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ROSICRUCIANISM AND
MODERN INITIATION

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ROSICRUCIANISM AND MODERN INITIATION

MYSTERY CENTRES OF THE
MIDDLE AGES

RUDOLF STEINER

Six lectures given in Dornach,
4th-13th January 1924

• RUDOLF STEINER PRESS
LONDON

First Edition 1950 (printed as Part II of the volume entitled,
The Mission of Christian Rosenkreutz)
 Second Edition (revised) 1965
 Third Edition (revised) 1982

Translated by Mary Adams from shorthand notes unrevised by the lecturer. The text from which this translation has been made is entitled,

Mysterienstätte des Mittelalters: Rosenkreuzertum und modernes Einweihungsprinzip. These lectures are included in a volume of the Complete Centenary Edition of the works of Rudolf Steiner bearing the general title:

Die Weltgeschichte in anthroposophischer Beleuchtung und als Grundlage der Erkenntnis des Menschengestes (No. 233 in the Bibliographical Survey, 1961).

This English edition is published in agreement with the Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, Dornach, Switzerland.

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 1982 Rudolf Steiner Press, London

ISBN 85440 381 7 (paperback)

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ABOUT THE TRANSCRIPTS OF LECTURES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The six lectures contained in the present volume followed eight given by Rudolf Steiner at the Christmas Foundation Meeting of the General Anthroposophical Society (24th to 31st December 1923) and subsequently published in English under the title, *World History on the Light of Anthroposophy*. That Course had been preceded by fourteen lectures on the ancient Mysteries, published in English with the title, *Mystery Knowledge & Mystery Centres*.

1

RESEARCH INTO THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT
DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

Dornach 4th January, 1924

Following on what I had to bring before you in the lectures given at our Christmas Foundation Meeting, I would like now to speak of the movement that is leading us in modern times to research into the life of the spirit. I refer to the movement that is spoken of under the name of Rosicrucianism (or is given some other occult designation), and I should like to take this opportunity of giving you a picture of it in its inner aspect and nature. It will be necessary first of all, by way of introduction, to say something about the whole manner of forming ideas that had become customary round about the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries A.D., and that has since then only gradually disappeared; for it can be found here and there—among stragglers, as it were—even as late as the nineteenth century. I do not intend today to go into the whole history of the movement, but rather to put forward some conceptions and ideas that you are to think of as inwardly experienced by certain people belonging to those earlier centuries. For it is not generally realised that we have only to go back a comparatively short time in history, to find that the men who were accounted scholars were possessed of a world of ideas altogether different from our own.

In these days we speak of chemical substances, and we enumerate seventy or eighty distinct chemical elements: but we have no idea how very little we are saying when we name

one substance oxygen, another nitrogen, and so on. Oxygen, for instance, is something that is present only under certain definite conditions—conditions of warmth, e.g.—and no reasonable person can unite a conception of *reality* with something that, when the temperature is raised by so and so many degrees, is no longer present in the same measure or manner as it is under the conditions that obtain for man's physical life on Earth. It was the realisation of facts like this that underlay research during the earlier centuries of the Middle Ages; the research of those times set out to get beyond what has only relative existence and arrive at real existence.

I have frequently spoken of a transition as between the ninth and tenth centuries A.D., for up to this time man's perceptions were still altogether spiritual. It would never, for example, have occurred to a scholar of the ninth century to imagine Angels, Archangels, or Seraphim as falling short in respect of reality—purely, I mean, in respect of *reality*—of the physical men he saw with his eyes. You will find that before the tenth century, scholars always speak of the spiritual Beings, the so-called *Intelligences of the Cosmos*, as one does of beings one actually meets in life. The men of that time were of course well aware that the day was long past when the "beholding" of spiritual Beings had been common human experience, but they knew that in certain circumstances some apprehension of their presence could still be had. One must not, for instance, overlook the fact that on into the ninth and tenth centuries countless priests of the Catholic Church were quite conscious of how, in the course of their celebration of the Mass, it would happen that in this or that act of the ritual they encountered spiritual Beings, Intelligences of the Cosmos. With the coming of the tenth century, however, all such direct and immediate contact with the Intelligences of the Universe began to disappear from men's consciousness; and there began to light up in its place consciousness of the *elements of the Cosmos*—the earthy element, the fluid or watery, the airy, the warm or fiery. And

so it came about that just as hitherto men had spoken of Cosmic Intelligences that rule the movements of the planets, that lead the planets across the constellations of the fixed stars, and so forth, now they began to speak rather of the immediate environment of the Earth. They spoke of the elements of earth, water, air, fire. Of chemical substances in the modern sense of the word, they did not as yet take account; that came much later. And indeed it would be a great mistake to imagine that scholars of the fourteenth century, even in some sense scholars of the eighteenth century, had ideas of the elements—warmth, air, water, earth—that resembled the ideas we have today. Warmth is spoken of today merely as a condition in which bodies exist. No one speaks any longer of actual warmth-ether. Air, water—these have likewise become for modern man completely abstract conceptions. It is time we studied the ideas of these earlier centuries and learned to enter into a true understanding of them. And so today I should like to give you a picture, showing you how a scholar of those times would speak to his pupils.

When I wrote my *Occult Science* I was obliged to make the account of the evolution of the Earth accord just a little with the prevailing ideas of the present day. In the thirteenth century one would have been able to give the account quite differently. The following might then have been found in a certain chapter, for instance, of *Occult Science*. An idea would have been called up, to begin with, of the Beings who may be designated as the Beings of the First Hierarchy: *Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones*. The Seraphim would have been characterised as Beings with whom there is no subject and object, with whom subject and object are one and the same, Beings who would not say: "Round about me are various objects", but: "The world is, and I am the World, and the World is I." Such Beings know only of *themselves*, and this knowledge of themselves is for them an inner experience

of which man has a weak reflection, when he is filled, let me say, with a *burning enthusiasm*. It is, you know, often quite difficult to make the man of today understand what is meant by "burning enthusiasm"! In the beginning of the nineteenth century men still knew better what it is than they do today. In those days it could still happen that some poem or other was being read aloud and the people were so filled with enthusiasm—forgive me, but it really was so!—that present-day man would say they had all gone out of their minds. So moved were they, so warmed! Today people freeze up just when you expect them to be "enthused". Now it was by becoming conscious of this element of enthusiasm, this rapture of the soul that used to come quite naturally to the men of Middle and Eastern Europe—it was by lifting this experience into consciousness, by making it the complete content of consciousness, that men had to form an idea of the inner life of the Seraphim. And as a bright, clear element in consciousness, full of light, so that *thought turns at once into light*, illuminating everything—such was the idea men formed of the element of consciousness of the Cherubim. And the element of consciousness of the Thrones was conceived as *sustaining, bearing the worlds, in grace*.

There you have one sketch such as could have been drawn for that earlier consciousness. I could go on speaking about it for a long time. For the moment, I wanted only to tell you how in those days one would first of all have tried to describe the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones in the true qualities of their being.

One would then have gone on to say: The choir of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones works together, in such wise that the Thrones found and establish a kind of seed or kernel; the Cherubim let their own light-filled being stream forth from this centre; and the Seraphim enwrap the whole in a mantle of warmth and enthusiasm that rays far out into cosmic space.*

* Drawings were made from here onwards on the blackboard with coloured chalks.

All the drawing I have made is *Beings*; in the midst, the Thrones; around them, the Cherubim; and outermost of all, the Seraphim. All is essential being—Beings who move and weave into one another, do, think, will, feel in one another. It is all being. And now, if some other being having the right sensitiveness were to take its path through the space where the Thrones have in this manner established a kernel, where the Cherubim have made a kind of circling around it and the Seraphim have, as it were, enveloped the whole—if a being with the required sensitiveness were to come into this realm of activity of the First Hierarchy, it would feel warmth in varying differentiations: here greater warmth, there less. It would all be an experience of soul, and yet at the same time sense-experience; that is to say, when the being felt warm in soul, the feeling would be the feeling you have when you are in a well-warmed room.

Such a united building-up by Beings of the First Hierarchy did verily once take place in the Universe; it formed what we call the Saturn existence. The warmth is merely the expression of the fact that *these Beings are there*. The warmth is nothing more than the expression of the fact that the Beings are there.

Let me try to make clearer to you what I mean. Suppose you have an affection for a certain person. His presence gives you warmth. But now someone comes along who is frightfully abstract and says: "The man himself doesn't interest me, I will think him away; the warmth he sheds around him, *that* is what interests me." Or suppose he doesn't even say: "*The warmth he sheds around him* is all that interests me." Suppose he says: *The warmth as such* is all that interests me." He talks nonsense, of course, you see that at once; for if the man is not there who sheds the warmth, then is the warmth not there. The warmth is only there when the man is there. In itself it is nothing. The man must be there, if the warmth is to be there. Even so must Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones be there; if the Beings are not there, neither is the warmth. The warmth is merely the revelation of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones.

Now in the time of which we are telling, everything was for man just as I have described it, even to the picture that I have drawn on the blackboard. Men spoke of elements. By the element of warmth they understood Cherubim, Seraphim, Thrones—and that is the Saturn existence, that is Saturn.

And now the description would go further. It would be said: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones—these alone have the power to bring forth something of the nature of Saturn. None but the highest Hierarchy is capable of placing such an existence into the Cosmos. But when this highest Hierarchy had once placed it there to start a new world-becoming, then evolution could go further. This "Sun" of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones could carry evolution further. And it came to pass in the following manner. Beings of the Second Hierarchy—*Kyriotetes, Dynamis, Exusiai*—Beings generated by the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones, pressed into the space that had been "formed" through the working of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones, formed and fashioned to Saturn warmth. Thither now entered younger, cosmically younger Beings. And how do these cosmically younger Beings work? Whereas Cherubim, Seraphim and Thrones revealed themselves in the element of warmth, the Beings of the Second Hierarchy take form in the element of light. Here (see drawing) you have Saturn; it is dark, it gives warmth. And now within the dark world of Saturn something new begins to arise through the working of the sons of the First Hierarchy, through *Exusiai, Dynamis* and *Kyriotetes*. What is it that is able now to arise within the Saturn warmth? The penetration of the Second Hierarchy signifies an *inner illumination*. Saturn warmth is inwardly shone through with light. (At the same time it also becomes denser; instead of the warmth element alone, there is now also *air*.) We have thus the entry of the Second Hierarchy, coming to revelation in light.

You must clearly understand that it is in very deed and truth *Beings* who press their way into the Saturn existence.

One who has the requisite power of perception sees the event as a penetration of light; the light reveals the path of the Beings. And where light enters, there we find too, under certain conditions, shadow, darkness, dark shadow. Through the penetration by the Second Hierarchy in the form of light, shadow also comes about.

What was this shadow? It was *air*. Right on into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries men knew for a fact what air is. Today we know only that air consists of oxygen, nitrogen and so forth—which is much the same as saying that a watch consists of glass and silver. That really tells me nothing at all about the watch as watch. And nothing at all is told about air as a cosmic phenomenon when it is said to consist of oxygen and nitrogen. We tell very much, on the other hand, if we know: Air comes forth from the Cosmos as the *shadow of light*. In actual fact we have, with the entry of the Second Hierarchy into the Saturn warmth, the entry of light and of the shadow of light, air. And therewith we have "Sun". Such is the way one would have had to speak in the thirteenth century.

And what follows after this? The further evolution comes about through the working of the sons of the Second Hierarchy: the *Archai, Archangels, Angels*. The Second Hierarchy have accomplished the entry of the element of light, light that has drawn after it its shadow, the darkness of air, not the indifferent, neutral darkness that belongs to Saturn—the darkness that is simply absence of light—but the darkness that is the antithesis of light. And now to this element of light the Third Hierarchy—*Archai, Archangels, Angels*—add by virtue of their nature and being a new element, an element that is like our human desire, like our impulse to strive after something, to long for something. And thereby the following comes to pass.

Say some *Archai*- or *Archangel-Being* enters *here*, and comes upon an element of light, encounters, as it were, a place of light. In this place of light the Being will then receive,

through its very receptivity for the light, the urge, the desire for darkness. The Angel Being carries light into darkness—or an Angel Being may carry darkness into light. These Beings become thus mediators, messengers between light and darkness. And as a result of this what previously has only shone in light and drawn after it its shadow, the darkness of air, begins now to shine in *colour*, to glow in a play of colour. Light begins to appear in darkness, darkness in light. The Third Hierarchy create colour; *out of light and darkness they conjure forth colour.*

In this connection we may turn to something historical, something that is to be found in written document. For in the time of Aristotle men still knew, when they gave themselves up to contemplation in the Mysteries, whence colours come; they knew that it is the Beings of the Third Hierarchy who have to do with colour. Aristotle himself, in his colour harmony, declares that colour signifies a working together of light and darkness. But this spiritual element in man's thought, whereby he knew that behind warmth he has to see Beings of the First Hierarchy, behind light and its shadow darkness, Beings of the Second Hierarchy, and behind the iridescent play of colour, shimmering in a great cosmic harmony, Beings of the Third Hierarchy—this spiritual element in man's thought has been lost. And nothing is left for man today but the unhappy Newtonian Theory of Colour. The Initiates continued to smile at Newton's theory until the eighteenth century; then it became an article of faith for professional physicists.

One must really have lost all knowledge of the spiritual world when one can speak in the sense of Newton's Theory of Colour. Anyone who is still inwardly stimulated by the spiritual world, as was the case with Goethe, will resist it. He will place before men the truth of the matter, as Goethe did, and attack with all his might. Goethe never censured so severely as when he had to censure Newton, he went for him and his theory hammer and tongs! Such a thing is incomprehensible

nowadays—for the simple reason that in our time anyone who does not recognise the Newtonian Theory of Colour is a fool in the eyes of the physicists!* But things were different in Goethe's time. He did not stand alone. True, he stood alone as one who spoke openly on the matter; but there were others who knew, even as late as the end of the eighteenth century, whence colour comes, who knew with absolute certainty how colour wells up from within the Spiritual.

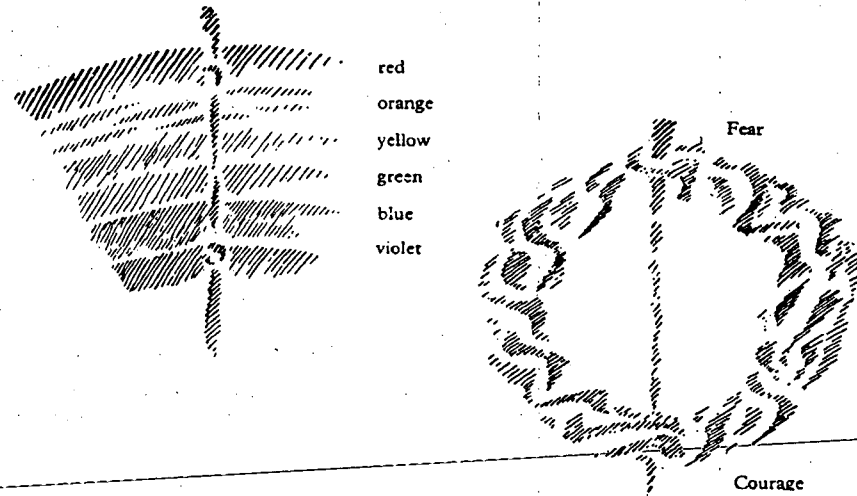
And now let us follow evolution further. We have seen that air is the shadow of light. And as, when light arises, under certain conditions we find the dark shadow, so when colour is present and works as a reality—and it can do so, when it penetrates into the air element, when it flames up in this air, when in a word it is something, is a reality flashing and sparkling in the element of air—when this is so, then under certain conditions we get pressure, counter-pressure, and out of the quite real colour there comes into being the fluid element of *water*. As, for cosmic thinking, the shadow of light is air, so is water the reflection, the creation of colour in the Cosmos.

You will say: No, that I can *not* understand! But try for once really to grasp colour in its true meaning. Red—surely you do not think that red is, in its essence, the neutral surface it is generally regarded as being? Red is something that makes an attack upon you. I have often spoken of this. You want to run away from red; it thrusts you back. Blue-violet, on the other hand, you want to run after! It runs away from *you* all the time; it grows deeper and deeper. In the colours everything is alive. The colours are a world in themselves, and the soul element in the world of colour simply cannot exist without movement; we ourselves, if we follow the colours with soul-experience, must follow with movement.

People gaze open-eyed at the rainbow. But if you look at

* These words were spoken more than forty years ago, when the scientific study of colour was largely limited to physics. Today it is usual to take a much broader view.

the rainbow with a little imagination, you may see there elemental beings. These elemental beings are full of activity, and they demonstrate their activity in a most remarkable manner.



Here (at yellow) you see some of them streaming forth from the rainbow, continually coming out of it. They move across, and the moment they reach the lower end of the green they feel drawn to it. You see them disappear at this point (green). On the other side they come out again. To one who views it with imagination, the whole rainbow is a revelation of the spiritual—of the streaming out, and disappearing again within, of the spiritual. It is in fact like a spiritual cylinder, wonderful to behold. And you may observe too how these spiritual beings come forth from the rainbow with extreme fear, and then how they go in with an absolutely invincible courage. When you look at the red-yellow, you see fear

streaming out, and when you look at the blue-violet you have the feeling: there all is courage and bravery of heart.

Picture it to yourself: What I see before me is not just a rainbow! *Here* beings are coming out of it . . . *there* beings are disappearing into it. *Here* is anxiety and fear . . . *there* is courage . . . And now the courage disappears again. That is the way to look at the rainbow! But now, imagine it is there before you in all its colours: red, yellow and so forth . . . and it receives a certain density! You can easily imagine how this will give rise to the element of *water*. And in this watery element spiritual beings live, beings that are actually a kind of copy of the Beings of the Third Hierarchy.

There is no doubt about it: if we want to get near the men who were possessed of real knowledge in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we must be ready to understand such things. As a matter of fact, without this we cannot approach even the men of still later times. We cannot understand Albertus Magnus, if we read him with the knowledge we have today. ~~We must read him with a kind of knowledge that takes account of the fact that spiritual things such as we have been considering were still a reality for him: only then shall we understand how he uses his words.~~

Thus we have air and water, coming into existence as a reflection of the Hierarchies, first air and then water. The Hierarchies themselves dive in, as it were. The First Hierarchy pour in their very selves as warmth, the Second enter in the form of light, and the Third Hierarchy as colour. And therewith we have reached the Moon stage of our Earth.

Now we come to the *Fourth Hierarchy*. I am telling it you, remember, as it was thought of in the twelfth to thirteenth century. We today do not speak of the Fourth Hierarchy, but men still did so then. What is this Fourth Hierarchy? It is *Man*. Man himself is the Fourth Hierarchy. But by the Fourth Hierarchy was not meant the two-legged being that goes about the world today, ageing year by year! To one who had true knowledge, Man as we know him on Earth today would

have seemed a strange being indeed. No, in those times they spoke of original Man, of Man before the Fall, who still bore a form that gave him power over the Earth, even as the Angels and Archangels and Archai had power over the Moon stage of our Earth, the Second Hierarchy over the Sun stage and the First Hierarchy over the Saturn stage. They spoke of Man in his original existence as Earth Man, and then they were right to speak of him as the Fourth Hierarchy. And with this Fourth Hierarchy came—as a gift, it is true, of the higher Hierarchies, but the higher Hierarchies had been holding it only as a possession they did not themselves use but guarded and protected—with the Fourth Hierarchy came *life*. Into the world of colour, into the iridescent world of changing colour, of which I have only been able to give you the merest hints and suggestions, came life.

You will say: Was then nothing alive before this time? My dear friends, you can understand how it was by looking at Man himself. Your Ego and your astral body have not life, yet they have being, they *are*. That which is of the soul and spirit does not need life. Life begins only with your etheric body. And the etheric body is something external, it is of the nature of a sheath. Thus it is only after Moon, only with the present Earth stage of existence that life enters into the evolution to which our Earth belongs. *The world of moving, glancing colour is quickened to life*. And now not only do Angels and Archangels and Archai experience a longing desire to carry darkness into light, and light into darkness, thereby calling forth the play of colour in the planet; now a desire becomes manifest to experience this play of colour as something *inward*, to feel it all inwardly: when darkness dominates light, to feel weakness, lassitude; when light dominates darkness, to feel activity. For what is really happening, when you run? When you run, light is predominating in you over darkness; when you sit and are lazy and indolent, then darkness is predominating over light. It is all a play of colour, an iridescent play of colour, not physical, but of the soul. Colour per-

meated with *life*, in its iridescence streamed-through with life—that is what appeared with the coming of the Fourth Hierarchy, Man. And in this moment of cosmic becoming, the forces that had been active in the play of colour began to build contours, began to fashion forms. Life, as it rounded off and moulded the colours, called into being the *hard, firm form of the crystal*. And this brings us to the *Earth* stage of existence.

Such things as I have been describing to you were fundamental truths for the mediaeval alchemists and occultists, Rosicrucians and others, who flourished (though history tells us little of them) from the ninth and tenth on into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and of whom stragglers are to be found as late as the eighteenth and even at the beginning of the nineteenth century—in these later times however always regarded as strange and eccentric people. Only then did the knowledge become entirely hidden. Only then did men begin to acquire a conception of the world that led them to a point of view that I would like to indicate in the following way. Imagine, my dear friends, that here we have a man. Suppose I cease to have any interest in this man, but I take his clothes and hang them on a coat-hanger that has a knob here above. From now on I take no further interest in the man and I tell myself: *There* is the man! I have no concern with what can be put into these clothes. *That*, the coat-hanger with the clothes on it, is the man! This is what really happened with the elements. It did not interest people any longer that behind warmth or fire is the First Hierarchy, behind light and air the Second Hierarchy, behind what we call chemical ether or colour ether etc. and water the Third Hierarchy, and behind the life element and earth the Fourth Hierarchy—Man. The peg, with the hanger, and on it the clothes—that is all!

There you have the first Act of the Drama. The second Act begins with Kant! There is the hanger, and the clothes hanging on it; and clever people begin to philosophise in true Kantian fashion as to what the “thing-in-itself” of these clothes

may be. And they come to the conclusion that the "thing-in-itself" of the clothes cannot be known. Very clever, very clever indeed! Do away with the man and have only the coat-hanger with the clothes, and you can of course proceed to philosophise over the clothes, you can make most beautiful speculations! You can either philosophise in the way Kant did, and say: "The 'thing-in-itself' cannot be known," or in the fashion of Helmholtz and think to yourself: "But these clothes, they cannot *of themselves* have forms; there is nothing really there but tiny, whirling specks of dust, tiny atoms, which hit and strike each other, and behold, the clothes are held in their form!"

Yes, my friends, that is the way thought has developed in recent times. It is all abstract, shadowy. And this is the kind of thinking we live in today, this speculative way of thinking; it gives the stamp to our whole natural-scientific outlook. And when we do not admit that we think in this atomistic way, then we do it most of all! For we are far from being ready to admit that it is quite unnecessary to dream in this way of a whirling dance of atoms, and that what we have rather to do is to put back the *man* into the clothes. This is however the very thing the renewal of Spiritual Science must now set out to do.

I wanted to indicate to you today, in a series of pictures, how men thought in earlier centuries and to help you to see what is really contained in the older writings, although it has been obscured. The obscurity has led to incidents that are not without interest. A Swedish scientist* of today has reprinted a passage from the writings of Basil Valentine and has interpreted it in terms of modern chemistry. He could not possibly come to any other conclusion than that it is nonsense, for that is what it appears to be if, in the modern sense, one thinks of a chemist standing in a laboratory, making experiments with retorts and other up-to-date apparatus. What Basil Valentine

* *Theodor Svedberg*, author of a book (1912) which was published in German in 1914 under the title: *Die Materie*.

gives in this passage is a fragment of embryology, expressed in pictures. Yes, that is what he gives—a fragment of embryology. If you approach it from the modern standpoint, it looks like a laboratory experiment, which then proves to be nonsense. For you cannot possibly expect to reproduce the real processes of embryology in a retort—unless you are like the Wagner of Goethe's *Faust*, who is still inclined to see things more from the standpoint of earlier centuries.

It is time these things were understood. And in connection with the great truths of which I was able to speak during the Christmas Foundation Meeting, I shall have still something further to say concerning the history and destiny of the spiritual life of mankind during the last few centuries.

HIDDEN CENTRES OF THE MYSTERIES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Dornach 5th January, 1924

Yesterday I began to speak to you of men's search for knowledge of the spiritual during the tenth century after Christ. We learnt how such efforts were still seriously undertaken as late as the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century; and I endeavoured to tell you something of their results. Today I should like to touch particularly on their historical aspect.

We have to remember that the Mysteries of ancient times were of such a nature and character that in the Mystery centres an actual meeting with the Gods could take place. In the lectures recently given at the Christmas Foundation Meeting, I described how the human being who was an Initiate or was about to receive Initiation did verily meet with the Gods. And it was actually possible in those times to discover places which by their very locality were expressly fitted to induce such meeting with the Gods.

From such centres came the impulses for all the more ancient civilisations. Gradually, however, they disappeared and from the fourth century onward are no longer to be found in their original form. Here and there we may come upon survivals, but the knowledge is no longer so exact or reliable. Not that Initiation ever ceased; it was the form in which the candidates found their way, that changed. I have already indicated how things were in the Middle Ages. I have told you how here and there were individuals, living simple, humble, unpretentious lives, who did not gather around them

a circle of official pupils in one particular place, but whose pupils were scattered in various directions in accordance with karma—with the karma, that is, of mankind or with the karma of some people or nation. I have described one such instance in what I said about Johannes Tauler in my book *Mysticism and Modern Thought*. There is no need for me to speak about that here. I should like however to tell you of another typical example, one that had very great influence, lasting from the twelfth and thirteenth on into the fifteenth century. The spiritual streams that were working during these centuries are in large measure to be traced to the events of which I would like now to speak. Let me give you first a sketch, as it were, of the situation.

The time when these events took place is round about the year 1200 A.D. There were at that time a great number of people, especially younger people, who felt within them the urge for higher knowledge, for a union with the spiritual world—one may indeed truthfully say, for a meeting with the Gods. And the whole situation and condition of the times was such that very often it looked as though a man who was searching and striving in this way found his teacher almost by chance. (In those days one could not find one's teacher by means of books, it could only come about in an entirely personal way.) But although it might look from without like a chance happening, in reality deep connections of destiny were at work in the event. And it was so in the case of the pupil of whom I want now to tell you.

This pupil found a teacher in a place in Middle Europe through such an apparently chance event. He met with an older man of whom he at once had the feeling: He will be able to lead me farther in that search which is the deepest impulse of my soul. And now let me give you the gist of a conversation between them. I do not of course mean that only one such conversation took place; I am compressing several into one.

The pupil speaks to the teacher and tells him of his earnest desire to be able to see into the spiritual world; but it seems

to him as though the nature of man as it is in that time—it is somewhere about the twelfth or thirteenth century—does not allow him to penetrate to the spiritual worlds. “Nevertheless,” he says, “I cannot but feel that in Nature one has something that is the work, the creation of divine-spiritual Beings. When one looks at what the objects of Nature are in their deeper meaning, when one observes how the processes of Nature take their course, one is bound to recognise that behind these creations stands the working of divine-spiritual Beings. One cannot however come through to them.” The pupil, who was a young man somewhere between 25 and 28 or so, felt strongly and definitely that the man of his time, because of the particular kind of connection that the physical body has with the soul, cannot come through, has hindrances in himself.

The teacher began by putting him to the test. He said to him: “You have your eyes, you have your ears. Look with your eyes on the things of Nature, hear with your ears what goes on in Nature; the Spiritual reveals itself through colour and through tone, and as you look and listen, surely you cannot but feel how it reveals itself in these.”

The pupil replied: “Yes, but when I use my eyes, when I look out into the world, with all its colour, then it is as though my eye stops the colour, as though the colour suddenly turns numb and cold when it reaches the eye. When I listen with my ear to tones, it is as though the sounds turn to stone in my ear; and these frozen colours and dead, hard sounds will not let the spirit of Nature through.” “But,” said the teacher, “is there not also Revelation—the Revelation of the religious life? In religion you are taught how Gods made and fashioned the world, and how the Christ entered into the evolution of time and became Man. What Nature cannot give you, does not Revelation give?”

And the pupil said: “Revelation does indeed speak powerfully to my heart, but I cannot comprehend it; I cannot connect what is out there in Nature with what Revelation says to me. It is impossible to bring the two into relation with one

another. Just as I do not comprehend Nature, just as Nature reveals nothing to me, so neither do I comprehend the Revelation of religion.”

And the teacher made answer: “I understand you well. If you must speak thus, if it is with your heart and soul as you say, then you cannot, as you stand in the world today, comprehend either Nature or Revelation: for you live in a body that has undergone the Fall”—such was the manner of speaking in those days—“and the ‘fallen’ body does not accord with the earthly environment in which you are living. This environment does not afford the conditions for using your senses and your feeling and understanding in such a way that you may behold in Nature and also in Revelation a light, an enlightenment that comes from the Gods. If you are willing, I will lead you out of the Nature of your earthly environment, which is simply unsuited to your being, I will lead you away from it and give you the opportunity of coming to a better understanding both of Revelation and of Nature.” And the teacher and pupil discussed together when this should take place.

Then, one day, the teacher led the pupil up a very high mountain, whence the surface of the Earth with its trees and flowers could no longer be seen at all. As the pupil stood there with his teacher, all he could see below him was a kind of sea of cloud, that completely covered the Earth with which he was familiar. You know how this often is so on high mountains. Up there the pupil was far removed from the affairs of Earth—at all events, the situation suggested this. He looked out into space above, and saw great billowing clouds, and below him too could see only as it were a surging sea composed entirely of cloud. Morning mist, and the breath of morning in the air! Then the teacher began to speak to the pupil. He spoke of the wide spaces of the worlds, of the cosmic distances, and of how, when one gazes out into these far spaces in the night time, one sees the stars shining forth from afar. And as he continued telling him many things, gradually the heart of the pupil was removed far away from the Earth, and

wholly given up to Nature, to Nature in the essential features of her existence.

The preparation continued until the pupil came into a mood of soul which may be indicated by the following comparison. It was as though—and not just for a moment only, but for quite a long time—all that he had ever experienced during his life on Earth in this incarnation were something he had dreamed. The scene that lay spread out before him, the surging waves of cloud, the wide sea of cloud with here and there a drift rising up to nearer view like the crest of a wave; far spaces of the universe, broken here and there by rising shapes of cloud—and scarcely even that, for there was no more than a glimpse now and then of cloud forms in the far distances—this whole scene showing so little variation, having so little content in comparison with the manifold variety of his experiences down below on the surface of the Earth, was nevertheless for the pupil the content now of his day-waking consciousness. And everything he had ever experienced on Earth was for him no more than the memory of a dream he had dreamed. Now, *now*, so it seemed to him, he had woken up! And as he grew gradually more and more awake, behold, from a cleft in a rock which he had hitherto not noticed, a boy came forth—a boy of 10 or 11 years old. The boy made a strange impression upon him, for he at once recognised in him his own self in the 10th or 11th year of his age. What stood before him was indeed the Spirit of his Youth.

You will easily guess, my dear friends, that to this scene is due one of the impulses that made me introduce into the Mystery Plays the figure of the Spirit of Johannes' Youth.* It is the "motif" alone you must think of, certainly not of anything like photography. The Mystery Plays are no occult romances where you have but to find the key, and all is plain!

The pupil stood before the Spirit of his boyhood, his very self. He, with his 25 or 28 years, stood face to face with the

* *The Soul's Awakening*. Scene 6.

Spirit of his Youth. And a conversation could take place—guided by the teacher, nevertheless actually taking place between the pupil and his own younger self. Such a conversation has a unique character; you may see that for yourselves in the Mystery Plays, from the style that is followed there. For when a man is face to face with the Spirit of his own Youth—and such a thing is always possible—then he gives something of his riper understanding to the childlike ideas of the Spirit of his Youth, and at the same time the Spirit of his Youth gives something of his freshness, his childlikeness, to what the man of older years possesses; and through the fact of this mutual interchange, the meeting becomes peculiarly fruitful. This conversation had the result that the pupil came to understand Revelation, the Revelation that is given in religion.

The conversation turned especially on Genesis, the beginning of the Old Testament, and on the Christ becoming Man. Under the guidance of the teacher and because of the special kind of fruitfulness that the conversation possessed, it ended with the pupil saying these words: "Now I understand what Spirit it is that works in Revelation. Only when one is transplanted, as it were, far away from the earthly into the heights of the ether, there to comprehend the ether-heights with the help of the power of childhood—this power of childhood being projected into the later years of life—only then does one understand Revelation aright. And now I understand why it is that the Gods have given to man Revelation—for men are not able, in the state in which they are on Earth, to see through the works of Nature and discover behind them the working of the Gods. Therefore did the Gods give them the Revelation which is ordinarily quite incomprehensible in the mature years of life, but which can be understood when childhood comes to life again in the years of maturity. Thus it is really something abnormal, to understand Revelation."

All this made a powerful impression on the pupil. And the impression remained; he could not forget it. The Spirit of his Youth vanished. The first phase of the instruction was over.

A second had now to come. And the second took its course in the following way.

Once more the teacher led the pupil forth, but this time on a different path. He did not now lead him up to a mountain top, but took him to a mountain where he knew there was a cave, through which they could pass to deep inner clefts, going down as far as the strata of the mines. Thus the pupil was now with the teacher, not in the ether-heights raised high above the Earth, but in the depths, far down below the surface of the Earth.

Once again it was for the consciousness of the pupil as though all that he had ever experienced on Earth went past him like a dream. For he was living down there in an environment in which his consciousness was particularly awakened to perceive how he himself was related to the depths of the Earth. What took place for him was really none other than what lies behind such legends as are told, for example, of the Emperor Barbarossa and his life in Kyffhäuser, or of Charlemagne and his life beneath a mountain near Salzburg. It was something of this nature that actually happened for the pupil, although of course only for a short time: he experienced a life in the depths of the Earth, far removed from man's life on the surface of the Earth.

And this time the teacher was able, by speaking with the pupil in a special way, to bring to his consciousness the fact of his union—this time—with the very depths of the Earth. And now there came forth out of a wall an old man, who was less easily recognisable to the pupil than the Spirit of his Youth had been, nevertheless he had the feeling that after many years he would himself become that old man, that he had in fact there before him his own self in future old age. Thereupon followed a similar conversation, this time between the pupil and himself as an old man—once more a conversation under the guidance of the teacher.

What resulted from the second conversation was altogether different from what followed from the first; for now there

began to arise within the pupil a consciousness of his own physical organisation. He began to follow the circulation of the blood in his body, moving with it as it coursed through all the single blood-vessels, began to follow also in the same way the nerve-fibres. He could moreover feel all the several organs of his organism and the meaning and significance of each for the whole. And he could feel too how that which is related to man out in the Cosmos works into him. He felt the inworking of the plant-world, in its blossoming, in its rooting; he felt also how the mineral element in the Earth is at work in the human organism. Down there in the depths he could feel how the forces of the Earth, when brought into the human organism, circulate within man, how they create there within him, themselves undergoing change, now destroying, now building up substances; he felt how the Earth creates and weaves and has being—in man. And the result of this conversation was that when the old man, who was himself, had disappeared, the pupil could say: "Now has the Earth, in which I have been incarnated, at last really spoken to me through her very being; a moment has come in my life when I have seen *through* the things and processes of Nature, seen through them to the work of the Gods that is behind the things and processes of Nature."

The teacher then led the pupil out again on to the Earth, and as he took leave of him, said: "Behold now! The man of today and the Earth of today are so little suited to one another that you have had to receive the Revelation of Religion from the Spirit of your own Youth, receiving it on the mountain high up above the Earth, and you have had to receive the Revelation of Nature deep down under the Earth, in clefts that are far below the surface of the Earth. And if you can now succeed in illuminating what your soul has felt in the hollow clefts of the Earth, with the light your soul has brought with it from the mountain, then you will attain wisdom."

Such was the path by which a deepening of the soul was brought about in those times—it was about the year 1200

A.D.; this was how the soul became filled with wisdom. The pupil of whom I have been telling you was thereby verily brought to Initiation, and he now knew what power he must put forth in his soul to rouse to activity the light of the heights and the feeling of the depths. Further instruction was then given him by the teacher, showing him how self-knowledge really always consists in this: one perceives on the one hand that which is high up above Earth man, and on the other hand that which is deep down below Earth man; and these two have to meet in man's own inner being. Then can man find within his own being the power of God the Creator.

The Initiation that I have described to you is a characteristic example of the Initiations which led afterwards to what we may designate as "mediaeval mysticism". It was a mysticism that sought for self-knowledge, but always with the idea of finding in the self the way to the Divine. In later times this mysticism tended to become abstract. The concrete union with the external world, as it was given for these pupils who were carried up into the ether-heights and down into the Earth-depths, was no longer sought for. Consequently we do not find in it the same deep stirring of the soul; nor did the whole experience attain such a degree of intensity. But there was still the search, there was still the impulse to seek within for the God, for God the Creator. Fundamentally speaking, all the seeking and striving of Meister Eckhart, of Johannes Tauler and of the later mystics whom I have described in my book *Mysticism and Modern Thought* owed its impulse to these earlier mediaeval Initiates.

Those who worked faithfully in the sense of such mediaeval forms of Initiation were however very much misunderstood, and it is by no means easy for us to find out in our day what the pupils of the mediaeval Initiates were really like. It is, as you know, possible to come a considerable distance along the path into the spiritual world. Those who follow actively and resolutely what is given in my book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment* do find the way into the spiritual

worlds. And everything that has been physically real in the *past* is of course only to be found now in the spiritual world—therefore also such scenes as I have been describing, for there are no material documents that record such scenes. There are however regions of the spiritual world which are hard of access even for a very advanced stage of spiritual power. In order to research into these regions, we must have come to the point of actually having intercourse with the beings of the spiritual world, in a quite simple, natural way, as we have with men on Earth. Only when we have attained so far, shall we come to perceive and understand the connection between these Initiates of whom I have told you, and their pupils—such a pupil, for example, as Raimon Lull, who lived from 1235 to 1315 and who, in what history can tell of him, seems to leave us full of doubts and questions.

What you can learn of Raimon Lull by studying historical documents is indeed very scanty. But if you are able to enter into a *personal relationship* with Raimon Lull—you will allow me to use the expression; perhaps in the light of all I have been telling you lately, it will not now sound paradoxical—if you are able to do this, then he shows himself to you as someone quite different from what the historical documents make him out to be. For he shows himself to be pre-eminently a personality who, under the influence and inspiration of the very Initiate of whom I have spoken to you as the "pupil", made the resolve to use all his power to bring about a renewal in his own time of the way that the *Mysteries of the Word*, of the *Logos*, had lived among men in bygone ages. And he set himself to do this by means of that self-knowledge for which, as I have been telling you, so powerful an impulse was working in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is in the light of this resolve of his that we should read his so-called *Ars Magna*. Raimon Lull said to himself: "When man speaks, then what we have in speech is really a microcosm. What man utters in speech is in truth the whole man concentrated in the organs of speech; the secret and mystery of each

single word is to be sought in the whole human being—and therefore in the great world, in the Cosmos.”

And so Raimon Lull came to see that one must look for the secret of speech, first in man himself—by diving down, as it were, from the speech organs into the whole organism of the human being—and then in the Cosmos; for the whole human organism can only be explained and understood out of the Cosmos. Let us suppose, for example, we want to understand the true significance of the sound A (as in “father”). The point is that the sound A, which comes about through the forming and shaping of the outgoing breath, depends on a certain posture or gesture of the etheric body, which you can easily learn to know today. Eurythmy will show it you; for this attitude of the etheric body is carried over in Eurythmy to the physical body and becomes the eurythmic movement for the sound A.*

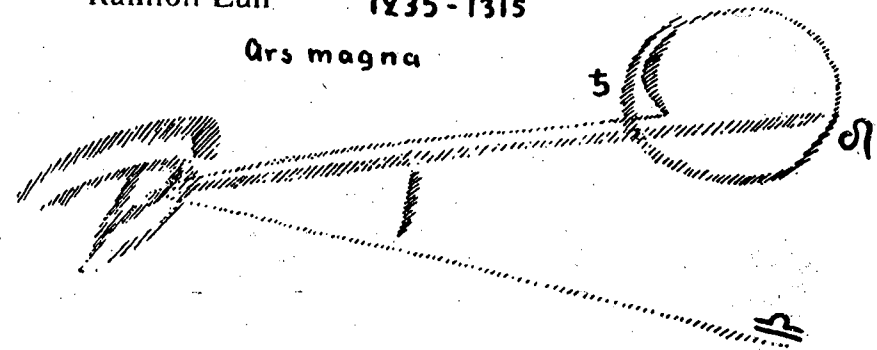
This was not by any means fully clear to Raimon Lull; with him it was all more of an intuitive “divining”. He did however come so far as to follow the inner attitude or gesture of the human being out into the Cosmos, and then say, for example: If you look in the direction of the constellation of the Lion (Leo), and then in the direction of the Balance (Libra), the connection between the two lines of vision will give you A. Or again, say you turn your eye in the direction of Saturn. Saturn stops your line of vision, comes in the way. And if Saturn stands in front, for example, of the Ram (Aries), you have, as it were, to go round the Ram with Saturn. Then you receive from out of the Cosmos the feeling of O.

Intuitive perceptions of this nature led Raimon Lull to find certain geometrical figures, the points and sides of which he named with the letters of the alphabet. And he was quite sure that when one experiences an impulse to draw lines in the

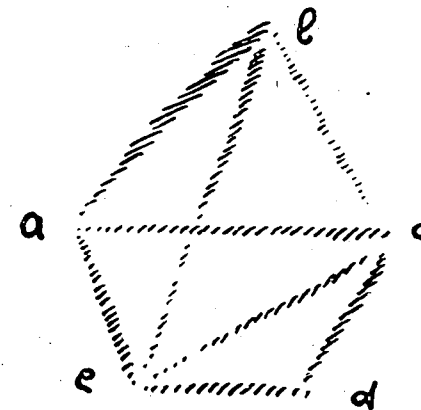
* Readers unfamiliar with the movements in Eurythmy for the sounds of speech, are recommended to turn to the first three chapters of the book *Eurythmy as Visible Speech* (15 lectures) by Rudolf Steiner.

Raimon Lull 1235 - 1315

Ars magna



figures—diagonals, for instance, across a pentagon, uniting the five points in different ways—then one has to see in these lines different combinations of sounds; and these combinations of sounds expressed for him certain secrets of the World-All, of the Cosmos. Thus did Raimon Lull look for a kind of renaissance of the secrets of the Logos, as they were known and spoken of in the ancient Mysteries.



You will find all this quite misrepresented in the historical documents. When however one enters little by little, as it were, into a personal relationship with Raimon Lull, then one comes

to see how in all these efforts he was trying to find again the solution of the riddle of the Cosmic Word. And it is a fact that the pupils of the mediaeval Initiates continued for several centuries to spend their lives in endeavours of this kind. It was an earnest and intensive striving, first to immerse oneself in man, and then to come forth from man and rise up into the secrets of the Cosmos.

Thus did these wise men—for we may truly call them so—seek to unite Revelation with Nature. They believed—and much of their belief was well founded—that in this way they could come behind the Revelation of Religion and behind the Revelation of Nature. For it was quite clear to them that man, as he is now living on the Earth, was destined and intended to become the Fourth Hierarchy, but that he has “fallen” from his true and proper nature, and become more deeply involved in physical existence than he should be, and on this account lacks also the power to develop his soul and spirit. And it is to such searchings after knowledge that we have to trace the rise of the Rosicrucians.

At a place of instruction of the Rosicrucians, of the first, original Rosicrucians, the scene I have depicted to you today—the scene between the teacher and the pupil, at first upon a high mountain and then down in a deep cleft of the Earth—emerged like a kind of Fata Morgana, came again, as it were, like a ghost! We find the scene reflected there as *knowledge*. And it taught the pupils in that school to recognise how man has by inner effort and striving to attain two things, if he would come to a true self-knowledge, if he would find again his right place on Earth and be able at last to become in actual reality a member of the Fourth Hierarchy. For within the Rosicrucian School the possibility was given to recognise what it was that had taken place with the pupil when he had seen before him in bodily form the Spirit of his Youth, namely, that his astral body, which was stronger at that moment than it otherwise ever is in life, had been loosened; it was in this

loosening of the astral body that the pupil had come to know the meaning and significance of Revelation. And again, what had taken place with the pupil in the depths of the Earth—that too was made clear to the pupils in the Rosicrucian School. This time the astral body was seen to have been drawn back, so that it was deep within the pupil, and this enabled him to apprehend the certainty of his own inner being.

And now exercises were found within Rosicrucianism, comparatively simple exercises. Symbolic figures were put before the pupil, to which he had to surrender himself in devotion and meditation. The force and power of which the soul became possessed through practising devotion to these figures, enabled him on the one hand to loosen the astral body and become like the pupil on the mountain top, who was in the ether-heights, and on the other hand through the compression, the contraction of the astral body, to become like the pupil in the clefts of the Earth. And it was then possible—without the help, as before, of external environment, simply through performing a powerful inner exercise—to enter into the inner being of Man.

I have given you here a picture of something to which I have made slight allusion in the preface to the new edition of my book *Mysticism and Modern Thought*. I said there that what we find in Meister Eckhart, in Johannes Tauler, in Nicolas Cusa, in Valentine Wiegel and the rest, is a late product of a magnificent striving of mankind that preceded them. And this earlier striving in the Spirit, this search for self-knowledge, in connection on the one hand with Revelation and on the other hand with the illumination of Nature, I wanted to bring before you today as one of the currents that take their course in the so-called “Dark Ages”. So-called; for the fact is, the man of modern times has conjured darkness into the Middle Ages out of his own imagination! In reality there were in those times many enlightened persons; but those who today consider themselves the most highly enlightened

are incapable of understanding the "light" of these mediaeval searchers after truth and consequently remain themselves in the dark!

It is indeed quite characteristic of modern times that men take light for darkness and darkness for light. If however we are able to look into what lies behind the literature of those earlier times and see that of which the literature gives no more than a reflection, then we may receive a powerful and lasting impression.

Something of this I wanted to show you today; tomorrow we will "round off" the picture.

THE TIME OF TRANSITION

Dornach 6th January, 1924

I spoke to you yesterday of the special form in which the results of research in the realm of spiritual knowledge were communicated in the Middle Ages. This form was, so to speak, the last experience vouchsafed to man before a door was shut for the evolution of the human spirit, a door that had been open for many centuries and had given entrance by way of natural gift and faculty into the spiritual world. The door was shut when the time came for man, so far as his *instinctive* faculties were concerned, to be placed outside the kingdom of the divine-spiritual Will that had been controlling him. From that time forward he had to find in his own inmost being, in his own will, the possibility to evolve conscious freedom in the soul.

But now, as you know, all such momentous movements of evolution take place slowly, step by step. And we can trace how the experience that had been attained by the pupil when the teacher led him up into the ether-heights and down into the deep clefts of the Earth—an experience that was even in those times no longer possible in the form it had taken in the ancient Mysteries—we can trace how this experience that was for the pupil directly connected with Nature (though not with Nature on the Earth's surface), began now to come to man in a different, in a more unconscious, way.

Think for a moment how it was with those who were searching for knowledge about the year 1200 and on through the following century. They would hear tell of how, only a short time before, a pupil had still been able to find a teacher

like the one of whom we were speaking yesterday; they themselves however were now being directed to *thought*—to human thinking, as the means of attaining knowledge. And in the succeeding years of the Middle Ages we can see this thinking developing and spreading, asserting itself in an impressive manner. It sets out on new paths with zeal, with sincere and whole-hearted devotion, and the paths are followed by large circles of knowledge-seekers.

At the same time what may truly be called Spiritual Science, Knowledge of the Spirit, continued, and after a few centuries we come to the time that saw the rise of Rosicrucianism. That event is connected with a change that took place in the whole spiritual world in respect of man. I can best describe the change by giving you once again a picture.

Mysteries in the old sense of the word were no longer possible in this time. There were however men who yearned for knowledge in the sense of the ancient Mysteries, and such men experienced severe conflicts of soul when they heard how in the past pupils had been led up to mountain tops and down into deep clefts of the Earth; and they made great efforts, exerting themselves inwardly in all sorts of ways, hoping thereby to rouse the soul within them, that it might yet find the way. And he who is able to see such things can find in those times—as we have said, not places of the Mysteries, but gatherings of knowledge-seekers who met together in an atmosphere warmed through and through with the glow of genuine piety. What appears later as Rosicrucianism—sound and genuine Rosicrucianism, as well as the degenerate and charlatan varieties—is to be traced back to men who came together in this simple way and sought so to temper their souls that it might yet be possible for genuine spiritual knowledge to be found again on Earth. In such a gathering, one that took place in quite unpretentious surroundings—just the simple living-room of a kind of manor house—a few persons were once met who, through certain exercises done in common by them all—exercises half thoughtful and meditative in

character, half of the nature of prayer—had developed a mystical mood in which all shared. It was the same mystical mood of soul that was cultivated in later times by the so-called “Brothers of the Common Life”, and later still by the followers of Comenius and by many other Brotherhoods; and in the small circle of which I am telling, it showed itself with a peculiar intensity. Whilst these few men were gathered together in this intense mystical atmosphere of soul, making devotion, so to say, of their ordinary consciousness, of their whole intellect, it happened that a being came to them, not a being of flesh and blood like the teacher whom the earlier pupil met and who led him up the mountain and down into the clefts of the Earth, but a being who was only able to appear in this little company in an etheric body. He revealed himself however as the same as he who had guided that pupil about the year 1200. He was now in the after-death state. He descended to these men from the spiritual world; they had drawn him thither by the mood of soul that prevailed in them—mystical, meditative, pious.

My dear friends, in order that no misunderstanding may arise, let me expressly emphasise that there is here no question of any sort of mediumistic power. The little company who were gathered there would have looked upon any use—or any sanctioning—of mediumistic powers, as deeply sinful; they would have been led to do so by certain widely accepted ideas belonging to old and honoured tradition. Particularly in those very communities of which I am telling you, mediumship and all that is related to it was regarded not merely as harmful but sinful—and for the following reason. These persons knew that mediumship goes together with a peculiar constitution of the physical body; they knew it is the physical body that gives the medium his powers, his spiritual powers. But the physical body they looked upon as “fallen”, and information that came by the help of mediumship they could not but regard under all circumstances as acquired by the help of Ahrimanic or Luciferic powers.

In the times of which we are speaking, all this was still clearly and exactly known. We have not therefore to think of anything mediumistic in this connection. All was in the mood of mysticism and meditation, and in that alone. And it was the enhancing and strengthening of this mood through fellowship of soul, that, so to speak, enchanted into the circle—but of his own free-will—that disembodied human being, who was purely spiritual, and yet at the same time human. And now the being spoke to them, in deeply solemn manner. "You are not quite prepared for my appearance. I am among you discarnate, without physical body, forasmuch as a time has come when for a short period of Earth existence the Initiates of olden times are unable to appear in a physical body. The time will come again when they can do so—when the Michael period begins. I am come to reveal to you that the inner being of man remains unchanged, that the inner being of man, if it bears itself aright, can yet find the way to divine-spiritual existence. For a certain period of time, however, the human intellect and understanding will be so constituted that they will have to be suppressed in order for that which is of the Spirit to be able to speak to the human soul. Therefore remain in your mystic and pious mood... You have now received from me, all of you together, the picture, the Imagination. What I have been able to give you is no more than an indication of that which will come to fulfilment within you; you will go on further and find a continuation of what you have here experienced."

And now, from the number gathered there together three were chosen, to the end that they might establish a special union with the spiritual world—once more not at all through any kind of mediumistic powers but through a further development of the mystic, meditative, pious mood of soul. These three, who were particularly guarded and protected by the rest of the circle, really closely and intimately cared for by them, experienced from time to time a kind of "absence of mind". They were at such times, in their external bodily

nature, wonderfully lovely and beautiful, their countenances shone like the sun; and they wrote down, in symbols, revelations which they received from the spiritual world. These symbolic revelations were the first pictures in which was revealed to the Rosicrucians what it behoved them to know of the spiritual world. In the pictures was contained a kind of philosophy, a kind of theology and also a kind of medicine.

And the remarkable thing was that the others (it seems to me as though the others were four in number, so that the whole was a company of seven), after the experience they had had with their brothers—beholding how their eyes shone like the sun and how their countenances were bright and radiant—these other four were able to give again in ordinary language what was in the symbols. The brothers whose destiny it was to bring the symbols from the spiritual world, could ~~only write them down, could only say, when they returned~~ again into their ordinary consciousness: "We have been among the stars and among the Spirits of the stars, and have found the old teachers of the occult knowledge." They could not themselves turn the symbolic pictures that they drew, into ordinary human speech. The others could, and did. And this is really the source of a great deal of the knowledge that passed over into such literature of theology as was philosophical in character (the theology not of the Church but rather of the laity) and into the literature of medicine.

And what had been thus received from the spiritual world in symbols was afterwards communicated to small groups organised by the first Rosicrucians.

Again and again, in the time from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, did the possibility arise in certain very small groups for experiences of this nature. Revelations came frequently to men from the spiritual world in this or some similar way. Those who had to translate what was revealed in pictures were not always capable of rendering it quite faithfully; hence the want of clarity in much that has come down to us of the philosophy of this period. One has to discover for

oneself what it really means, by seeking for it again in the world of the Spirit. For those however who have been familiar with this kind of revelation that can be received from the spiritual world, there has always been the possibility to link on to such revelations.

But picture to yourselves, my dear friends, what strange feelings must gradually have come over such men, who had to receive the very highest knowledge—for what was given them was recognised as such—from a direction that was growing more and more foreign to them, indeed almost uncanny; for they could no longer see into the world out of which the secrets came, ordinary consciousness could not reach so far.

It will readily be understood that such things could all too easily lead to charlatanism and even to fraud. Indeed at no time in human evolution have charlatanism and the highest and purest of revelation stood so close to one another as in this period. It is difficult to distinguish the true from the false—and this is what has led many to regard the whole of Rosicrucianism as charlatan. One can understand it, for the true Rosicrucians are extraordinarily hard to find among the charlatans, and the matter is all the more difficult and problematic for the reason that one has continually to bear in mind that the spiritual revelation comes from sources which in their real quality and nature were in those days quite hidden.

The small circles gathered by the first Rosicrucians grew to a larger brotherhood, who went about unrecognised, appearing here and there in the world, generally with the calling of a physician, healing the sick, and at the same time spreading knowledge as they went. And it was so that in regard to very much of this knowledge, the spreading of it was not without a certain embarrassment, inasmuch as the men who carried it on were not able to say anything at all about the connection in which they stood to the spiritual world.

But now in this pursuit of spiritual research we can detect the development of something that is of very great beauty.

There are, as we said, the three brethren and the four. The three are only able to attain their goal when the four work with them; the two groups are absolutely interdependent. The three receive the revelations from the spiritual world; the four are able to translate the revelations into ordinary human language. What the three give would be nothing but utterly unintelligible pictures, were the four not able to translate them. And again, the four would have nothing to translate, if the three did not receive their revelations, in picture form, from the spiritual world. This interdependence gave rise to the development within such communities of an inner brotherhood of soul, a brotherhood in knowledge and in spiritual life, which in those days was held in some circles to be among the very highest of human achievements. Such small groups of men did indeed learn to know the true worth of brotherhood. And gradually they came more and more to feel how in the evolution of humanity towards freedom the bond between men and Gods would be completely severed were it not kept whole by this kind of brotherhood, where the one looks to the other, where the one is in very truth dependent on the other.

We have before us here a quality of soul that is wonderfully beautiful. And much that was written in those days possesses a charm that we only understand when we recognise how this atmosphere of brotherhood, which permeated the spiritual life of many circles in Europe in those times, has shed its radiant light into the writings.

We have however also to see how a mood began gradually to pervade this whole striving for knowledge, that made people anxious. If one was unable oneself to approach the sources of spiritual revelation, it was in the last resort impossible to know whether these revelations were good or evil; and so, along with the recognition of what was good in them, anxiety began to be felt in regard to some of the influences. This anxiety then spread over large circles of people, who came in time to have fear, intense fear, of all knowledge.

The gradual development of the mood of which I speak

may be particularly well studied in two men. One is Raimund of Sabunda, who lived in the fifteenth century (he was born about 1430). Raimund of Sabunda is a remarkable man. If you study carefully what remains to us of his thought, you will have the feeling: This is surely almost the very same revelation that was communicated in full consciousness about the year 1200 by the teacher who took his pupil to the mountain tops and to the deep clefts of the Earth! In Raimund of Sabunda, however, who belongs, as we saw, to the fifteenth century, it is all given in a more vague, impersonal style, philosophical in character, theological too and medical. This is due to the fact that Raimund of Sabunda received his revelations by way of the genuine Rosicrucians, that is to say, by the path that had been opened by the great Initiate of the twelfth century, whose work and influence I described to you yesterday, and who continued to inspire men from out of the spiritual world in all that I have been relating to you today. For the revelation that came through Rosicrucianism is to be traced originally to this great Initiate and those who were with him in the spiritual world; he set the mood and feeling of the whole teaching. By now, as I said, a certain anxiety regarding the teaching was beginning to take hold of men. Raimund of Sabunda however, was a bold, brave spirit, he was one of those who are able to value ideas, who understand how to live in ideas. And so, although we notice in him a certain vagueness due to the fact that the revelations have their source after all in the spiritual world, yet in him we find as yet no trace of anxiety or fear in regard to knowledge.

All the more striking therefore is another—and very characteristic—example of that spiritual stream: Pico della Mirandola, who also belongs to the fifteenth century.

The short-lived Pico della Mirandola is a remarkable figure. If one makes an intensive study of the fruits of his thought and contemplation, one sees how the same initiative I have just described is everywhere active in them, a continuation, namely, of the wisdom of that old Initiate by way of the

Rosicrucian stream. But in Pico della Mirandola you will observe a kind of shrinking back before the knowledge. Let me give you an instance. He makes, for example, the following declaration: Everything that happens on Earth—stones and rocks coming into being, plants living and growing and bearing fruit, animals living out their life—all this cannot be attributed to the forces of the Earth. If anyone were to think: There is the Earth, and it is the forces of the Earth that produce what is on the Earth—he would have quite a wrong notion of the matter. The true view, according to Pico della Mirandola, is that up there are the *stars* and what happens on Earth is dependent on the stars. One must look up to the Heavens, if one wants to understand what happens on Earth. Speaking in the sense of Pico della Mirandola we would have to say: You give me your hand, brother man, but it is not just *your feeling* alone that is the cause why you give me your hand, ~~it is the star~~ standing over you that gives you the impulse to hold out your hand. Ultimately everything that comes about has its source in the Heavens, in the Cosmos; what happens on Earth is but the reflection of the same.

Pico della Mirandola gives expression to this as his firm conviction. And yet at the same time he says: But it is not for man to look up to these causes in the stars; man has to take account only of the immediate cause on Earth.

From this point of view Pico della Mirandola combats the astrology that he finds prevalent—and that is a most significant fact! He knows well that the old and genuine astrology expresses itself in the destinies of men. He knows that: it is for him a truth. And yet he says: One should not pursue astrology, one should look only for the immediate causes, for the causes nearest at hand.

Note well what it is we have before us here. For the first time we are confronted with the idea of "boundaries" to knowledge. The idea shows itself however in a singular manner; it is still, let me say, quite human in character. Later, in Kant, in du Bois-Raymond, you will be expressly told: "Man

cannot cross the boundaries of knowledge." With them that is a fact, resting on an inner necessity. Not so with Pico della Mirandola in the fifteenth century! He says: "What is on Earth, has undoubtedly come about through cosmic causes. But man is called upon to forgo the attainment of a knowledge of these cosmic causes; he has to limit himself to the Earth." Thus we have in the fifteenth century, in such a markedly characteristic person as Pico della Mirandola, voluntary renunciation of the highest knowledge.

My dear friends, we have here reached an event in man's history that is of the greatest imaginable importance. Men are making the resolve: We will renounce knowledge! And it is actually so that what comes to pass externally in such a person as Pico della Mirandola has also its counterpart in the Spiritual.

It was again in one of those simple gatherings of Rosicrucians that on the occasion of a ritual arranged for the purpose—it was in the latter half of the fifteenth century—man's knowledge of the stars was, in deeply solemn manner, offered up. What took place in that ritual, a ritual enacted with all the reverence proper to such a solemn occasion, may be expressed as follows. Men stood before a kind of altar and said: "We resolve to feel ourselves at this moment responsible not for ourselves alone nor for our community or our nation, nor even only for the men of our time; we resolve to feel ourselves responsible for all men who have ever lived on Earth, we resolve to feel ourselves belonging to the whole of mankind. And we feel that what has really happened with man is that he has deserted the rank of the Fourth Hierarchy and has descended too deeply into matter" (for the "Fall" was understood in this sense) "and in order that man may be able to return to the rank of the Fourth Hierarchy, may be able to find for himself of his own free will what in earlier times Gods have tried to find for him and with him, let now the higher knowledge be offered up for a season!"

And certain Beings of the spiritual world, who are not of

human kind, who do not come to Earth in human incarnation, accepted the sacrifice in order to fulfil therewith certain purposes in the spiritual world. It would take us too far to speak of these here; we will do so another time. But thereby was the *impulse for freedom* made possible for man. This possibility was granted him by the spiritual world.

I tell you of this ritual in order to show you how everything that takes place in the external life of the physical senses has its spiritual counterpart; we have only to look for it in the right place. For it can happen that such a ritual, enacted—I will not say, in this instance, with full knowledge, but enacted by persons who stand in connection with the spiritual world, has very deep meaning; from it can radiate impulses for a whole culture, for a whole stream of civilisation. For it is a fact that if we want to come to a clear knowledge of the fundamental colouring and tone of a particular epoch of history we must look for their source in the spiritual; from the spiritual spring the forces that stream through that epoch of time. Whatever, in the years that followed, showed itself to be of a truly spiritual nature, was a kind of echo sounding on of this creative working from out of unknown spiritual worlds. Side by side with the external materialism that developed in the succeeding centuries, we can always find here and there individuals who are living under the influence of that renunciation of higher knowledge.

I should like to give you a brief description of a type of man that might be met with from the fifteenth century onwards, right through the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. You might find him in some village, gathering herbs for an apothecary, or engaged in some other simple calling. If you are one who takes an interest in special forms and manifestations of the being of man as they show themselves in this or that individuality, then you may meet with such a person. At first you will find him very reserved, he will speak but little, perhaps he will even turn away your attention from what you are trying to find in him by talking in a trivial

manner, on purpose to make you think it is not worth while to converse with him. If, however, you know better than to look merely at the content of what a man says, if you know how to listen to the sound of his words, if you can hearken to the way the words come out of him, then you will go on listening, despite all discouragement. And if then out of some karmic connection he receives the impression that he really should talk to you, he will begin to do so—carefully and guardedly; and you will make the discovery that he is a kind of wise man. But what he is telling is not earthly wisdom. Neither is there contained in it much of what we now call spiritual science. It is warm words of the heart that he is uttering, far-reaching ethical teachings; not that there is anything sentimental about his way of uttering them, he expresses himself rather in proverbs, in short, pithy sayings.

He might say something like this. "Let us go over to yonder fir-tree. My soul can creep into the needles and cones, for my soul is everywhere. And when my soul creeps into the cones and needles of the fir-tree, it sees through them, my soul looks out through them into the deep distances of worlds beyond; and then I become one with the whole world. That is the true piety, to become one with the whole world. Where is God? God is in every fir-cone. And if we do not recognise God in every fir-cone, if we look for God somewhere else than in every fir-cone—we do not know the true God."

I want only to give you a kind of picture of how these men spoke—such men that you might meet with in the way I have described. And then they might go on to say more. "Yes, and when one creeps into the cones and needles of the fir-tree, one finds how God rejoices over the human beings in the world. And when one descends deep down into one's own heart, into the abysses of the innermost of man's nature, there too one finds God; but then one learns to know how He is made sad through the sinfulness of men."

In such wise did these simple sages speak. A great number of them possessed what might be described in modern lang-

uage as "new editions" of the geometrical figures of the old Rosicrucians. These they would show to persons who approached them in the right way. When however they spoke about these figures—which were quite unpretentious, even badly drawn—then the conversation would unfold in a strange manner. There were in those days many who felt interested in the unpretentious wise man before them, but were at the same time overcome with curiosity as to what these strange Rosicrucian pictures really meant, and would ask questions about them. But they received from these wise men, who were as a rule regarded as rather strange and eccentric, no clear or exact answer. They would receive only the advice: If one studies these figures with the right deepening of soul, then one can see through them, as through a window, into the spiritual world. The wise men might give as it were a description of what they themselves had been able to *feel* from contemplating the figures; but they were not ready to offer any explanation or interpretation of them. And often it was so, that when one had heard these expressions of feeling in connection with the figures, one could not put them into *thought* at all: for it was not thoughts that these simple sages gave. What they gave had, however, an after-working that was of immense significance. One would come away, not only with warmth in one's soul, but with the feeling: I have received a knowledge that lives in me—a knowledge I cannot possibly bring into intellectual concepts.

This, then, was one of the ways—I have also described others to you—in which, during the period from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries right down to the eighteenth, the knowledge of the nature of Man and of the nature of the Divine was communicated to wide circles of people through the medium, as it were, of feeling. We cannot quite say, without words, but without ideas, although not on that account without content.

In this period it was actually so that much intercourse went on among men by means of a silencing of thought. No one

can arrive at a true conception of the character of this period who does not know how much was brought to pass in those days through this silencing of thought, when men interchanged not mere words but their very souls.

I have given you, my dear friends, a picture of one of the features of that time of transition when freedom was first beginning to flourish among men. I shall have more to say on this from many aspects. For I want in these lectures to add something further to what was given at the Christmas Foundation Meeting.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MAN TO THE SUN

Dornach 11th January, 1924

What I have been telling you in recent lectures requires to be carried a little further. I have tried to give you a picture of how spiritual knowledge took its course through the centuries, and of the form it has assumed in recent times. I have shown you how from the fifteenth century until the end of the eighteenth and even on into the beginning of the nineteenth, the spiritual knowledge that before that period was present among men as clear and concrete—albeit instinctive—knowledge, manifested more in a devotion of heart and soul to the Spiritual in the world.

We have seen how a direct knowledge of Nature, and of how the spiritual world works in Nature, is still unmistakably present in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In Agrippa of Nettesheim, for example, whom I have described in my book *Mysticism and Modern Thought*, we have a personality who still knew quite well that in the several planets of our system are spiritual Beings of specific character and kind.

In his writings, Agrippa of Nettesheim assigns to each single planet what he calls the *Intelligence* of the planet. This points to traditions which were extant from olden times and were even in his day still something more than traditions. To look up to a planet in the way that became customary in the later Astronomy and is still customary today, would have been quite impossible to a man like Agrippa of Nettesheim. For him, the external planet, nay every single star, was no more than a sign, an announcement, so to say, of the

presence of spiritual Beings, to whom man could look up with the eye of the soul, when he turned his gaze in the direction of the star. And Agrippa of Nettesheim knew that the Beings who are united with the single stars are Beings who rule the inner existence of that star or planet, rule also its movements in the Universe, hold sway indeed over its whole activity. And he called such Beings the *Intelligence* of the star.

And Agrippa knew how, at the same time, hindering Beings are at work there, Beings who undermine the good deeds of the star, working both from the star and also into it. These Beings he called the *Demon* of the star. And together with this knowledge went an understanding of the Earth, that saw in the Earth too a heavenly body having its Intelligence and its Demon. This understanding for star Intelligence and star Demonology, with all its implications, has been completely lost. Let us look for a moment at what it implied.

The Earth was looked upon as ruled in her inner activity, in her movement in the Cosmos, by a group of Intelligences whom one could bring together under the name of the Intelligence of the Earth star. But what, for the men of Agrippa's time, *was* the Intelligence of the Earth star? It is exceedingly difficult today even to speak of these things, because men's ideas have travelled so very far away from what was accepted as a matter of course in those times by persons of insight and understanding. The Intelligence of the Earth star was Man himself. The men of those times saw in Man a being who had received a task, a mission, from the Spirituality of the Worlds, not merely, as modern man imagines, to walk about on the Earth, to travel over it by train, to buy and sell, to write books, and so forth and so forth—no, they looked upon Man as a being to whom the World-Spirit had given the task to rule and regulate the Earth, to bring as it were law and order into all that has to do with the place of the Earth in the Cosmos. Their conception of Man was expressed by saying: Through what he is, through the forces and powers he bears within his being, Man gives to the Earth the impulse for her

movement round the Sun, for her movement altogether in cosmic space.

There was in those days still a feeling for this. It was known that such a task had once been allotted to Man. The World-Spirituality had really made Man the Lord of the Earth, but in course of his evolution Man had not shown himself equal to the task, he had fallen from his high estate. When men are speaking of knowledge nowadays it is seldom indeed that one can catch even a last echo of this view. What we find in religious belief concerning the Fall goes back ultimately to this conception; for there the point is that originally Man had quite another status on the Earth and in the Universe, that he has in fact fallen from his high estate. But apart from this religious conception, wherever men think they have attained knowledge by correct methods of thought, it is only here and there that we may still find today an echo of the ancient knowledge that once proceeded from instinctive clairvoyance, and that was well aware of Man's true calling and of his Fall into his present narrow limitations.

It may happen, for example, that one is having a conversation with a person—I am here relating fact—who has thought very deeply, who has also acquired a deep knowledge of spiritual matters. The conversation turns on whether Man, as he stands on Earth today, is really a creature who is self-contained, who carries his whole being within him. And such a person will say to you, that this cannot be. Man must in reality be a far more comprehensive being—otherwise he could not have the striving he has now, he could not develop the great idealism of which we can see such fine and lofty examples; in his true nature Man must be a great and comprehensive being, who has somehow or other committed a cosmic sin, as a consequence of which he has been banished within the limits of this present earthly existence, so that today he is really imprisoned as it were in a cage. You may still meet here and there a stray survival, as it were, of this view. But, speaking generally, where shall we find one who considers

himself a qualified scientist, giving serious attention to these great and far-reaching questions? And yet it is only by facing such questions that Man can ever find his way to an existence worthy of him as Man.

It was, then, really so: Man was regarded as the bearer of the Intelligence of the Earth. But now, such a person as Agrippa of Nettesheim ascribed to the Earth also a Demon. When we go back to the twelfth or thirteenth century, we find this Demon of the Earth to be a Being who could only become what he did become on Earth, because he found in Man a ready tool for his activity.

In order to understand this, we must acquaint ourselves with the way men thought in those days about the relationship of the Earth to the Sun, or rather of Earth Man to the Sun. And if I am now to describe to you how they understood this relationship, then I must again speak in Imaginations: for these things will not suffer themselves to be confined in abstract concepts. Abstract concepts came later, and they are very far from being able to span the truth; we must therefore begin here to speak in pictures, in Imaginations.

I have described in my *Occult Science* how the Sun separated itself from the Earth, or one may say, separated the Earth off from itself. For the Sun, you must remember, is the original abode of Man; ever since the Saturn time Man has been united with the whole planetary system including the Sun. Man has not his home on Earth, he has on Earth only a temporary resting place. He is in reality, according to the view that prevailed in those olden times, a Sun-being. In his whole nature and existence he is united with the Sun. And he ought, as Man, as a Sun-being, to have an altogether different relation to the Earth than he has. What should happen is that the Earth, first of all, should obey her impulse to bring forth out of the mineral and plant kingdoms the seed of Man in etheric form, and the Sun should then fructify the seed. Thence should arise the etheric human form which, by establishing its own relationship to the physical substances of the

Earth, should then take on Earth substantiality. The contemporaries of Agrippa of Nettesheim—Agrippa's own knowledge was, unfortunately, somewhat clouded, but better contemporaries of his did really hold the view that Man ought not to be born in the earthly way he is now, but ought to come to being in his etheric body through the interworking of Sun and Earth, and then, going about on the Earth as an etheric being, give himself Earthly form. The seeds of Man should grow up out of the Earth with the purity of plant-life, appearing here and there as ethereal fruits of the Earth, darkly gleaming; these should then in a certain season of the year be overshadowed by the light of the Sun, and thereby assume human form—but etheric still; then Man should draw to himself physical substance—not from the body of the mother, but from the Earth and all that is thereon, incorporating physical substance into himself from the kingdoms of the Earth. That, in their view, should have been the manner of Man's appearance on Earth, in accordance with the purposes of the Cosmic Spirituality.

The development that came later was attributed to the fact that Man had allowed to awaken within him too deep an urge, too intense a desire for the earthly and material. Thereby he forfeited his connection with the Sun and the Cosmos, and could only find his existence on Earth in the form of the stream of inheritance. And that gave opportunity for the Demon of the Earth to begin his work. The Demon of the Earth would not have been able to do anything with men who were Sun-born. Sun-born Man on Earth would have been in very truth the Fourth Hierarchy. If one were wanting to place Man, one would have had to say: *First Hierarchy*: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones; *Second Hierarchy*: Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes; *Third Hierarchy*: Angels, Archangels, Archai; *Fourth Hierarchy*: Man—three different stages or gradations, of the human, forming together the Fourth Hierarchy.

But because Man gave rein to his strong impulses in the

direction of the physical, he became, not the being on the lowest branch, as it were, of the Hierarchies, but instead the being at the summit—on the topmost branch—of the kingdoms of Earth. Mineral kingdom, plant kingdom, animal kingdom, human kingdom—*this* became the picture of how Man stood in the world.

Moreover, because Man has not found his proper task on the Earth, the Earth herself has not her right and worthy position in the Cosmos. For since Man has fallen, the true Lord of the Earth is not there. What has happened? The true Lord of the Earth is lacking, and it has become necessary for her place and course in the Cosmos, not being regulated from the Earth herself, to be regulated from the Sun; so that the tasks that should really be carried out on Earth have fallen to the Sun. The man of mediaeval times looked up to the Sun and said: In the Sun are certain Intelligences. They determine the movement of the Earth in the Cosmos; they govern what happens on the Earth. *Man* ought, in reality, to do this; the Sun-forces ought to work on Earth *through Man*. Hence that significant mediaeval conception that was expressed in the words: The Sun, the unlawful Prince of this world.

And now reflect, my dear friends, how infinitely such conceptions deepened for mediaeval man his feeling for the Christ-Impulse. The Christ became for him the Spirit Who did not want to find His further task on the Sun; Who was not willing to remain among those who directed the Earth in unlawful manner from without. He wanted to take His way from the Sun to the Earth, to enter into the destiny of Man and into the destiny of Earth, to experience Earth events, to follow the path of Earth evolution, sharing the lot of Man and of Earth.

Therewith, for mediaeval man, the Christ was the Being—the one Being—Who saved for the Cosmos man's task on Earth. There you have the connection. And now you can see why, in Rosicrucian times, again and again it was impressed upon the pupil: "O Man, thou art not what thou

art; the Christ had to come to take from thee thy task, that He might perform it for thee."

A great deal in Goethe's *Faust* has come over from mediaeval conceptions, although Goethe himself did not understand this. Recall, my dear friends, how Faust conjures up the Earth Spirit. With these mediaeval conceptions in mind, we can enter with feeling and understanding into the way this Earth Spirit speaks.

In the tides of Life, in Action's storm,
A fluctuant wave,
A shuttle free,
Birth and the Grave,
An eternal sea,
A weaving, flowing
Life, all glowing,
Thus at Time's humming loom 'tis my hand prepares
The garment of Life which the Deity wears.*

For who is it really that Faust is conjuring up? Goethe himself, when he was writing *Faust*, most assuredly did not fully comprehend. But if we go back from Goethe to the mediaeval Faust, in whom Rosicrucian wisdom was living, we find that he too wanted to conjure up a spirit. And who was it he wanted to conjure up? He never spoke of the Earth Spirit, he spoke of *Man*. The longing and striving of mediaeval man was: to be Man. For he felt in the depths of his soul that as Earth man he is not truly Man. How can manhood be found again? The way Faust is rebuffed, is pushed aside by the Earth Spirit is a picture of how man in his earthly form is repelled by his own being. And this is why many accounts of "conversion" to Christianity in the Middle Ages show such extraordinary depth of feeling. They are filled with the sense that men have striven to attain the manhood that has been lost, and have had to give up in despair, have rightly despaired of being able to find in themselves, within earthly

* *Faust*, I, Act I, Scene 1. Bayard Taylor's Translation.

physical life, the true and genuine manhood; and so they have come to the point where they have to say: Man's striving for true manhood must be abandoned; Earthly man must leave it to the Christ to fulfil the task of the Earth.

In this time in man's history when his relation to true manhood as well as his relation to the Christ was still understood in what may be called a superpersonal-personal manner—in this time Spirit-knowledge, Spirit-vision, was still a real thing, was still a matter of experience. It ceased to be so with the fifteenth century; and then came that stupendous change, which no one has really understood. Those, however, who have knowledge of such things are aware of how in the fifteenth to sixteenth century, and even later, there existed a Rosicrucian school, isolated, scarcely known to the world, where again and again a few pupils were educated, and where above all, care was taken that one thing should not be forgotten but be preserved as a holy tradition. This holy tradition was as follows. I will give it to you in narrative form.

Let us say, a new pupil arrived one day at some such lonely spot to receive preparation. The first thing to be set before him was the so-called Ptolemaic system in its true form, as it had been handed down from olden times; not in the trivial way it is explained nowadays as something that has long ago been supplanted, but in an altogether different way. The pupil was shown how the Earth really and truly bears within herself the forces that are needed to determine her path through the Universe. So that to have a correct picture of the World, it has to be drawn in the old Ptolemaic sense: the Earth in the centre of the Universe, and the other stars controlled and directed in their corresponding revolutions by the Earth. And the pupil was told: If one really studies to find what are the best forces in the Earth, then one can arrive at no other conception of the World than this. In actual fact, however, it is not so. It is not so on account of man's sin. Through man's sin, the Earth has gone over, in an unauthorised, unjustifiable manner, into the kingdom of the Sun; the Sun has become the

regent and ruler of earthly activities. And so, over against a World-System given by the Gods with the Earth in the centre, has now been set another World-System that has the Sun in the centre, and the Earth revolving round the Sun—the system, that is, of Copernicus. And then the pupil was taught that here a mistake, a Cosmic mistake, has been brought about by human sin. This was the knowledge entrusted to the pupil and he had to engrave it deeply in his heart and soul. Men have overthrown the old World-System, the teacher would say, and set another in its place; and they do not know that this other is the outcome of their own guilt, is really nothing else than the expression—the revelation—of human guilt, while all the time they are imagining it to be the right and correct view of the Cosmos. And what has happened in recent times?—the teacher would go on to say. Science has suffered a downfall through the guilt of man. Science has become a science of the Demonic.

About the end of the eighteenth century such communications became impossible, but until that time there were always at least a few pupils here and there, who received in some lonely Rosicrucian School their spiritual nourishment, receiving it with "feeling", receiving it as a knowledge of the heart.

Even such a man, for example, as the great philosopher Leibniz, was led by his own thought and deliberation to try to find somewhere a place of learning where one could arrive at a correct conception of the relationship between the Copernican and Ptolemaic systems. He was not able to discover any such place.

Things like this need to be known if one is to understand aright, in all its shades of meaning, the great change that has come about in the last centuries in the way man looks on himself and on the Universe. And with this weakening of man's living connection with himself, with this estrangement of man from himself came afterwards the tendency to cling to the external intellect that today rules all. For, think for a

moment: this external intellect—is it verily *human experience*? Not by any means! Were it human experience, it could not live so externally in mankind as it does. The intellect has really no sort of connection with what is individual and personal, with the single individual man; we could almost call it a convention. It does not spring from inner human experience; it approaches man as something external to him.

You can feel how external the intellect has become, if you compare the way in which Aristotle imparted his logic to his pupils with the way in which it was taught much later, say in the seventeenth century. In the time of Aristotle, logic was still thoroughly human. When a man was taught to think logically, he had a feeling as though—if I may be allowed to express myself again in imaginative terms—as though he were dipping his head into cold water and thereby becoming estranged from himself for a moment; or else he had a feeling such as Alexander expressed when Aristotle wanted to impart logic to him: You are pressing together all the bones of my head! Logic was felt as something external. By the seventeenth century this externality was taken as a matter of course. Men learned how from the major and minor premises the consequent must be deduced. They learned what we find treated so ironically in Goethe's *Faust*:

“The first was so, the second so,
Therefore the third and fourth are so:
Were not the first and second, then
The third and fourth had never been.”

“There will your mind be drilled and braced,
As if in Spanish boots 'twere laced,”*

Whether, like Alexander, one feels the bones of one's head pressed together, or whether with all this first, second, third, fourth, one feels laced up in Spanish boots—we have each time a picture of the same experience.

* *Faust*, I, Act I, Scene 4. Bayard Taylor's Translation.

But this externality of abstract thought was no longer experienced in the time when logic began to be taught in the schools. Today of course this has for the most part ceased; logic is no longer a subject in the curriculum. It is rather as if there had once been a time when hundreds of people had been ordered to put on the same uniform and had done it with enthusiasm, and then later on came a time when they went on doing it of their own accord, without giving it a thought.

But now, during all the time when the logic of the abstract was gaining the upper hand, the old spiritual knowledge could not flourish. Even spiritual knowledge becomes external, assuming a form of which examples are to be found in the writings of Eliphas Levi or in the publications of Saint-Martin. Such writings are the last offshoots of the old Spirit-knowledge and Spirit-vision.

What do we find in a book like Eliphas Levi's *The Dogma and Ritual of High Magic*? In the first place there are all manner of signs—triangles, pentagrams and so forth. Then there are words from languages that were in use in bygone ages, especially from the Hebrew. And what in earlier times was life as well as knowledge and could pass over into man's deeds and into man's ideas—this we find has on the one hand become bereft of ideas, and on the other hand degenerated into external magic. There is speculation as to the symbolic meaning of this or that sign, concerning all of which modern man, if he is honest, is obliged to confess that he can see nothing in it. Allusion is made to horrible practices connected with all manner of rites, while those who spoke of these rites and frequently practised them were far from having any notion at all of their spiritual connection. Such books are invariably pointers to what was once understood in olden times, was once an inward knowledge-experience, but at the time when Eliphas Levi, for example, was writing his books, was no longer understood. As for Saint-Martin, you can read what I have written about him in the *Goetheanum Weekly*.

Thus we see how what had once been interwoven into

the soul-and-spirit of man's life, could not be held there but fell victim to complete want of understanding.

Sincere and genuine was the common impulse and striving for the Divine that showed itself in man's feeling life from the fifteenth to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Beautiful things and sublime are to be found in it. Much that has come down from those times and that is far too little noticed today has about it quite a magic breath of the Spiritual. Side by side with it, however, a seed is sprouting, a hard seed, tending to ossify—the seed of inability to understand the old spiritual truths; while at the same time it becomes also more and more impossible to approach the Spiritual in a way that is in right accord with the age. We come across men of the eighteenth century who speak of a destruction of all that is human, and of the rise of a terrible materialism. Often it seems as though what these men of the eighteenth century say could just as well be applied to our own time. And yet it is not so; what they say does not apply to the last two-thirds of the nineteenth century. For in the nineteenth century a further stage has been reached. What was still regarded in the eighteenth with a certain abhorrence on account of its demoniacal character, has come to be taken quite as a matter of course. The men of the nineteenth century no longer had the power to say: "The Copernican system is all very well; but a conception of the Universe that was *only able to arise* because man did not become on Earth what he should have become—such a conception is revolting to us! We are deeply moved by what happened—that the Earth was left without a ruler and the rulership passed over to the unrightful lords of the world" (this expression occurs again and again in mediaeval writings), "and that then the Christ left the Sun and united Himself with the destiny of the Earth."

Only now, at the end of the nineteenth century, has it again become possible to look into these things with clear vision, with such clear vision as man possessed originally—

only now in the Michael Age! We have spoken repeatedly of the dawn of the Michael Age, and of its character. But there are *tasks* that belong to this Michael Age, and it is possible now to point to these tasks, after all that we have been considering in the Christmas Meeting and since, about the evolution of Spirit-vision as it has taken its course through the centuries.

OCCULT SCHOOLS IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Dornach 12th January, 1924

We have seen how the knowledge that man used to acquire in olden days by means of instinctive clairvoyance gradually faded away into a kind of evening twilight. It is actually quite difficult to find any trace of that ancient wisdom in modern times, particularly since the eighteenth century; for all that is now left to us—or rather, I should say, what has recently come in its place—is the external observation of Nature, and logic. And neither with external observation of Nature nor with the mere sequence of abstract logical thoughts can man build a bridge whereby he may reach reality. Much of the ancient wisdom maintained nevertheless a sort of existence in traditional form right on into modern times, even as late as the middle of the nineteenth century; and in order that we may orientate ourselves aright to the important subjects with which we shall have to deal, I should like today to tell you about some of the ideas that were still to be found in the first half of the nineteenth century as survivals of the ancient wisdom, in order that you may see how in time that does not lie so very far back, there were men whose whole manner of thinking was entirely different from what it is today. As I said, it is exceedingly difficult to arrive at these things, for it is single individuals, living alone, or having around them at best a small circle of pupils, who preserved the ancient wisdom in strict secrecy—and often without themselves understanding it in all its profundity. And a similar picture has to be made of the conditions that pre-

ailed in still earlier times, for it is quite certain that the two characters familiar to you under the names of Faust and Paracelsus encountered in the course of their wanderings lonely individuals of this kind—cave-dwellers of the soul one might call them—and learned a great deal from them that they afterwards developed and elaborated through an inner faculty that was, in their case too, of a rather instinctive nature.

What I am now going to relate to you belongs, however, to a much later date; it will illustrate for you how things were in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Once more we find a little group—call it a school if you will—a lonely school somewhere in Central Europe. There, in this quite small circle, was to be found a deep and penetrating teaching concerning Man. A long time ago, I became aware—on a spiritual path—that at a certain place in Central Europe there existed such a small company of men who had knowledge. As I have said, I learned to know of it on a spiritual path. I was not able at that time to make observations in the physical world, for I was not then in the physical world; but on a spiritual path it became known to me that a little company of this kind existed.

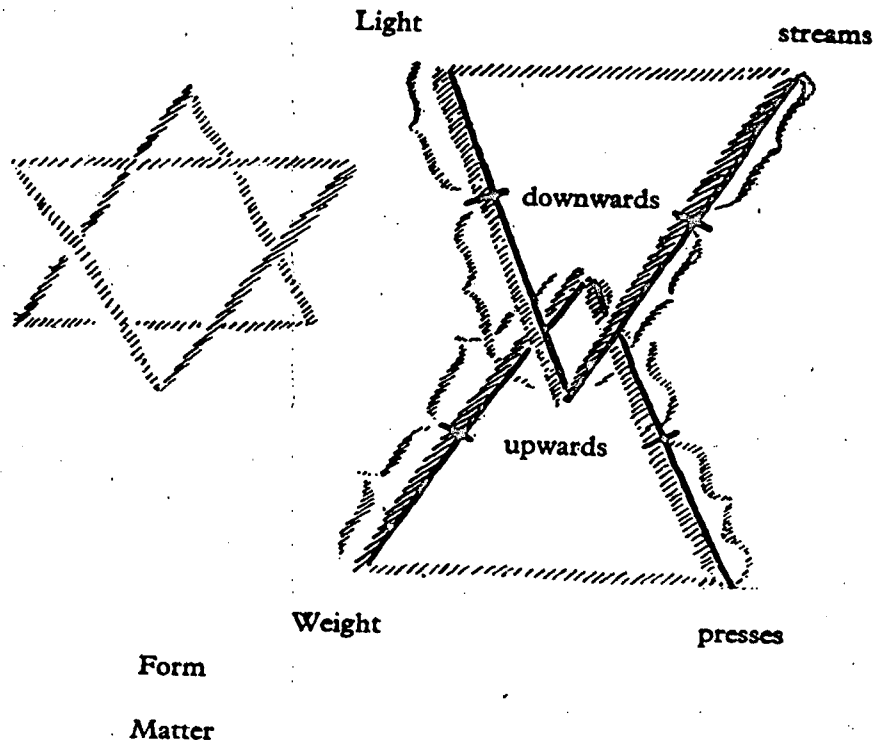
I should, however, not speak of what was taught within this little company, had not the essence of what was hidden in it subsequently again disclosed itself to research made independently through Spiritual Science; I should not speak of it, had I not myself found the knowledge anew. For it is just in the *re-finding* that one obtains the right orientation to the wisdom that has survived from olden times, a wisdom that is truly overpowering in its greatness. For this little company of which I speak, a tradition goes right back in history, back through the whole of the Middle Ages into the times of antiquity that I was describing to you in the lectures given at the Christmas Meeting, into the age of Aristotle. The tradition does not, however, come directly from Greece; it comes from Asia,

whither it was brought from Macedonia by Alexander the Great.

Within this little company a deep and strikingly exact teaching was given concerning Man, in respect especially of two human faculties. We can see there a spiritual scientist—for he may truly be so called—who is a highly developed Master, instructing his pupils. The ancient symbols by which he teaches them consist in certain geometrical forms—say, for example, a form such as *this* (diagram) and at the points would generally be found some words in Hebrew. At first sight one can make nothing whatever of such symbols. And the pupils of this Master would have known through the instruction they received that what, for example, Eliphaz Levi gives later on, is in reality no more than a talking round the subject, for these pupils were still able to learn how the true meaning of such symbols is only arrived at when they are rediscovered in the nature and being of Man himself.

There was in particular one symbol that played a great part in this little group of seekers. You have the symbol before you, when you draw apart this "Solomon's Key" so that one triangle comes down and the other rises (diagram). The symbol thus obtained played, as I said, a significant part within this little community or school, and continued to do so even as late as the nineteenth century.

The master would then get the pupils to assume a certain attitude with their physical bodies. The body itself had to "draw" this symbol. He made them stand with their feet far apart, and their arms stretched out above. Then, by lengthening the lines of the arms downwards and the lines of the legs upwards, these four lines (darker in the diagram) came to view in the human organism itself. A line was then drawn to unite the feet, and another to unite the hands above; and these two joining lines had to be felt as lines of force. The pupil became conscious that they do really exist; it became clear to him that currents pass, not unlike electro-magnetic currents, from the left finger-tips to the right finger-tips, and



again from the left foot to the right. So that in actual fact the human organism itself writes into space these two intersecting triangles.

The pupil had then to learn to feel what lies in the words: "Light streams upwards, Weight bears downwards." He had to experience this in deep meditation, standing in the attitude I have described. Thereby he gradually came to the point where the teacher was able to say to him: "Now you are about to experience something that was practised over and over again in the ancient Mysteries." And the pupil did then

actually attain to this further experience—namely, that he could feel the very marrow within the bones of his limbs (see dark lines in diagram).

You will be able to come a little nearer to an understanding of such experiences if you recall something I said to you yesterday. I told you then, in another connection, that if man continues to think so abstractly as has by now become the custom, if he goes on living entirely in abstract thoughts, he will, as it were, externalize himself, he will become something altogether external. The exact opposite happens when, in this way, man attains to a consciousness of the interior of the bones.

Let me tell you something else that will help you to a clearer understanding of the matter. Paradoxical as it may sound, it is nevertheless true that such a book as my *Philosophy of Freedom* cannot be grasped by logic alone, it needs the whole human being. You will in fact not understand what is said in the book about thinking, unless you know that man experiences thought by means of an inner experience of his skeleton. Man does not really think with his brain; when he thinks in sharply defined thoughts, he thinks with his skeleton. When, however, as is the case in the *Philosophy of Freedom*, thought becomes concrete, becomes real, then it goes over into the whole man.

The pupils of this Master went even further. They learned to feel the actual *inside* of the bones, and that enabled them to experience a last example of what was practised in manifold ways in the ancient Mystery Schools: they learned to experience symbols by turning their own organism into a symbol. Only so *can* symbols be truly experienced! Explanation and interpretation of symbols is quite nonsensical; so too is all theorising about them—utter nonsense. One has to *make* them, one has to *experience* them. It is the same with symbols as it is with fables and legends and fairy tales; one has to identify oneself with them. There is always something in man whereby he can enter into all the figures of the fairy tale,

whereby he can make himself one with the fairy tale. And so it is with these genuine symbols of olden times, which come originally from spiritual knowledge. I have, as you see, written the words in your own language (see diagram). There is very little sense in writing on the diagram Hebrew words that are no longer understood; for then the man who reads them will not be inwardly quickened, will have no inward experience of the symbol; rather will he be cramped by it, will feel as though his bones are being broken. And that is also what really happens—spiritually of course—when one takes seriously such writings as those of Eliphaz Levi.

These pupils, then, learned to experience the inside of their bony system. But, my dear friends, when you begin to experience the inside of your bones, you are really no longer in the body! If you hold your finger a few inches in front of your nose, then what you are holding there is not *in* you; just as little is what you experience within your bones really in you. You go inwards, it is true; nevertheless, you go out of yourself. And this going out of oneself, this going to the Gods, this going to the spiritual world, is what the pupils of that lonely school learned to grasp and understand. For they learned to know the lines the Gods had drawn into the world, the lines that had been drawn by the Gods to establish and found the world. They discovered—in one direction, namely through Man—the path to the Gods.

And then the teacher put into words what the pupils were experiencing. He expressed it in a sentence that will naturally sound ludicrous and paradoxical to many people today, but that holds nevertheless, as you will be able to recognise, a deep truth:

Behold the man of bone,
And thou beholdest Death.
Look within the bones,
And thou beholdest the Awakener—

that is, the Awakener of man in the Spirit, the Being who

brings man into connection with the world of the Gods.

Now in the time of which we are speaking, not very much could be attained on this path. Something, however, of the teaching concerning the evolution of the Earth through its various metamorphoses became clear to the pupils. Through being able to place themselves into the Spirit-being of Man, they learned to look back into Atlantean times and even further. As a matter of fact very many things that were not in those times written down or printed but related by word of mouth concerning the evolution of the Earth, had their origin in a knowledge and insight that came about in this way. Here then we have one of the teachings given in this school.

Another is also very interesting. The pupils were led to perceive in a practical manner that Man stands higher than the animals. To appreciate this teaching, you must realise that certain facts we now put to use in various ways and that are of great value to us, were known and understood even as late as the nineteenth century out of genuine old traditions. We pride ourselves today, for example, on having police-dogs who are able to track out all kinds of crime. This *application* of the knowledge had not been thought of in olden times, but the faculty that shows itself—in this case, for example, in dogs—was still better known than it is today. A very fine substance could be perceived even around every human being, a substance finer than anything that can be seen or smelt or detected by any of the senses. And men understood how there is also a kind of fine fluid belonging to the world as a whole. They recognised it as a special differentiation of warmth-currents, in union with all manner of other currents, which were looked upon as of electro-magnetic nature; and they connected the dog's faculty of scent with these currents of warmth and electro-magnetism. The pupils of the little school of which I am telling you, had their attention drawn to the same kind of faculty in other animals too; it was shown them how this sense for a fine fluid flowing through the world was present in a great many animals. And then it was pointed

out to them how that which in the case of the animal develops downwards in the direction of what is material, develops in man upwards into a quality of soul.

And here we come to a teaching that is of quite extraordinary interest. It was taught in this school by reference to facts of external anatomy, but it points to a deeply spiritual truth. The teacher would say to the pupil: "Behold, Man is a Microcosm; he imitates in his organism what goes on in the great Universe." Nor was it only in respect of the *processes* that go on within him, that man was regarded as a microcosm, as a little world. What shows itself *plastically* in man—this too was referred back to what takes place in the external world. So we find that profound and solemn attention was given, for example, in this school to the passage of the Moon through First Quarter, Full Moon, Last Quarter, New Moon; the pupils learned to watch how the Moon goes through twenty-eight to thirty phases.

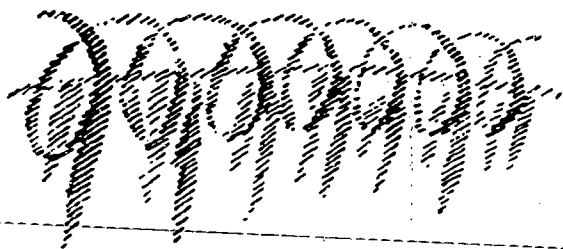


They watched, out in the Cosmos, the passage of the Moon through her phases; they watched how the Moon moves within her orbit. They saw how she describes her twenty-eight to thirty rotations.* And then, perceiving how Man has in his spinal column twenty-eight to thirty vertebrae* they came to understand how the development of the spinal column in the embryo corresponds with the movements and forces of the Moon.

They saw in the whole formation of the human spinal column a copy of the monthly movement of the Moon. And in the twenty-eight to thirty nerves that go out from the spinal column into the whole human organism, they saw a copy of the streams that the Moon sends down continually

* German has the same word for 'rotations' and 'vertebrae'.

upon the Earth, as she passes through the stages of her path in the heavens. Actually and literally, in these continuations of the vertebrae they saw a reflection of the inpouring of the Moon-streams. In short, in what the human being bears within him in the nerves of the spinal marrow, together with the spinal marrow itself, they saw something that brings him into living connection with the Cosmos.



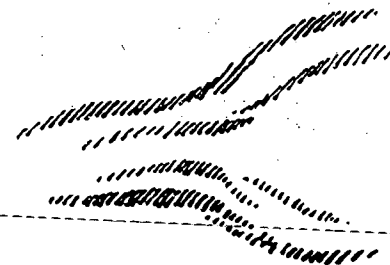
All this that I have indicated to you was presented to the pupil. And he was then made to observe something else. It was said to him: "Look at the optic nerve: watch how it goes from the brain across into the eye. You will find that in



the course of its passage into the eye it is divided into very fine threads. How many threads? The threads that go from the optic nerve into the interior of the eye are exactly as many in number as the nerves that go out from the spinal

marrow; there are twenty-eight to thirty of them. So that we may say, a spinal marrow system in miniature goes from the brain through the optic nerve into the eye."

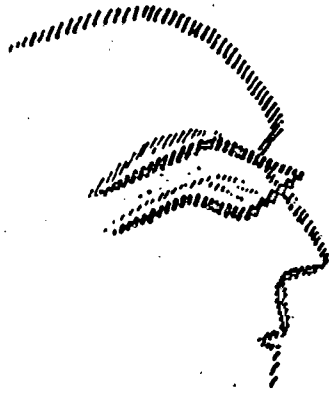
Thus has man—so said the teacher to his pupils—thus has man received this thirty-membered system of the spinal marrow nerves from the Gods, who in primeval antiquity formed and shaped his existence; but man himself has fashioned, in his eye, in his sense-world-beholding eye, a copy of the same; there, in the front of the head-organism, he has shaped a copy of what the Gods have made of him.



And then the pupil's attention was directed to the following. The organisation of the spinal marrow stands, as we have seen, in connection with the Moon. But now, through the special relationship that the Moon has to the Sun, we have a year of twelve months; and from the brain twelve nerves go out to the various parts of the organism, the twelve chief nerves of the brain. So that in this respect too man is a microcosm—a microcosm in his *head*, in respect of the relationship between Sun and Moon. Actually, in the whole form and figure of man we have before us an imitation of processes out yonder in the Cosmos.

The pupil was then taught to observe something else. He has seen how in the optic nerve, through the way the optic nerve is split up into thirty strands, man imitates the Moon system of the spine; and he has seen how twelve chief nerves go out from the brain. But now, when the particular part

of the brain that sends the olfactory nerve into the nose is examined, the fact is disclosed that there, in that little portion of the brain, the whole big brain is imitated. Just as in the eye the whole arrangement of nerves and spinal marrow is imitated, so in the organ of smell the whole brain is imitated, inasmuch as the olfactory nerve enters the nose in twelve strands. So that man has here in front, a miniature human being (diagram).



And then the pupil was led to observe that *anatomically* we have no more than a mere indication of this miniature human being. Only the most minute anatomical investigation can disclose it; it merges and becomes confused. On the other hand, as it were in compensation, it finds expression all the more strongly in the astral body. Since anatomically there are no more than indications of the fact, it cannot be made use of in ordinary life. We can, however, learn to make use of it. And even as the pupil was shown how to experience the inside of his bones, so was he shown also how to experience, in a really living way, this particular part of his being.

And here we come to something that is in truth more akin to the whole Western outlook than are many other things that come over to us from the East. For as is well

known, the East too speaks of concentration on the root of the nose, concentration on the point between the eyebrows. (This is how the exact spot is defined.) And this concentration is in truth concentration on the miniature man that is situated at this spot and can be grasped astrally. A meditation can actually be so formed as to enable one to apprehend something in that region that is like a miniature man in embryonic development. The pupil in the little school of which we are speaking received such guidance: he learned to apprehend, in intensely concentrated thought, a kind of embryonic development of a miniature human being.

And then, in pupils who had the faculty for it, the two-petalled lotus flower could begin to develop. And they were told: The animal develops this faculty downwards, to the fluid warmth and electro-magnetism. Man on the other hand develops what is situated up here in the head and nose. It may at first appear to be merely a sense of smell, but the activity of the eye plays over into it. Man develops it into the astral, and thereby acquires the faculty that enables him—not merely to follow that fluid as do the animals, but to evoke continual interchange with the astral light, and to perceive by means of the two-petalled lotus-flower what, his whole life long, he is continually writing into the astral light. The dog scents only that which has remained, that which is there present. Man has an altogether different experience. For even when he cannot yet perceive with it, he moves with his two-petalled lotus-flower; and as he moves with it, he is continually writing everything that is in his thoughts into the astral light, and acquiring at the same time the faculty that enables him to follow what he has written—and moreover to perceive something else, namely, the real difference between Good and Evil.

It was in such ways as these that echoes were still present of ancient primeval treasures of wisdom; and the rudiments of that wisdom were still taught, even practically. We can see from this how very much has been lost owing to the influence

of the materialistic tendencies that began to work so powerfully about the middle of the nineteenth century. For such truths as I have been indicating to you were still experienced and known in certain circles, isolated and hermit-like though these might be. And in the most varied domains of life knowledge was still derived from such hidden sources, knowledge that was later entirely disregarded, and that many today are longing to find again. But on account of the crude methods that prevail in our time, the customary external cognition cannot regain this knowledge.

Together with all else that was taught in that little circle, there was one very special teaching, that was as follows. It was shown to the pupil how when he makes use of the organ which is really a sort of enhanced organ of smell that reaches up into the astral light, then he learns to know the true substance of all things, he learns to know *matter*. And when he acquires knowledge of the inside of his bony system, and thereby learns to know the true and authentic World Geometry, learns to know the way in which the forces have been inscribed into the world by the Gods, then he grows able to understand the *forms* that are at work in the things of the world. Thus, if you would, for example, learn to know quartz in its substance—so it was said to the pupil—then look at it with the two-petalled lotus-flower. And if you would learn to know its crystal form, if you would understand how the substance is given shape and form, then you must apprehend its form (that comes from the Cosmos) with the power of apprehension that you can gain by living experience of the inside of the bony system. Or again, the pupil was taught as follows. With the help of your head-organ, you can learn to know how a plant is fashioned in respect of substance. And by learning to experience the inside of your bony system, you can learn to know how some particular plant grows, why it has this or that form of leaf, and this or that arrangement of its leaves, or again, why it unfolds its blossoms in this or that manner.

Form, wherever it occurs, had to be understood in the one way, matter in the other way. And it is really most interesting to find, when we go back to Aristotle, how he makes this distinction in respect of everything that exists—the distinction between form and substance. In later times, of course, it was taught in a purely abstract manner.

In the stream of culture that came from Greece and spread over Europe, the abstractness with which these things were set forth in books is enough to drive one to despair; and this went on throughout the Middle Ages, and in still more recent times has gone from bad to worse. But if you go right back to Aristotle, you will find that, with him, forms are referred to the experience I described; you will find he has also the insight to see in things, whenever the head is in question, that which he calls their matter or substance. Perceptions of this nature belong, however, to that part of Aristotle's teaching that was carried over into Asia.

But now the inner knowledge—that is to say, the knowledge that is derived from the Akashic Records—the inner knowledge of the philosophy taught in Greece, points us to something of which I could naturally give no more than an external indication in my *Riddles of Philosophy*,* where I showed how Aristotle held the view that in man, form and matter flow into one another; in man, matter is form and form matter. You will find this where I am speaking of Spirit in *Riddles of Philosophy*.

Aristotle himself, however, taught it in quite a different way. Aristotle taught that when you approach the minerals, you experience in the first place their form by experiencing the inside of the bones of the lower leg, and you experience their matter, their substance, in the organ of the head. The two are far apart from one another. Man holds them apart, form and substance. In the mineral kingdom you have crystallisation. When, however, man comes to an understanding of

the plant, then he experiences its form by means of his experience of the inside of the thigh-bone, its substance once more by means of the organ of the head, the two-petalled lotus-flower. The two experiences have already come a little nearer. And when man experiences the animal, then he feels the animal in its form through the experience he has of the inside of the bones of the lower arm, and again he feels its substance through the organ of the head. This time the two are still nearer together. And if now man experiences man himself, then he experiences the form of man by means of the inside of the upper arm that is connected—through the forming of speech—with the brain. (I have often spoken of this, when giving introductory words before a Eurythmy performance.) There the two-petalled lotus-flower unites with what goes from the inside of the upper arm to the brain; and it is particularly in speech that we experience our fellow human being no longer divided as to form and content, but as one in form and content.

This teaching survived in all its concreteness in the time of Aristotle. And, as we have said, a trace of it could still be found on into the nineteenth century. But there we come to an abyss. In the forties of that century the knowledge was completely lost, and the abyss remained until the end of the century, when the coming of the Michael Age brought the possibility for these truths to be found again. When, however, men stepped over this abyss, they were in reality stepping over a threshold. And at the threshold stands a Guardian. Between the years 1842 and 1879, men were not able to see the Guardian when they went past him. But now they must; for their own good, they must look back and take note of him. For to continue not heeding him, to live on into the following centuries without heeding him, would lead mankind to complete disaster.

THE TASKS OF THE MICHAEL AGE

Dornach 13th January, 1924

The Michael period into which the world entered in the last third of the nineteenth century, and into which men must now enter with increasing consciousness, is very different from former periods of Michael leadership. You know, of course, that as evolution goes forward, the seven great Archangel Spirits enter from time to time, one after another, into the life of man. Thus, after a certain time has elapsed, a particular guidance of the world—the guidance of Gabriel or Uriel, Raphael or Michael—is repeated. Our period is, however, essentially different from the preceding periods of Michael. This is due to the fact that man has been standing, since the first third of the fifteenth century, in quite another relation to the spiritual world than he ever did before. And this new relation to the spiritual world necessarily alters the character of his relation to that Spirit guiding the destinies of mankind, whom we may call by the ancient name of Michael.

Recently I have been speaking to you again of the Rosicrucian Movement. Rosicrucianism, as I have shown you, degenerated in many quarters to charlatanry. Indeed, most of that which has been transmitted to mankind under the name is pure charlatanry. Nevertheless, as I have explained on many former occasions, as individuality did exist who may rightly be described by the name of Christian Rosenkreuz. And he may be said, in a sense, to have set the example of how an enlightened individuality—a man who had knowledge of the spirit—could, at the dawn of the new phase of man's development, enter into relation with the spiritual world.

To Christian Rosenkruz it was vouchsafed to put forward many questions, to inquire concerning deeply significant riddles of existence in quite a new way when compared with the earlier experiences of mankind. For you must remember that while Rosicrucianism was arising, directing the mind of man—with “Faustian” endeavour, as it was sometimes called in later times—towards the spiritual world, *at the same time* an abstract naturalistic science was also arising. The bearers of this modern stream of spiritual life—men like Galileo, Giordano Bruno, Copernicus or Kepler—worthy as they are of fullest recognition, were in a different situation from the Rosicrucians, who wanted to foster, not a merely formal or abstract, but a true knowledge of the world. The Rosicrucians perceived how completely times had changed for the whole of human life, and therewith for the relation of the Gods to mankind. We might describe it as follows.

Until the fourth century A.D., and indeed as late as the twelfth and thirteenth century, man was still able to draw forth from himself real knowledge—even if only rudimentary—about the spiritual world. By doing the exercises given in the old Mysteries, he could draw forth from himself the secrets of existence. For it was really so with the humanity of olden times: what the Initiates had to say to mankind, they drew forth from the depths of their own souls, brought it up to the surface of thought, to the world of ideas. They were quite conscious that they were drawing forth their knowledge from the inner being of the human soul. The exercises they undertook were intended, as you know, to shake the human heart to its depths, to induce in the heart and mind experiences man does not undergo in the ordinary round of life. Thereby the secrets of the world of the Gods were, one might say, drawn forth from the depths, from the innermost being, of man.

Man cannot, however, *see* these secrets in the act of drawing them forth. In the old instinctive clairvoyance man did, it is true, behold the secrets of the world; he saw them in

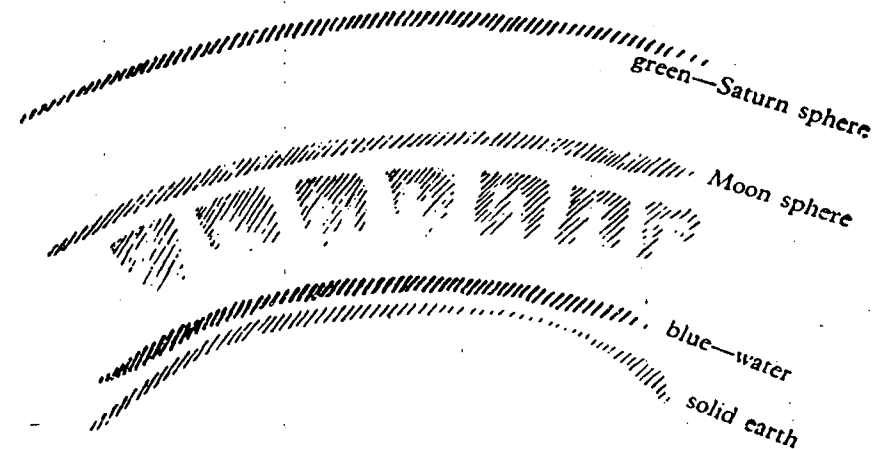
Imagination, he heard them in Inspiration, he united himself with them in Intuition. But all this is not possible as long as man stands there *alone*—just as little as it is possible for me to draw you a triangle without a blackboard to draw it on. The triangle I draw on the board portrays to me what I carry in a purely spiritual way within me. The triangle as a whole—all the laws of the triangle—are in me; and when I draw the triangle on the board, I bring home to myself what is really already there all the time within me. That is how it is when we draw diagrams. And it is the same when it is a question of deriving real knowledge out of the being of man, as was done in the ancient Mysteries. This knowledge too must, in a sense, be *written* somewhere. Every such knowledge, if it is to be seen in the Spirit, must be inscribed in that which has been called from time immemorial the “astral light”, i.e., in the fine substantiality of the Akasha. Everything must be written there; and man must be able to develop the faculty of writing in the astral light.

This faculty has depended on many different things in the course of human evolution. I do not intend to speak here of far-off pristine ages, and will leave on one side the first post-Atlantean epoch, the ancient Indian. At that time things were somewhat different. Let us begin then with the ancient Persian epoch, as you will find it described in my *Occult Science*. There was in that time an instinctive clairvoyance, there was knowledge of the divine-spiritual world; and the knowledge could be written into the astral light for man to behold it, inasmuch as the *earth*, the solid earth, afforded *resistance*. The writing itself is done, needless to say, with spiritual organs; but even spiritual organs require a basis of resistance. The things that are thus seen in the Spirit are not inscribed of course on to the earth itself, they are written into the astral light; but the earth acts as a ground of resistance. In the old Persian epoch the seers could feel the resistance of the earth; thereby alone, could the perceptions they drew forth from their inner being grow into actual visions.

In the next epoch, the Egypto-Chaldean, all the knowledge that the Initiates drew forth from their souls was able to be written into the astral light with the help of the *fluid* element. You must have a clear and correct picture of this development from epoch to epoch. The Initiate of the old Persian epoch looked to the solid earth. Wherever he saw around him plants or stones, the astral light reflected back to him his inner vision. The Initiate of the Egypto-Chaldean epoch looked into the sea, into the river—or into the falling rain, or the rising mist. When he looked into the river or into the sea, he saw the secrets that endure. The secrets, on the other hand, which relate to the transient—to the creation of the Gods in the things that are transient—these he beheld in the downpouring rain or the ascending mist. You must familiarise yourselves with the idea that the ancients did not look at mist and rain in the prosaic, matter-of-fact way that we do today. Rain and mist said very much to them—revealed to them the secrets of the Gods.

Then, in the Graeco-Latin period, the visions were like a Fata Morgana in the *air*. The Greek saw his Zeus, saw his Gods, in the astral light, but he had the feeling that the astral light only reflected the Gods to him under certain conditions. Hence he assigned his Gods to special places—places where the air could offer the required resistance for the inscriptions in the astral light. And so it remained until the fourth century A.D. Even among the first Fathers of the Christian Church, and notably the old Greek Fathers, there were many (you may indeed find it confirmed in their writings) who saw this Fata Morgana of their own spiritual visions in the astral light—through the resistance of the air. Thus they had clear knowledge of the fact that the Logos, the Divine Word, revealed Himself out of man—through Nature. But in course of time this knowledge faded. Feeble echoes of it still continued in a few specially gifted persons, even as late as the twelfth or thirteenth century. But when the age of abstract knowledge came—when men became

entirely dependent on the logical sequence of ideas and the results of sense observation—then neither earth nor water nor air afforded resistance to the astral light, but only the element of the *warmth-ether*. This is not known, of course, to those who are completely wrapped up in their abstract thoughts. They have no idea that these abstract thoughts of theirs are also written into the astral light. For so indeed they are; and it is the element of warmth-ether alone that affords them the resistance they need.



And now we find the following.

Remember what I said just now, that in the ancient Persian epoch men had the solid earth as a resistance so as to behold what they had inscribed into the astral light. What is thus received into the astral light—all that for which the solid earth is the resistance—rays out, but only as far as the sphere of the Moon. Further it cannot go. Thence it rays back again. Thus it remains, so to speak, with the Earth. Man *beholds* the secrets reflected by virtue of the earth; they *remain*, because of the pressure of the lunar sphere.

Now let us look at the Egypto-Chaldean epoch. Here it is the water on the Earth that reflects. What is thus reflected

goes out as far as the Saturn sphere. And now it is Saturn that "presses", and so makes it possible for man to "hold" on Earth what he beholds in spirit. And if we go on into the Graeco-Latin period—extending as it does right into the twelfth or thirteenth century—we find the visions inscribed in the astral light by virtue of the air. This time what is inscribed goes right to the boundary of the cosmic sphere before it returns. It is now much more fleeting; yet it is still such that man can remain united with his visions. The Initiates of all these epochs could say to themselves every time: Such spiritual vision as we have had—through the resistance of earth or water or air—remains, it is there. But coming into modern times, when only the element of the warmth-ether was left to offer resistance, we find that the element of the warmth-ether carries all that is written into it out into cosmic realms, right out of space into the spiritual worlds. It is no longer there!

It is so indeed, my friends. Take the most pedantic of modern professors with his ideas. He must of course *have* ideas—some of them have none at all!—but assuming that he has, then through the instrumentality of the warmth-ether these ideas are gathered up in the astral light. But the warmth-ether is transient and fleeting; in it, at once everything becomes merged and fused, and goes out into the cosmic distances.

Such a man as Christian Rosenkruz knew that the Initiates of olden times had lived right with their visions. They had fastened and confirmed what they beheld, knowing that it was there, reflected somewhere in the heavens—be it in the Moon sphere or in the planetary sphere, or at the end of the Universe. But now, nothing at all was reflected. For the immediate, wide-awake vision of man, nothing at all was reflected. Men could find ideas about Nature, the Copernican cosmology could arise, all manner of ideas could be evolved—but in the warmth-ether these ideas were simply scattered abroad and merged into the cosmic vast.

Then it came about that Christian Rosenkruz, under the

inspiration of a higher Spirit, found a way to perceive the reflected radiation after all, in spite of the fact that one had to do with a reflection depending on the warmth-ether alone. It was brought about in the following way. Other conditions of consciousness—dim, subconscious and sleep-like—were called into play, conditions in which man is *normally* outside his body. Then it became perceptible that that which is discovered with modern abstract ideas is after all inscribed—although not in space; it is written in the spiritual world. This, then, is what we find in the Rosicrucian Movement. The Rosicrucians, living as it were in a transition stage, made themselves acquainted with all that could be discovered about Nature in that epoch, received it into themselves and assimilated it as only man can assimilate it. What for the others was science they enhanced into true wisdom. Holding it in their souls, they then tried, after deep meditation, to pass over into sleep in a condition of the highest possible purity. And it was so, that then the divine-spiritual worlds—no longer the spatial end of the Universe, but the divine-spiritual worlds brought back to them in a *spiritually real* language what had first been apprehended in abstract ideas.

The Copernican cosmology, for example, was taught in Rosicrucian schools; but in special states of consciousness the ideas contained in it came back in the form I have explained to you. It was the Rosicrucians, above all, who realised that that which man receives in modern knowledge must first be carried forth, so to speak, must first be *offered to the Gods*, that the Gods may translate it into their language and give it back again to men.

This possibility has remained up to the present time. It is so indeed, my dear friends. If you are touched by the Rosicrucian principle of Initiation as understood among us here, study the system of Haeckel, with all its materialism; study it, and at the same time permeate yourselves with the methods of cognition indicated in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*. Take what you learn in Haeckel's

Anthropogenesis. In that form it may very likely repel you. Master it nevertheless; learn all that can be learned about it through studying the Natural Science of today, and then carry it towards the Gods. You will get what is related about evolution in my *Occult Science*.

Such is the connection between the feeble, shadowy knowledge that man can acquire here with his physical body, and the knowledge the Gods can give him, if he first duly prepares himself by studying this external knowledge in the right spirit. For man must first bring to the Gods what he can learn here on Earth. The times, you see, have changed!

And another thing has happened. Let a man strive as he will today, he can no longer draw anything forth from himself as did the old Initiates. The soul no longer transmits anything in the way it did for the old Initiates. It all becomes impure, permeated with instincts—as is evident in the case of spiritualistic mediums, and other morbid or pathological conditions. All that arises merely from within, becomes impure. The time for such creation from within is over and gone; actually it was past already in the twelfth or thirteenth century. What has happened can be expressed approximately as follows.

The Initiates of the old Persian epoch wrote a great deal into the astral light with the help of the resistance of the solid earth. When the first Initiate of the old Persian epoch appeared, the whole of the astral light that was destined for man, was like an unwritten slate. As I told you, I will speak later of the old Indian epoch; today we are going back only to the ancient Persian epoch. The whole of Nature, all the elements—the solid, the liquid, the airy, and the warm—were at this time an unwritten slate and the Initiates of the old Persian epoch wrote on this slate as much as could be written by making use of the resistance of earth. This was how, to begin with, the secrets destined to come to man from the Gods were written in the astral light. The tablet was then—in part—inscribed; yet in another respect it was still empty.

Thus the Initiates of the Egypto-Chaldean epoch were able to continue the writing in their way, gaining their visions by the resistance of water. And so a second portion of the tablet was inscribed. Then came the Greek Initiates; they inscribed a third portion. And now the tablet of Nature was fully inscribed. By the thirteenth or fourteenth century it was fully inscribed.

Then human beings began to write into the warmth-ether—the warmth-ether that is spread abroad, that disperses. For a time—until the nineteenth century—men continued to write in the warmth-ether; they had, however, no inkling that these experiences of theirs stand written also in the astral light. But now, my dear friends, the time has come when men must recognise: not out of themselves, in the old sense, can they find the secrets of the world, but only by so preparing themselves in heart and mind that they can read what is written on the tablet which is now full of writing. This we must prepare to do today; for this we must make ourselves ripe. No longer have we to draw forth the truth from ourselves like the old Initiates; we have to be able to read in the astral light all that is written there. If we succeed in doing so, then what we gain from the warmth-ether works as an inspiration. It works in such a way that the Gods come to meet us; they bring to us *in its reality* what we have acquired by our own efforts here on Earth. And what we thus receive from the warmth-ether reacts also in turn on all that stands written on the tablet by virtue of air, water and earth.

Thus is the Natural Science of today the true basis for spiritual seership. Learn first by the study of Natural Science to know the properties of air, water and earth. Then, having attained also the corresponding inner faculties, you will find that as you gaze into the airy, into the watery, into the earthy element, the astral light will stream forth—and not like some vague mist or cloud, but so that we can read in it the secrets of world-existence and the secrets of human life.

What, then, do we read? We—the humanity of today—

read what we ourselves have written in it. For what does it mean, to say that the ancient Greeks, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Persians wrote in the astral light? It means: we ourselves wrote it there in our former lives on Earth!

You see, my dear friends, just as our own memory of the common things that we experience in earthly life preserves these things for us, so does the astral light preserve for us what we have written in it. The astral light is spread around us—a fully written tablet with respect to the secrets which we ourselves have inscribed. There we must read, if we would find again the secrets of Nature. A kind of *evolution memory* must arise in mankind. A consciousness must gradually arise that there is such a thing as an evolution memory, and that in relation to former epochs of culture the humanity of today has to read in the astral light—just as we, individually, at a later age in life, read in our own youth with the help of our ordinary memory. This must come into the consciousness of men, and it is with this in view that I gave the lectures at Christmas. I wanted you to see how we have to draw forth from the astral light the secrets that we need today. The old Initiation was directed mainly to the *subjective* life; the new Initiation concentrates on the *objective*. That is the great difference. For all that was subjective has been written into the outer world, all that the Gods have secreted into man. What they secreted in his sentient body came out in the old Persian epoch; what they secreted in his intellectual or mind-soul came out during the Grecian epoch. The spiritual soul which we are now to evolve is independent; it brings forth nothing more out of itself. The spiritual soul stands over against what is already there. As human beings we must find our true humanity again in the astral light.

That, then, is how it was with the Rosicrucian Movement. In a time of transition it had to content itself with entering into certain dream-like conditions and, as it were, dreaming the higher truth of that which Science discovers here in a dry, matter-of-fact way, out of the Nature that is all around us.

But since the beginning of the Michael epoch, since the end of the 1870's, the situation has been different. The same thing that was attained in the time of the old Rosicrucians in the way above-described, can now be attained in a conscious way. Today, therefore, we can say: We no longer need that other condition which was half-conscious, what we need is a state of enhanced consciousness. Then, with the knowledge of Nature which we acquire, we can dive into the higher world; and the knowledge we have acquired will come to meet us from that higher world. We can read again what has been written in the astral light; and as we do so, it comes to meet us in spiritual reality. We carry up into a spiritual world the knowledge of Nature attained here, or we carry up thither the creations of naturalistic art, or again the feelings we develop out of a religion that works naturalistically in the soul—for even religion has become naturalistic nowadays. And as we carry all this up into the spiritual, then, provided we develop the necessary faculties, we do indeed encounter Michael.

So we may say: the old Rosicrucian Movement is characterised by the fact that its most illumined spirits had an intense longing to meet Michael; but they could only do so, as it were, in *dream*. Since the end of the last third of the nineteenth century, men can meet Michael in the Spirit, in a *fully conscious* way.

Michael, however, is a Being with this peculiar characteristic: He reveals nothing if we ourselves do not bring Him something from our diligent spiritual work on Earth. Michael is a silent Spirit—silent and reserved. The other ruling Archangels are Spirits who talk a great deal—in a spiritual sense, of course; Michael is taciturn. He is a Spirit who says very little. At most He will now and then give brief directions. What we have to learn from Michael is not really the word but, if I may so express it, the *look*; it is the power, the direction, of His gaze.

This is because Michael concerns Himself most of all with that which men *create* out of the Spiritual. He lives with the

consequences of what men have created. The other Spirits live more with the causes; Michael lives with the consequences. The other Spirits kindle in man the impulses for what he ought to do. Michael wants to be the spiritual hero of Freedom; He lets men do, and then takes what becomes of human deeds, receives it and carries it on and out into the Cosmos, to continue in the Cosmos what men themselves cannot yet do with it.

With other Beings of the Hierarchy of Archangeloi, we have the feeling that impulses are coming to us from Them. In greater or lesser degree, impulses to do this or that come from Them. Michael is the Spirit from whom in our time impulses do not come; for the present Michael age is His most characteristic epoch—the epoch, namely, when things are to arise out of human freedom. But when man has once done something out of his own inner freedom, consciously or unconsciously kindled by the reading of the astral light, then Michael carries that human earthly deed out into the Cosmos, that it may become cosmic deed. Michael takes care of the results, the other Spirits are concerned rather with causes.

Michael is, however, not merely a silent, taciturn Spirit. Michael meets man with a very clear gesture of repulsion, in regard to many things in which the human being of today still lives on Earth. For example, all knowledge about the life of men or animals or plants that tends to lay stress on inherited characteristics, on everything that is inherited in physical nature—we can feel how Michael is constantly repelling it, pushing it aside with a gesture of deprecation. He means to show that such knowledge cannot help man at all for the spiritual world. What man discovers in the human and animal and plant kingdoms independently of the purely hereditary nature—that alone can be carried up before Michael. *Then* we receive, not the eloquent gesture of deprecation, but the look of approval which tells us that it is a thought rightly conceived in harmony with cosmic guidance. For this is what we learn increasingly to strive for—so to direct our thoughts

that we may strike through to the astral light and behold the secrets of existence, and then come before Michael and receive His approving look which tells us: That is right, that is in harmony with the cosmic guidance.

Michael sternly rejects also all separating elements—such as the human languages. So long as we only clothe our knowledge each in our own language, and do not carry it right up into the *thoughts*, we cannot come near Michael. On this account there is waging today in the spiritual world a very significant battle. For on the one hand the Michael impulse has entered the evolution of humanity. The Michael impulse is there. But on the other hand, there is much in this evolution of humanity that does not want to receive the impulse of Michael, that wants to reject it. Among the things that would fain reject the impulse of Michael today are the feelings of nationality. They flared up in the nineteenth century, and they have become strong in the twentieth—stronger and stronger. Many things have been ordered—or rather, sadly disordered—in accordance with the principle of nationality.

All this is in direct opposition to the Michael principle; all this contains Ahrimanic forces which strive against the inpouring of the Michael-forces into the earthly life of man. So then we see this war being waged by the upward-attacking Ahrimanic spirits who would like to carry upward what comes from the inherited impulses of nationality—which Michael sternly rejects and repels.

A most lively spiritual conflict is in fact being waged today in this direction. For this is the state of affairs over a great portion of mankind. Thoughts are not there at all; men think only in words, and to think in words is no way to approach Michael. We only come to Michael when we get through the words to real inner experiences of the Spirit—when we cease to hang on to words, and come through to real inner experiences of the Spirit.

This is the very essence, the secret of modern Initiation: to get beyond words, to a living experience of the Spiritual. It is

in no way contrary to a feeling for the beauty of language. Precisely when we no longer *think* in language, we begin to *feel* it. As a true element of feeling, it begins to live in us and flow outward from us. This is the experience to which the man of today must aspire. Perhaps, to begin with, he cannot attain it for speech, but can more readily find his way to it through writing. For in respect of writing, too, it must be said: Today men do not *have* the writing; the writing *has them*. What do I mean by this? I mean that in our wrist, in our hand, we have a certain train of writing. We write mechanically, out of the hand. This is a thing that fetters man. He only becomes unfettered when he writes as he paints or draws—when every letter as it stands beside the next becomes for him a thing that is painted or drawn . . .

Goetheanum

Then there is no longer what is ordinarily called a "hand-writing". Man *draws* the *form* of the letter. His relation to the letter is objective; he sees it before him—that is the essential thing.

For this reason, strange as it may sound, in certain Rosicrucian schools learning-to-write was prohibited, up to the fourteenth or fifteenth year of age; so that the form, the mechanism which comes to expression in writing, did not enter the human being's organism. Only when his intelligence was more developed did he approach the form of the letter, and then it was so arranged that simultaneously with learning the



conventional letters, needed for human intercourse, he had to learn others—specifically Rosicrucian letters—which are now supposed to have been a secret script. But that was not intended; the idea was that for an *A* one should learn at the same time another sign: *O*. For then, one would not hold fast to the sign, but get free of it and feel the real *A* as something higher than any mere sign—be it *A* or *O*. Otherwise, the *letter* would be identified with that which comes forth from the human being, soaring and hovering around him as *sound*.

With Rosicrucianism many things found their way to the people at large. For it was one of their fundamental principles, that from the small circles in which they were united, Rosicrucians should go out into the world—generally working, as I have told you, as doctors of medicine. But at the same time, while they practised medicine, they spread knowledge of many things in the wide circles into which they came. Moreover, together with such knowledge, certain moods and feelings were spread. We find them on every hand, wherever the Rosicrucian stream has left its traces. Sometimes they even assume grotesque forms. For instance, out of such moods and feelings of soul, men came to regard the whole of our modern-relationship to writing—and *a fortiori*, to printing—as a black art. For it is quite true, nothing hinders one more from reading in the astral light than ordinary writing. This artificial fixing hinders one very much from reading in the astral light. One has always first to overcome it when one wants to read in the astral light.

At this point two things come together, one of which I mentioned a short while ago. I told you how in the production of spiritual knowledge man must always be present with full *inner activity*. I confess that I myself have a number of notebooks in which I write or record in some way the results I come to. I generally do not look at them again! Only, by calling into activity not the head alone but the whole man, one enables these perceptions—which must indeed take hold of the entire man—to come forth, to find expression. He who

does so, will gradually accustom himself not to care so much for what he sees physically, for what is already fixed, but to remain in the *activity*, in order not to spoil his faculty of seeing in the astral light. It is good to practise this reticence. As far as possible, when fixing things in ordinary writing, one should not adhere to writing as such, but either draw the letters and re-draw them after one's pleasure (for then it is as though you were painting, it becomes an art) or anyway abstain from reflecting upon what one has written. In this way one learns not to spoil the impressions in the astral light.

If we are obliged to relate ourselves to writing in the modern way, we mar our spiritual progress. For this reason, in Waldorf School education, great care is taken that the child does not go so far in writing as is usual in the educational methods of today. Care is taken to enable him to remain within the Spiritual, for that is essential.

The world must in our time find the way to receive once more the principle of Initiation as such among the principles of civilisation. Only thereby will it come about that man, here on Earth, will gather in his soul something with which he can go before Michael, so as to meet Michael's approving look, the look that says: "That is right, that is cosmically right." Thereby the will is fastened and made firm, thereby is man incorporated in the spiritual progress of the Universe. Man becomes then himself a co-operator in that which is to be instilled into the evolution of mankind on Earth by Michael—beginning now in this present Michael epoch.

Many, many things need to be taken into account if man is to cross in the right way the abyss of which I spoke yesterday, where in very truth a Guardian is standing. We shall show in the next lectures* how the abyss opened out in the 1840's and how man today, as he looks back, can find his right relation to this abyss and to this Guardian—helped by such knowledge as I have once again been endeavouring to set before you.

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