the Christ-impulse, now radiates back and streams into the world of space. In proportion to its strength or weakness in man, it gathers a force which streams out into space. This force will form a sphere surrounding the earth, a sphere in process of becoming a Sun. A kind of spiritual sphere is developing round the earth, composed of those etheric bodies endowed with light. As the Christ-light streams from the earth, there is in like manner a kind of reflection of the Christ-light in the circumference of the earth. The Christ-light which is here reflected and which appeared in consequence of Christ's life on earth; this, it is, which Christ called the 'Holy Ghost'. True as it is that the change of the earth into a sun began with the event of Golgotha, it is equally true that the earth thenceforward began to be creative and to form a spiritual ring round itself which, in time to come, will become a kind of planet surrounding it.

Thus, since the event of Golgotha, a momentous process has been taking place in the universe. At the moment when the Cross was raised on Golgotha and the blood ran from the wounds of Christ Jesus, a new cosmic centre was created. We were there as human beings, whether in a physical body or out of it, between birth and death. Thus do new worlds arise. But one thing we must understand, that while we behold the dying Christ, we stand in the presence of the birth of a new Sun.

Christ united Himself with death which has become, on earth, the characteristic expression of the Father-Spirit. Christ goes to the Father and unites Himself with the expression of the Father — with death; thereby the image of death (as it has become) is shown in its falseness; for death now becomes the seed of a new Sun in the universe. Let us feel this event, this growing delusion of death; let us feel that the Death on the Cross is the seed from which a new Sun bursts forth, then we shall also truly feel how mankind on earth must have felt that Event to be the supremely important transition in human evolution.

There was once a time when men still possessed a dim, hazy clairvoyance. They lived then in the spiritual element. They could retrace their lives; when they were thirty years of age they could look back to their 20th, to their 10th year and so on; and even to their birth. They knew that they had been born out of divine, spiritual regions. Birth was then no beginning. Spiritual beings beheld this birth; they beheld the death too, and knew that something spiritual dwelt within birth and death, which death could not affect. Birth and death in the present sense did not as yet exist; they appeared later and assumed their deceptive form in the outer image of the Father; death became the characteristic feature of this outer image of the Father! Men then beheld death and saw in it the apparent destroyer of life. Death grew to an increasing extent into an image representing the opposite of life; if life brought many sorrows in its train, death represented the greatest of sorrows. What must have been the reflections on death of one who contemplated from outside the events on earth as they were reflected in mankind before the coming of Christ? had he descended as a higher being from divine, spiritual heights, with conceptions other than human, he must have felt impelled, when he considered the human race, to speak as Buddha spoke.

Buddha had issued from the royal palace in which he had grown up and in which he had seen nothing but what was elevating in life. On quitting the palace, however, he first saw a suffering man, next a sick man, and lastly, and worst of all, a dead man. These experiences wrung from him the words: 'Sickness is suffering! Old age is suffering! Death is suffering!' Mankind had indeed felt this to be so, and it was this common feeling of all mankind which burst from the great soul of Buddha.

Then came the Christ, and 600 years after Christ (as 600 years has elapsed between the time of Buddha and that of Christ) there were those who, when they saw the Cross and, hanging upon it, the dead Man, could reflect: 'He who hangs upon the Cross is the symbol of that seed from which life in abundance flows!' They had acquired a true feeling regarding death.

Christ Jesus embraced death; he went to that death which had become the characteristic expression of the Father and united Himself therewith. And from that union of Christ Jesus with death was born the Sun of Life. It is a deception, maya, or illusion to think that death is synonymous with pain. When men learn in the course of time to await the coming of death as Christ awaited it, it will prove itself in truth to be the seed of life. In proportion as men opening their hearts to the Christ-impulse offer up something of their own, they will contribute to the growth of a new sun and a new planetary system, and provide for the ever greater increase of the Sun of Life.

The objection might be raised that this is the assertion of Anthroposophy, and it might be questioned that such a cosmology can be reconciled with the Gospel.

Christ taught those who were His disciples. In order to prepare them for the greatest truths He had adopted the method which is necessary for the gradual understanding of the highest truth in the right way. He spoke to them in parables or 'proverbs'. The time then gradually approached when the disciples could believe themselves sufficiently ripe for hearing the truth without parables. Christ Jesus found the opportunity to speak to His apostles without parables. For the apostles desired to hear the Name, the great Name because of which He had come into the world:

'Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled.

'These things have I spoken to you in proverbs; but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but shall tell you plainly of the Father.'

Let us feel that the moment was at hand when He desired to speak to His disciples of the Father.

'In that day ye shall ask in my name; and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you;

'For the Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved me and have believed that I came forth from God.

'I came out of the Father. . . .'

He had come of course from the Father in His true, not His deceptive form.

'I came out of the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go unto the Father.'

It now flashes upon His disciples (for they had grown ripe for this knowledge) that the world as it surrounds them is the outer expression of the Father and that the most significant feature in the outer world, and its greatest maya or illusion, is equally the expression of the Father, that Death is the name of the Father. This truth flashes upon His disciples, only we must learn to read aright.

'His disciples said unto Him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly and speakest no proverb.

'Now we are sure thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee; by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

'Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

'Behold the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

'These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.'

Did the disciples know whither He was going? Yes, henceforth they knew that He was going to His death and that He had united Himself with death. And now read what He said to them when they had learnt to understand the words: 'I

came forth from death' — that is, from death in its true form — from the Life-Father — 'and am come into the world, again I leave the world and go unto the Father'. And the disciples say unto Him: 'Now we are sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee; by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.'

The disciples now knew that the true form of death is in reality founded in the divine Father-Spirit, and that death, as it is beheld and felt by men, is a deceptive appearance, an error. Thus Christ discloses to His disciples the Name of Death, behind which is concealed the fount of the sublimest life. The new Sun of Life would never have risen had not death entered the world and been overcome by Christ. Thus, beheld in its true aspect, Death is the Father. Christ came into the world because in death a false reflection of the Father had arisen. He came into the world in order to create a true image and form of the living God-Father. The Son is the descendant of the Father and reveals the true form of the Father. Of a truth the Father sent His Son into the world, that the real nature of the Father should be manifested — that is, everlasting life which is veiled by temporal death.

This is not merely the cosmology of spiritual science. It is what we need in order to fathom the full depth of St. John's Gospel. Its writer, having described therein the sublimest truths, could say: 'In this Gospel are contained truths from which mankind will obtain nourishment for all time to come. Inasmuch as man gradually learns to understand and practise these truths, he will acquire new wisdom and ascend by a new way into the spiritual worlds.' But this will take place only in the course of time and by degrees. Therefore the united leaders of Christian evolution were obliged to provide for the appearance of ancillary books, side by side with the Gospel of St. John; books which were not intended (like the Gospel of St. John) for the foremost in good will and understanding. In fact, ancillary books had to be provided for the immediate future.

In the first place a book was given to the world, from which the generations of the first centuries of Christian evolution could learn, in a manner suited to their intellect, the highest truth they required for the understanding of the Christ-event. To be sure, in proportion to the whole of mankind, the number of those who understood what this book could give them, was but small. This first ancillary book was not intended for the highest select, but indeed for the select; this was the Gospel of St. Mark. This Gospel was composed in a manner especially adapted for a certain understanding peculiar to those times. Then followed a time in which the Gospel of St. Mark began to be less understood; human understanding tended to grasp the whole force of Christ in its inner value for the human soul, and to regard the outer physical world with a certain contempt. A time came in which man was eminently disposed to utter such words as: 'Worthless are all temporal goods; true riches are nowhere found save in man's evolved inner self.' This was the time in which John Tauler wrote his book *Of the Poor Life of Christ* (Von armen Leben Christi). It was a time in which the Gospel of St. Luke was best understood. Luke, a disciple of St. Paul, was one of those who lent Paul's own Gospel a form suited to that epoch, giving prominence to the 'poor life' of Jesus of Nazareth, who was born in a stable and surrounded by poor shepherds. We recognize John Tauler's *Poor Life of Christ* in the narration of the Gospel of St. Luke, the second of the books given for the furtherance of the evolution of mankind.

In our time there will be some who can best learn from the Gospel of St. Matthew what is suited to their understanding and adapted to the needs of the present day. Even though Matthew's name be not singled out, people will select to an increasing extent what is most in conformity with St. Matthew's Gospel. There will be a growing tendency to show that nothing can be understood of the events which were enacted in the higher worlds at the Baptism of John, as we have narrated them. Many will experience this in the future. We are approaching a time in which he who, in the 30th year of his life, received into himself the Christ, will be to an increasing extent regarded, even by the professors of religion, as the 'simple man of Nazareth'. Those to whom the 'simple man of Nazareth' is of greatest importance, and who attach less significance to the Christ than to the high initiate Jesus of Nazareth — people with this tendency will consider the Gospel of St. Matthew, at least as regards its sense, as of special importance. The thinkers of a materialistic age will say: 'Turn to the Gospel of St. Matthew. We find in it a line of generations, a genealogical table showing us the line of ancestry of Jesus of Nazareth. His descent can be traced through three times fourteen generations from Abraham down to Joseph. And as we see there: Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac Jacob, and so on, so it continues down to Joseph and Jesus of Nazareth. This was written for the purpose of showing that the physical line of descent and inheritance of the body in which the individuality of Jesus of Nazareth was born, reaches back to Abraham. Omit Joseph, and this table has no meaning whatever. If you speak of a supersensible birth in the face of this table of ancestry, the latter ceases to have any meaning. Why should the writer of the Gospel of St. Matthew take the trouble to trace a line of ancestry through three times fourteen generations, if he meant to say "Jesus of Nazareth was descended physically, according to the flesh, not from Joseph"? The Gospel of St. Matthew is only comprehensible when it is emphasized that the individuality was born into a body which really did descend through Joseph from Abraham. This genealogical tree was intended to show "Joseph cannot be left out, in the sense of St. Matthew's Gospel". Hence, Joseph cannot indeed be left out of account by those who are unable to understand the supersensible birth recorded as the Baptism by John.'

But the Gospel of St. Matthew was originally written in a community in which the chief place was given, not to Christ, but to that individuality who appeared to the world in the person of the Initiate Jesus of Nazareth. The Gospel of St. Matthew was founded on a traditional document of initiation known to the Ebionite Gnostics, and can be traced back to such a document as to its model. There, special importance is attached to the initiate Jesus of Nazareth, and all the rest becomes much clearer by the fact that it is contained in the Ebionite Gospel. For this reason a certain tone is found in St. Matthew's Gospel, which however must not necessarily be interpreted in the sense of its Ebionite model. In reality the Gospel of St. Matthew does not bear such an interpretation, though it is quite possible to read this meaning into it. The Gospel of St. Matthew may be understood to imply that there is no question in it of a supersensible birth. Yet the

possibility is afforded to find in the accounts in that Gospel the symbol of a God, so-called, who in reality was only a man. Though this is not in the least St. Matthew's meaning, this interpretation will be given by those who, to an increasing extent, take their stand upon that Gospel.

In order that no human being who desires to approach Christ may be denied the opportunity of doing so, provision is made for those who cannot rise from Jesus to Christ, to find in the Gospel of St. Matthew a support by the aid of which they can grow to an understanding of Jesus of Nazareth.

But it is the mission of anthroposophical spiritual investigation to lead men upwards to the understanding of the Gospel of Gospels — that of St. John. The other Gospels are to be considered as complementary to St. John's; the latter contains the grounds for the others, and these can be understood aright only if considered as built up on the groundwork of St. John.

The study of the Gospel of St. John will guide mankind to the fullest comprehension of the scene which was enacted on Golgotha, and will help men to understand the Mystery by which death in its untrue form was overcome in the evolution of humanity. And men will learn to understand how, by the Deed of Golgotha, it has not only been demonstrated as a matter of knowledge, that death is the true source of life, but that, as a result of that Deed, man has been placed in such a position as regards death, that by degrees he can increase the life within his own being more and more, until he is at last wholly living, that is, he can rise from all death; he has conquered death. This is the revelation which St. Paul experienced when he saw the living Christ before Damascus; when he knew 'that Christ liveth'; when he beheld, with his new-found vision, what was to be seen in the environment of the earth, and as an initiate of the Old Testament now knew that 'Once the earth was devoid of a certain light; now I see that light in it; therefore Christ must have been there. Therefore He who died on the Cross was Christ in Jesus of Nazareth!'

Thus Paul, on his way to Damascus, learned to understand the Event which was enacted upon Golgotha.

## LECTURE XIV

To the unprepared it may well appear strange that, yesterday, the name of the Father-Spirit of the world should have been associated with the name of death. But you must also remember the simultaneous statement that the form in which death appears to man in the physical world is not its true form. The outer world, inasmuch as it must necessarily appear subject to death, cannot present its true form; it cannot truly manifest the divine, spiritual Being which underlies it and upon which it is founded. Strictly speaking, this is equivalent to saying that man is subject to an illusion, to a great deception or maya regarding all that is displayed to his senses and that he perceives in space. Could he recognize the true form of things, he would be aware of the spirit. Could he recognize death in its true form, he would see therein precisely the expression which the sense-world must have, in order that it may itself be the expression of the divine Father-Spirit.

Before our earth could come into existence, it was necessary that an earlier, super-physical world should densify to physical matter or substance, in an earthly sense. Hence it was possible for the outer world to be the expression of a divine, spiritual world, which thus had something like a work of its own creation outside and beside itself. All previous forms of existence of our planet were of such a nature that they were contained more or less within the divine Being. On ancient Saturn there was as yet neither air, nor water, nor earth; that is, no solid body as we know it. Saturn was a body composed solely of warmth; it was neither more nor less than space filled with warmth; and all things on Saturn were as yet in the bosom of the divine Father-Spirit. And so it was too on the old Sun, though the latter was already densified to air. That planet of air — the old Sun — contained within itself (hence within the bosom of the divine, spiritual Being) all its creatures. On the old Moon, this was equally the case. On the Earth, Creation for the first time burst forth from the bosom of the divine, spiritual Being, and became something beside that divine Being. But into that which now existed side by side with the divine spiritual Being, and which grew into the robe, the garment, or physical corporeality of the human being, there now inserted themselves all the spirits which had fallen behind in their evolution. Owing to these circumstances, Creation did not become as it was destined to be, had it grown into an image of the divine, spiritual Being. This Being, having borne within itself all creatures — our mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms — sent them forth, spread as a carpet about itself. This was now an image of the divine, spiritual Being, and should have remained so. But the retardative element formerly expelled by the divine spiritual Being inserted itself into all this, and Creation became, as it were, dimmed in its lustre and of less value than it would otherwise have been.

This 'obscuration' arose in the period during which the separation of the Moon from the Earth was taking place — that period of which we said that, had no change taken place, and the Moon not been expelled, the Earth would have become a waste. But the human race had to be tended and cared for until man could achieve his independence. He had to clothe himself in a material body of earthly, physical substance, and was guided, from Lemurian times and onwards through the Atlantean period, in such a way that he became more and more able to incarnate in physical substance.

But in this physical substance were contained all the beings which had remained behind in their evolution. There was therefore no alternative for man but to incarnate in bodies beset by those beings. There were certain beings in Atlantean times who were then the companions of man. man himself was still clothed in a soft substance; what is now human flesh

was not then in its present condition. Had we seen a human being of ancient Atlantean times, when the air was drenched with heavy masses of dense vapour and when man was an aqueous being, we must have seen in him a resemblance to certain jelly-like creatures inhabiting the ocean and scarcely distinguishable from the water surrounding them. Such was the constitution of man in those times. He had all his organs, but these were in embryonic form and only gradually hardened; the human bones and so on developed by degrees and slowly. In the earliest stage, then, of Atlantean evolution there were also beings whom we might call the companions of men, the latter being as yet clairvoyant and able to see those beings whose actual dwelling place was the Sun, and who shed their light upon him in the Sun's rays. For it was not merely physical sunlight that streamed upon man; in that physical light, beings came towards him, beings whom he beheld. And when man himself was in a state comparable to sleep, he could say to himself: 'Now I am outside my body and in the sphere where the Sun-beings live.' Then came the time (towards the middle and last third of the Atlantean period) when the physical matter of the earth grew increasingly dense and man began to develop his self-consciousness. Then there were no longer such beings for man to see. These withdrew from the earth and became invisible to that sight with which man beheld the things of the earth. Through the Luciferic influence, the attraction by which man was drawn into sense matter became ever more powerful. It then became possible for a Being whom we must name Lucifer so to insinuate himself into the human astral body, that man descended ever deeper into a dense physical body. The beings, however, who were man's former companions rose ever higher. They would have nothing to do with the beings who remained behind, and broke away from these. The Luciferic beings entered into the human astral body, but the higher beings broke away from them and thrust them down, saying: 'Ye shall not rise with us! See how ye can find your way below!' One of those higher beings is represented to us in the figure of Michael who thrust the Luciferic beings down into the abyss and restricted their activity to the earthly sphere. Here they seek to exercise their powers in the astral bodies of men. The home of these beings was therefore no longer in 'Heaven'. They were thrust down to Earth by the other, higher beings whose scene of activity was to be found in Heaven. But all evil, all wickedness has its good aspect and is also grounded in the wisdom of the world. These beings had to be left behind in the world, in order that they should draw man down into physical matter, for here alone could man learn to address himself as 'I' and develop his self-consciousness. Without the entanglement in illusion or maya, man would never have learnt to address himself as 'I'. But he would have been overwhelmed by the powers of illusion, Lucifer-Ahriman, had they succeeded in holding him captive.

I must now make certain statements which I beg you to receive, I might say, with all the caution that has been developed in you by knowledge; for you will understand these thoughts aright only if you reflect upon them and take them literally, though not 'literally' in the usual materialistic sense.

What purpose had the Luciferic-Ahrimanic spirits in view with regard to the physical world? Having united themselves with human evolution in Atlantean times, what did they desire to accomplish with all the beings now in the world and under their influence?

These beings — Lucifer and Ahriman — desired nothing less than to preserve all beings on Earth in that form in which they are interwoven in dense matter. When, for instance, a plant grows, springs up from its root, sends forth leaf after leaf in its progress to flower, the intention of Lucifer and Ahriman is to prolong this budding and growth indefinitely; that is, to make the being which is striving to develop there, resemble and retain the physical form it inhabits, and thus wrest it from the spiritual world. For if they succeeded in making this being similar to its physical form, they would, we might say, sunder Heaven from the Earth. With all animals too, Luciferic and Ahrimanic spirits tend to make the spiritual part resemble the physical form which it inhabits, and make it forget, in matter, its divine spiritual origin. The same influence is at work in human beings.

In order that this might not be, the divine Father spoke: 'It is true that the beings of Earth have won for themselves, in man, their summit, the knowledge of external things in the Ego; but man may not yet be allowed power over life.' For the form which life would then assume would be such that the beings would be torn asunder from their divine root; man would identify himself with his physical body and would for ever forget his divine origin. It was to save the remembrance of man's spiritual origin that the divine Father-Spirit bestowed on all beings that strive downwards into matter the blessing of death. It thus became possible for the plant to shoot up, in its growth, till the moment of fructification and, at that moment, to begin to wither, in order that a new plant form should emerge from the seed. But when it enters the seed, the plant is for a moment in the divine spiritual world and is refreshed by that world. The same applies to man in particular. man would be spellbound on earth and would forget his spiritual origin were not the power of death extended over the earth; for death makes it possible for man to have continual access to new sources of strength, in the intervals between death and a new birth, so that he should not forget his divine origin.

When we come to scrutinize it, where can we find death on earth? Let us approach some being, say, a plant that delights our eye with its splendid blossoms. In a few months it is no longer there. Death has passed over it. Look at the animal, one that is attached to us or some other: in a short time it is no longer there. Death has passed over it. Behold the human being as he lives and moves in the physical world: after some time death passes over him and he is no more. For if he were still there he would forget his divine spiritual origin. Behold the mountain. The time will come when the volcanic activity of our earth will have swallowed up the mountain: death will have passed over it. Turn where we will, there is nothing in which death is not interwoven. Everything on earth is steeped in death. Thus death is a benefactor when it carries man out of an existence which would seclude him from the divine spiritual world. But it was essential that man should enter the world of the physical senses; for here alone could he gain his self-consciousness and human egoity. Were he to pass through death again and again, taking nothing with him from this kingdom of death, he would indeed return to the divine spiritual world but without consciousness, without egoity. He must carry that egoity with him into the spiritual world.

Therefore he must fructify the kingdom of earth, with which death is interwoven, so that death may become the seed of a selfhood in eternity, in the spiritual world. But it is the Christ-impulse which has made it possible for death (which would otherwise mean annihilation) to be transformed into a seed of everlasting selfhood. The true form of death was presented to mankind for the first time on Golgotha. By His union with death, Christ, the image of the Father-Spirit, made His death on Golgotha the starting-point of a new life, and, as we saw yesterday, of a new Sun. Henceforth it is true that everything in the nature of the former apprenticeship of humanity can now be discarded, since man has won for himself an Ego for eternity, and can advance into the future with his rescued self, which will to an increasing extent become the fashioned image of the Christ-self.

Let us take, for example, in this room, the first seven branches of this candelabrum, as a symbol of the first period of human evolution — the Saturn period. Every evolutionary period runs its course in seven smaller periods; thus we have in the first seven flames a symbol of the force which sustained man during the Saturn evolution. Again in the second group of seven lights we have a symbol of the forces which sustained man during the old Sun period. Similarly in the third group of seven lights we have a symbol of the forces which built up the human being during the old lunar evolution. And in the fourth group we have a symbol of all the forces by which man has been organized during the evolution of the earth. We see the central light still burning in this fourth group of seven; the next are but faintly visible. Here, then, where you see the central light, is the point of time when the Christ-light flashed upon evolution. Had not the Christ-impulse intervened, the other lights would never be kindled, nor could the succeeding periods of evolution follow. Today they are still in darkness. Now if we would represent future evolution in a similar symbolical way, we must allow the first light to die out, when the light next after the central is kindled and begins to burn brightly; and when the next following is lit, we must let the second light die out, and so on. For we have here the beginning of a new Sun evolution. When the lights have all been kindled to the last, the first will have been extinguished, because their fruits will have passed into the last lights and into the future. Thus we have a past evolution in which the moving force was the Father-Spirit. Had the Father-Spirit continued to work as before, the lights would have to be extinguished one by one, because Lucifer and Ahriman are interwoven in evolution. But the Christ-impulse has come; a new light now shines and a new cosmic Sun arises.

Yes, death as a consequence of Lucifer and Ahriman, is necessarily interwoven in all natural existence. Moreover, without Lucifer and Ahriman, man would never have attained independence. On the other hand, with these spirits alone, independence would have grown stronger and stronger, and in the end would have led to oblivion of man's divine spiritual origin. For this reason even the human body must partake of death. Of ourselves we could never have carried our selfhood into eternity, had not the outer expression of selfhood, which is in the blood, become subject to death.

We have in us the blood of life, the red stream, and the blood of death, in the blue stream. In order that our selfhood may live, the life in the red blood must every instant be destroyed in the blue blood. Were this life not killed, man would be submerged in life to the extent of forgetting his divine spiritual origin. Thus we have, in this room, as symbols of these two kinds of blood, two pillars, one red and the other blue; the one symbolizing life which indeed flows from the divine Father, but in a form in which it would lose itself; the other symbolizing the destruction of the first. Death is the stronger, the more powerful, and causes the destruction of the element which would otherwise become lost in itself. But annihilation of something which would otherwise annihilate itself signifies a call to resurrection. Thus you see that a true interpretation of the gospel of St. John enables us to gain insight into the meaning of all life. What we have learnt today and yesterday is, in substance, nothing less than the fact that at the point of our evolutionary age, when the Christian era begins with a new figure 'I', something took place which was of supreme importance for the whole evolution of the earth and of the universe, inasmuch as cosmic evolution is one with that of the earth. Yes, a new centre was then created when that Death was consummated on Golgotha. Since then the earth has remained united with the Christ-Spirit. He had gradually approached and since that moment is in the earth. It is therefore necessary that men should learn and know that the Christ-Spirit has been in the earth since that time, and is contained in everything that the earth produces. Failure to recognize the Christ-Spirit in things means viewing them from the standpoint of death, while the recognition of the Christ-Spirit means cognition from the standpoint of life.

We are at the beginning of specifically Christian evolution. Its future must bring the recognition of the entire Earth as the body of Christ. For Christ has dwelt in the Earth since that time and has created therein a new centre of light. He penetrates the Earth, sends His radiance forth into the world, and remains eternally united with the aura of the Earth. To see the Earth today devoid of the Christ-Spirit underlying it, means seeing nothing but the corruptible, perishing earth, the decomposing corpse; into however many small particles we split it up, we see nothing but the corpse of the earth in dissolution if we do not understand the Christ. Wherever we see nothing but material substances, we have an illusion before us. In the same way you do not find the truth concerning the human inhabitant of the Earth when you study his decaying corpse. If you study his corpse you cannot (without being inconsistent) but regard the earth and its elements as composed of material atoms, and it is quite immaterial whether they are extended in space or are centres of force. Atoms of which our earth is supposed to be composed can only be the corpse of the earth; something which is continually dissolving and will one day vanish when the earth itself is no more. For the Earth is in dissolution! The truth will escape us until we see in every atom a part of the Christ-Spirit which has been there since that time. Of what then does the earth consist, since it was penetrated by the Christ-Spirit? To the last atom the Earth consists of Life, since Christ permeated it, and atom is devoid of value nor can it be recognized in its true nature unless we see in it a sheath that encloses a spiritual part; this spiritual element is a part of Christ.

Now take anything that is of the Earth; when would you be judging of it correctly? When you said: 'This is a part of the body of Christ!' What else could Christ say to those who desired to know Him? In breaking the bread made of the corn of

the Earth, Christ could say to them: 'This is my body!' What could He say in giving them the juice of the vine, which is the juice of a plant? 'This is my blood!' Because He had become the soul of the Earth, He could say of that which is solid: 'This is my flesh!' and of the juice of the plant: 'This is my blood!' As we should say of our flesh: This is my flesh; and of our blood: This is my blood. Those who are able to grasp the true meaning of these words of Christ form for themselves thought-images which attract the body and blood of Christ in the bread and in the juice of the grape. They draw to themselves the Spirit of Christ therein and unite themselves with it.

Thus the symbol of the Last Supper becomes a reality. Without the thought of communion with Christ in the human heart, no power of attraction to the Christ-Spirit can arise in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. But by means of these thought-forms this power of attraction can be developed. For all those, therefore, who require an outer symbol to accomplish a spiritual act (the union with Christ) the Sacrament of Communion will be the way — that is, it will be the way until their inner strength has grown so powerful that they are filled with Christ and can untie themselves with Christ without the outer physical medium. The Sacrament of Communion is a preparation for the mystic union with Christ, a preparatory step. This is the light in which we must regard these things. And just as everything evolves from the physical upwards to the spiritual under the influence of the Christ-impulse, so everything originally intended as a link must also evolve under the influence of Christ. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper must evolve from the physical to the spiritual plane in order to lead to a true union with Christ. These things can only be slightly indicated, for they will not be rightly understood unless they are received with a full sense of their sacred nature.

It was incumbent on man to recognize Christ's presence in the Earth in consequence of the event of Golgotha. This recognition was to become ever clearer, penetrating all knowledge. For this purpose, however, mediators were necessary. One of the first great mediators was he who, from Saul, became Paul. What was it possible for Saul to know, in his character of Jewish initiate? We can express it roughly in the following words:

He could partake of all the knowledge in the possession of Jewish occult teaching; he could know what Moses had seen in the burning bush and in the thunder and lightning of Mount Sinai, as 'Ejeh asher ejeh', Jahve, or Jehovah; he knew that this was drawing near the Earth; had approached the Earth; and would once appear in a human body, and in this body effect the rejuvenation of the Earth. At the same time, however, he was governed by the opinions of his age and the Jewish law. He had witnessed the event of Golgotha, but he was not in a position to admit that He who died on the Cross was the Bearer of the Christ. The events which he had experienced and witnessed were not of a nature to convince him that He whose advent he had been led to expect in the sense of his Jewish initiation, had been incarnate in the body of Jesus of Nazareth. What was it, therefore, that he must needs experience in order to arrive at the conviction that the immortal Spirit of Christ was really present in the mortal body of Jesus of Nazareth on Golgotha?

From his Hebrew initiation Paul knew that if the Christ-Spirit had been in a human body and if that human body were dead, Christ must be present in the aura of the Earth. Then it would be possible for one who could behold the aura of the Earth with spiritual eyes, to behold Christ. This was known to Paul. Hitherto, however, he had been incapable of insight into the Earth-aura. He was, it is true, an initiate as far as wisdom was concerned, but not a seer. Yet he possessed, as he himself mentions, one of the first requisites to become a seer in an abnormal way. He alludes to it as an act of 'grace', bestowed upon him from above. He tells us that he was born prematurely or 'out of due time', as it is usually rendered. He was not borne the full term within the maternal organism. He had descended from the spiritual into the physical world before fully immersing himself in all the elements of earthly existence. He had entered the world before the unconscious ties, which unite us to the spiritual powers, are broken. Thus the vision of Damascus became possible for one whose spiritual eye was opened in consequence of his entry into the world out of due time. By his premature birth Paul; was predisposed to spiritual vision. He gazed into the Earth-aura and there beheld the Christ. The time, therefore, when Christ had trod the Earth in a human body must already have been! Here was the proof that Christ had died on the Cross! For He, of whom Paul knew that He should conquer death upon Earth, had appeared to him as the Living Christ. The meaning of the death on Golgotha was now clear to him. He knew that Christ had risen from the dead. For he whom he had now seen could never before have been beheld in the aura of the Earth. Paul now understood the words: 'It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks!'

What is meant by the 'pricks'? Paul himself has told us: 'O death, where is thy sting? In vain wouldst thou kick against the pricks; for didst thou do this thou wouldst only recognize death. But thou canst no longer kick against death; for thou hast seen Him who has vanquished death!'

In consequence of this experience, Paul became that apostle of Christianity who proclaimed above all things the living, the spiritually living Christ.

How was it possible to see Christ in the aura of the Earth? It was because the etheric body of Jesus of Nazareth was, needless to say, completely penetrated by Christ. It was therefore an etheric body which had the physical vehicle so completely under its mastery and dominion that it could reconstruct the physical body after death; that is, it could assume such a form that all the familiar features of the physical body were there again, but by the force of the etheric body itself. When therefore Christ was seen after His death, it was His etheric body which was seen. But for those who (through the strength imparted to them by these events) were able to recognize as a real body, not only a physical body, but also an etheric body bearing all the marks of the physical — for such, Christ was risen as a real Bodily Presence. And so He was in truth!

We are told in the Gospels that when man has so far progressed in his evolution that his corruptible part develops an incorruptible, he is then also endowed with a higher vision. Moreover we are told that Christ was recognized by those who had already at that time developed such higher vision. This is told plainly enough; only people fail to read what is actually in the Gospel. Take, for instance, the first appearance of Christ after the Crucifixion.

'But Mary was standing without at the tomb, weeping; so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she beholdest two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

'And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.

'And when she had said thus, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

'Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepeth thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.

'Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto Him in Hebrew, Rabboni, which is to say, Master.'

Now let us imagine that we had seen someone a few days ago, and that we see the same person again a few days later. Can you believe it possible that we should not recognize him? Can you believe that you would ask him whether he were the gardener, and where he whom you were seeking had been laid, when he himself was standing before you? But we are forced to believe this of Mary (or of her who is here alluded to as 'Mary'), if you assume that a physical eye could have recognized Christ and seen Him in the same way as physical eyes had seen Him before. Read the Gospel according to the Spirit!

In the first place the sacred force of the Words must penetrate the woman as a power. That was essential. The Words echoed in her heart and kindled within her the memory of everything which she had recently seen. And this made her spiritual eye capable of seeing the risen Christ. Does not Paul say the same?

In the case of Paul, it can never be doubted that he saw Christ with the spiritual eye, at a time when Christ was again to be found in the higher spiritual regions, in the aura of the Earth. What does Paul say? As a proof that Christ lives, he affirms that He had appeared, and brings forward, as appearances of equal importance, that: 'He had been seen by Cephas, afterwards by twelve. After that He was seen of about five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto the present, but some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen of James, then of all the apostles. And last of all, He was seen of me, also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle.'

He placed the visions of the others exactly on a par with his own — and his vision was possible only for spiritual sight. Paul therefore says plainly: 'In like manner as I have seen the Christ, so has He been seen by the others also.' Through all that they experienced, says Paul, the power was kindled in them to behold the Christ as One risen from the dead. Now we understand what Paul means. His view will at once be recognized as the anthroposophical spiritual view; that is, it assures us: 'There is a spiritual world, and when we contemplate this world with the power bestowed upon us by the Christ-impulse, we penetrate into it and find Christ Himself there, Him who underwent death on Golgotha!' This is what Paul meant to say. And it is possible for man (especially through what is known as Christian initiation), with patience and endurance, to acquire by degrees the faculties enabling him to behold the spiritual world — to behold Christ Himself face to face, in the spirit.

In other lectures I have often described the initial steps by which we rise to the vision of the Christ-Being Himself. The pupil must live over again all the steps described in the Gospel of St. John. Only the very briefest description can now be given of the manner in which the human being, when he resolves to live through a certain scale of feelings, can rise into the spiritual world which has been illuminated by the Light of Christ since the Crucifixion.

The pupil begins by saying to himself: 'I consider the plant; it flourishes and grows out of the mineral soil. But if the plant could be conscious, like man, it should bend to the mineral kingdom, to the soil out of which it has grown, and say: Thou stone art today a lower creation among the works of Nature than I; but without thee, lower kingdom, I could not subsist!' And likewise, if the animal were to approach the plant and feel that the plant is the support of its existence, it would reflect: 'As an animal, I am a higher being than thou, O plant; but without thee I could not exist!' And the animal would bow down with humility and say: 'To thee, lowly plant, which art humbler than I, I owe my existence!' And in the human kingdom too, it should be likewise. Everyone who has climbed higher on the ladder should bow down in a spiritual sense to the one below him, saying: 'Ye belong indeed to an inferior world,' but as the plant must bend to the stone, and the animal to the plant, so must man, at a higher stage, add: 'To thee who art humbler than I, I owe my existence!' Then, when the pupil has so steeped himself in the feeling of a universal humility, for weeks and months, perhaps for years, under the guidance of a teacher fitted for the task, there comes a moment for him in which he knows what is meant by the Washing of the Feet. For he has a direct spiritual vision of the act accomplished by Christ as He, a higher Being, bent before the Twelve and did wash their feet. And the whole significance of the act flashes on the pupil as a vision, and he

knows that the washing of the feet did take place. The bond of knowledge guides him so that he needs no further proof; he now gazes directly into the spiritual world and beholds Christ in the scene of the Washing of the Feet.

The pupil can then be led by the teacher, so that he can find strength to say: 'I will bear all the sorrows and sufferings that may come to me in the world, courageously and without murmuring. I will so steel myself against the pains and sorrows that they cease to be such for me, and I can realize that they are necessities in the world!' When the pupil has become sufficiently strong of soul, there grows up within him, out of that inner contemplation, the feeling of the Scourging. He experiences it spiritually in himself. The pupil is then instructed how to develop that force which belongs to a still higher stage, and which enables him not only to endure sorrow and suffering on the every hand, but also to say to himself: 'There is something so sacred to me that I am ready to give my very self for it. Should the whole world cover me with scorn and derision, this will still be the Holiest for me! Mockery and ridicule from all sides will not withhold me from the Holiest, even though I stand alone. I pledge myself to defend it!' The pupil then experiences inwardly, in the spirit, the Crowning with Thorns. He needs no historical records; his spiritual vision shows him the scene described in the Gospel of St. John as the Crowning with Thorns. Then, when the pupil learns, under suitable guidance, to regard his physical existence in a totally new light, then he learns to look upon his own body as something external, to be carried about with him; when this feeling and sensation have become so much a matter of course that he can say: 'I bear my physical body through the world like an outer instrument' he has reached the fourth stage of Christian initiation, the Bearing of the Cross. This does not make him a feeble ascetic; on the contrary, he learns to handle the instrument of his body much more effectually than before. When we learn to regard the body as something which we carry about with us, we have attained the fourth stage of Christian initiation, the Bearing of the Cross — then we have conquered for ourselves the power to behold in the spirit the scene in which Christ bears the Cross upon His back, as we have learnt, by the elevation of our soul, to carry our body like a piece of wood. Something then takes place which we must regard as the fifth stage of Christian initiation — what is called the Mystic Death. By our inner growth, everything around us, the whole physical world of sense, appears as if blotted out. Darkness compasses us about. Then comes a moment when the darkness is, as it were, rent asunder like a veil, and we see behind this physical world. While this moment lasts, something else takes place. We have learnt to know what sin and evil are; we recognize them in their true form — that is, we know, at this stage, what is meant by the Descent into Hell. Then we learn, while looking upon our body as something foreign to us, to regard everything else upon Earth as a part of ourselves, to the extent that our body is a part of ourselves, even as in the days of old clairvoyance. We learn to look upon the sufferings of others as those of a great organism to which we too belong; and we are united with the Earth inasmuch as we recognize the truth. We then have the experience of being laid in the Earth, the Burial. And being united with the Earth, we have also risen from it. For in this experience we have tasted what is meant by the words: 'The earth is in process of becoming a new Sun!' In these fourth, fifth, and sixth stages of Christian initiation we have attained the qualities enabling us to behold, in personal vision, the Event of Golgotha, and to live in intimate knowledge of it. We have now no need of traditional documents. These have served their purpose in leading us from step to step.

We have then reached the 7th stage, called the Ascension; in other words, the ascent into the spiritual world. This is the stage of which it is rightly claimed that no human language is capable of describing it; for no idea of it can be formed save by one who has learnt to think without the instrument of the brain. The miracle of the Ascension cannot become the object of thought save when the thinker has learnt to dispense with the physical brain as the instrument of thought.

Being capable of spiritual vision, they who were present as believers at the Crucifixion on Golgotha were in a position to see what was happening; they would have been able to see the Christ in the manner described to you, especially if He had revealed Himself to their opened spiritual eye in the aura of the Earth. They might have seen the Christ (even had he retained the same form, to a certain extent, which He had worn before), were it not that He, the Christ had won something for Himself by His conquest of death. We have now come to a conception which it is very difficult to grasp.

man learns ceaselessly inasmuch as he increasingly develops his capacities, upon whatever stage he finds himself. But not man alone; every being, from the lowest to the highest spiritual being, learns in the course of increasing development. What Christ accomplished as a divine being in the body of Jesus of Nazareth has already been described, in its effects and its fruits for humanity. But now let us ask: Did Christ undergo within Himself any experience which led Him also to a higher stage? Yes, He did; even divine, spiritual beings pass through experiences leading them on to more advanced stages. His experiences, his ascent to a still higher world, He revealed to those who had been His companions on Earth, in the Ascension. Thus, one who is dependent upon the physical brain as the instrument of thought, who is neither an initiate nor a clairvoyant, can understand the first six stages of Christian initiation even if he cannot see them. But the 7th stage, the Ascension, can be understood by the seer alone — by one who is not limited to the instrument of the physical brain and who has experienced in himself what it signifies to think and to see independently of the brain. Such is the connection among these things.

Such was the course of the world's evolution during the period of which we have been privileged to speak in our 14 lectures.

We have seen how the Christ indicated that, in the case of the man born blind and healed by Himself, the offences committed by the man in a former life were to be made manifest. Thus when Christ appeared to humanity, He taught the doctrine of reincarnation, in as far as it could be understood. He taught Karma, the extension of causes from one incarnation to another; he taught it as one giving a practical lesson from life. He meant to say: 'There will be a future time when all men will believe in karma and will understand that if a man commits an evil action, it is needless to punish him

by an outer earthly tribunal; for that evil action necessarily brings in its train its own adjustment in this or a following incarnation. It is then only necessary to inscribe his deed in the great Law-book of the Akashic records, in the spiritual world. We, as men, need not condemn him, and can confide his offence to the spiritual laws, to be recorded in the spiritual world. We can leave the man to his Karma.'

'Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. And early in the morning He came again into the Temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them.

'And the Scribes and Pharisees brought a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery in the very act. Now Moses in the Law commanded us that such should be stoned, but what sayest thou?

"This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him.

'But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground.'

What did He write? He inscribed the sin in the spiritual world. And that sin will find its adjustment from out the spiritual world. But he reminded the others if perchance they themselves were conscious of no sin. For unless they themselves had nothing for which to make amends, they could not feel free from participation in the woman's sin and were unfit to judge her. As it was, they could not know whether perchance, in a former life, they had influenced this woman in such a way that she now committed adultery; they could not know whether they had not themselves committed this sin or laid the foundation of it in a former life. Everything is written in the book of Karma. Jesus wrote in the Earth, which He had already permeated with His spiritual light; that is, he confided to the Earth what should lie in the Karma of the adulteress. He meant to say: 'Follow the path which I now mark out for you. Learn to say: We judge not; we leave that which is in the human being to the adjustment of karma.' If we follow this rule we shall understand Karma. We need not teach it as a dogma; we have taught it in practice. That is how Christ taught it.

But such things could, of course, be written only by the one of Christ's pupils and disciples who had been initiated by Himself: Lazarus-John. Hence this was the only disciple who understood in full measure what results when a being has acquired the power (from the moment of the Baptism by John) to make himself master over the physical body, in the etheric body, so that the latter revives the physical body. Therefore the writer of the Gospel of St. John knew that it was possible to transform what appears outwardly as water, so that it becomes changed into wine by being taken into the human organism, when it is drunk. For this reason he understood that with a small number of fishes and loaves it is possible so to work through the power of the etheric body that the people's hunger is stilled. This is related to us by the writer of St. John's Gospel, if only we take the Gospel seriously. Where does he tell us that the few loaves and the few fishes were eaten as physical food is usually eaten? Nowhere do we find this stated, if you search the whole Gospel! He tells us plainly and distinctly, if we only take the words literally, that Christ broke the bread, but that He first gave thanks to Heaven:

'And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, He distributed to His disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down, and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would.'

The meaning of these words, when we read them in the original (they are badly rendered in German), is somewhat as follows:

The disciples distributed the loaves and the fishes and left it to everyone to do with them what they would. But in that moment no one desired anything but to feel the power issuing from the mighty etheric body of Christ Jesus. No one desired anything else; and by what were they satisfied? In the 23rd verse we read:

'Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread after that the Lord had given thanks.'

Through the giving of thanks, it was, that they had eaten the bread! They had not partaken of bread by performing the physical act of eating. Hence Christ could afterwards interpret the occurrence by saying: 'I am the bread of life!'

What then had they eaten? They had partaken of the power of the body of Christ! What could it be that remained over? Nothing but the power of the body of Christ! This worked so mightily that a remainder could afterwards be gathered in.

According to occult teaching, every body is composed of 12 members. The topmost member of the body is called the ram; the next, the bull; that represented by the hands, the twins; the breast is called the crab; the region of the heart is called the Lion; the part below (the trunk) is called the virgin; the hips are called the balance; below that again, the scorpion; then the thigh is called the archer; the knee, the goat; the skin, the waterman, and the feet, the fishes.

Thus the human body is divided into 12 members, and with good reason. Now when they gathered the remainder, after the power of the body of Christ had been used to satisfy hunger, they must necessarily do so in 12 measures.

'Therefore they gathered them together and filled 12 baskets with the fragments of the 5 barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.'

They had eaten the barley loaves; they had partaken of the force that proceeded from Christ. And they were filled with that force through the giving of thanks, when Christ called upon the spiritual realms from which He had descended. It is this way that we understand the working of the spiritual in the physical world. Thus we can also understand how the separate events group themselves within the central event — the evolution of our Earth into a Sun. They take their place as mighty generators of force in the Sun-genesis of our Earth. Therefore it will also be clear to us that then mighty impulse which was then communicated to the Earth could reach man only by degrees, slowly and gradually.

We pointed out yesterday that the Gospel of St. Mark was best adapted to be the first bringer of the great truths to those mature enough to receive them. This was the case in the earliest centuries of Christianity. Man was to regain by his own efforts the region from which he had issued. Let us endeavour to understand clearly how man himself, descending from spiritual heights, had reached the lowest depths at the time when the Event of Golgotha brought him the impulse to strive upwards again. Man had descended from divine spiritual heights and had fallen lower and lower. Then came the Christ-impulse and bestowed upon him the strength, when he permeated himself with the newborn spiritual light, to recover by degrees all that had once been his own, in the following way. In the period immediately following the life of Christ upon Earth, it was man's task to regain what he had lost during the centuries immediately preceding Christ's advent; this he was enabled to accomplish with the help of St. Mark's Gospel. Next, the Gospel of St. Luke, which directed man's attention to the inner life, was to help him reconquer what he had lost at a still earlier period.

But we said that 600 years before Christ's appearance on Earth, all that had been spiritually bestowed on mankind in earlier centuries and then been gradually lost, was embodied in the great individuality of Buddha. He comprised all the ancient wisdom existing in the world — all that mankind had lost and which he now had come to proclaim. Thus we are told that his birth was foretold to his mother Maya. It is further related that a prophet appeared who announced respecting the child: 'This is the child who will become the Buddha, the Redeemer, the guide to immortality, freedom, and light.' Other Buddha legends narrate further that Buddha, as a 12 year old boy, was once lost and that he was found sitting under a tree, surrounded by the minstrels and sages of older times, whom he taught. In my book **Christianity as Mystical Fact** you may read how, 600 years after Buddha, the same legends related of Buddha appear in the Gospel of St. Luke; how the truths revealed by Buddha came to light again, in a new form, in the Gospel of St. Luke. Hence we find in that Gospel the content of the Buddha legends. So perfect is the agreement in such matters, when they are examined in the light of spiritual research.

Thus the conviction is borne in upon us that the Gospel of St. John and the Gospels associated with it contain an infinity of depth. We have considered these depths in a series of lectures. Could we continue these lectures and double their length, we should still be able to extract new profound truths from the Gospels. And were we to double the time already doubled and then again double the result, there would still be new depths to fathom. We should have an inkling of new and ever new depths yet to be explored beneath the surface of these profound documents, in ages of human evolution to come. Man can indeed never cease learning from the interpretation of these documents. We need add nothing of our own to them; we need only prepare ourselves, with the help of occult truths, to discern what is really contained in the Gospels. Then the universal coherence of humanity, and again, the connection of humanity as a whole with the Cosmos will be revealed to us. This gives us a deeper and ever deeper insight into the spiritual world.

But we must not forget, after listening to a course of lectures like the present, to reflect that we have not merely added to our store of knowledge; not merely imbibed a number of isolated truths. This would be the least important part of the matter, although it is indispensable for the essential part. That, however, which should especially accrue to us from such considerations, is that everything which our mind has opened to receive, may, if we let it sink into our hearts, grow into a feeling for the cause, into emotions, and even into impulses of will. When the truths which we have taken into our intelligence have made our hearts glow, they become a force within us — a healing force for spirit, soul, and body. And then we say to ourselves: 'We were plunged into the life of the Spirit during the time we contemplated the things of the spirit, and we acquired much from this spiritual life during our 14 days' study. But our gain has not been merely one of empty concepts and ideas, but of such conceptions and ideas as have the power to become a source of life within the soul — a living force in our feelings and emotions. These will remain in us; we can never lose them — we carry them with us into the world. Not only have we learnt something but we have grown more alive through all that we have learnt.' Let us leave this lecture-cycle with feelings such as these; and spiritual science will become the content of our lives; something which, far from estranging us from ordinary life, will resemble an image of that which has been held up to us in these lectures as the Highest. It has been shown that death is indeed indispensable in the world, but that our view of death is not the right one. Christ has taught us to see death in the true light, and, in this light, death becomes the seed of a higher life.

Outside, beyond the sphere of these lectures, life surges, everyday existence runs its course. Human beings are merged in this existence. Spiritual investigation will not diminish that life by an atom. It will take nothing from it. But the opinions which are generally held regarding life, before the spirit has permeated it, are erroneous, and this error must appear to us as the illusion of life. This illusion it is, which we must allow to die out in us. Then, from the seed which we have gained through the illusion, a higher life will grow up within us. But this can only be if we receive into ourselves the living, spiritual view of things. This does not make ascetics of us in life; rather does it teach us to know life in its true form, so that we may carry with us into life a true command of the same, and a real gain. In this way we Christianize life to the

extent to which we ourselves experience spiritual science in a Christian way, and find in it an image of that image of life which we see in death. Inasmuch as spiritual science guides our mode of thought, far from becoming estranged from life, we learn to know to what extent our views of life were wrong. Then we enter life strengthened by a right knowledge of it; far from retiring from life, we go forth as workers, having gained strength and vigour by a course of study such as the present, which leads us into the spiritual world.

If I have succeeded, even in a small measure, in giving to these lectures a form by which they may become fruitful for life; if they contribute, even in a slight degree, to enable you to feel spiritual knowledge as an elevation of life, as vital warmth in your feeling, thinking, and willing, and in your work — then the light which we have derived from our anthroposophical conceptions of the world may shine forth as the warm glow — as the fire of life. And if this fire is strong enough to keep alight and to burn on through life — then that has been attained which was my aim when I undertook to deliver these lectures.

With these words I would beg you to lay to heart the feelings which have been expressed to you, as a subject of inner meditation.