

THE SUN-MYSTERY
IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN HISTORY

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THE PALLADIUM

Lecture given by

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The Sun-Mystery in the Course of Human History

WE HAVE BEEN studying how the living form of man, his soul and his spirit, are related to the cosmos. The various aspects of this subject presented in recent lectures may be summarised in somewhat the following way:—

In the deep foundations of man's being lies the will. In many respects the will is the most mysterious and secret element in human nature. It is obvious that aberrations, inclinations that often run counter to the world's well-being surge up from fathomless depths of the moral life; everything experienced by the soul in the form of pricks of conscience or self-reproach streams up from the deep ground of the will.

The reason why the will is so mysterious and secret is that in many respects it is a highly indeterminate force; there is in it an instinctive element over which we have little control and which drives us hither and thither on the turbulent waves of life often without our being able to claim that any conscious impulses are taking effect. In another respect too, namely in respect of our knowledge of the operations of the will, it has

again and again been emphasised that these operations of the will are as withdrawn from human consciousness as the experiences of deep, dreamless sleep; so that in this respect too, the will is an indeterminate, mysterious element.

But when we think of man's spiritual nature we cannot conceive that this spirituality is active in him only during his waking hours or in his conscious mental life; the fact is that this spirituality is at work in him during sleep too, within that part of his being where his will lies and which, like the experiences of deep sleep, is wrapt in unconsciousness.

Spirit is therefore also present and at work in the sleeping human being. Two aspects of the will can be distinguished.—There is first of all the will which—unless we are out-and-out idlers—spurs us to activity from the time of waking until that of falling asleep. True, we cannot perceive the will in actual operation, but the effects rise into our consciousness inasmuch as we can form mental concepts and images of them. We do not know *how* the will-impulse works in us when we are walking; but we can see ourselves stepping forward. We form mental images of the workings of our will and in this sense are conscious of its effects. That is one aspect of the will.

The other aspect is that the will is also active in us while we sleep; for then inner processes are taking place, processes that are also operations of the will, only we are not aware of them—precisely because we are asleep.

But just as the sun also shines during the night on the other side of the earth where we are not living, so does will stream through our being while we are asleep, although we have no consciousness of it.

Thus two kinds of will can be distinguished: an inner will and an outer will. The workings of the outer will are made manifest to us while we are awake; those of the inner will take effect while we are asleep. Strictly speaking, the inner will is not revealed to us; nevertheless when we look back, its effects can be apprehended afterwards, as having been part of the condition of sleep.

The will is present as it were in ocean-depths of the soul. It surges upwards in waves. But just because we must admit that the will is at work during sleep, when the bodily part of our being is engaged in purely organic activity, neither pervaded with soul nor illumined by spirit, it follows that the will as such has to do with this organic activity. The will that is working while we are asleep has to do with organic activity, inasmuch as organic processes, life-processes take place in us. These processes are essentially connected with the will.

But during waking activity too, that is to say when our will is in flow, life-processes are taking place. The will takes effect in the processes of internal metabolism. So that here again we can point to organic activity.

Out of the ocean-depths of will in the human being, waves which come to expression in the form of *feeling*, surge upwards. We know that feeling is a dimly

apprehended experience, that so far as actual consciousness is concerned it has really only the intensity of a dream. But at any rate it is clearer than the workings of will. It raises into greater clarity what lies in the ocean-depths of man's being. Feeling brings a certain light into, intensifies, consciousness; the two poles of the will rise into this intensified consciousness and in it both the inner will and the outer will are made manifest.

Thus we distinguish two kinds of feeling, as we did in the case of the will: an inner will in the sleeping state, an outer will in the waking state. One kind of feeling surges upwards from the will that is connected with man's sleeping condition. This kind of feeling lives itself out in the antipathies—taking the word in the widest sense—unfolded by the human being. This is feeling which tends towards antipathy. Whereas the will that is involved in outer activity and therefore leads man into the external world, manifests in all those experiences of feeling which have in them the quality of sympathy. The dreamlike experience of feeling which comes to expression in sympathies and antipathies aroused by different forms of life, by forms of art or of nature, or in sympathies and antipathies connected more with the organs and arising in us through smell or taste or through a sense of well-being or comfort—all this weaving activity belongs to the soul. Will therefore reveals itself in *organic activity*, feeling in activity of the soul.

If the life of soul is studied from this point of view,

great illumination will be shed upon it. Waking life arouses in us sympathy with the surrounding world. Our antipathies really come from more unconscious realms. They press upwards from the sleeping will. It is as though our sympathies lie more on the surface, whereas antipathies rise up through them from unplumbed depths. Antipathies repel; antipathies draw us away from the surrounding world; we isolate ourselves, shut ourselves within our own being. Inwardly upstreaming antipathies are the antecedents of human egotism. The greater a man's egotism, the more strongly is the element of antipathy working in him. He wants to isolate himself, to feel enclosed within his own being.

In normal life we do not notice the constant interplay of sympathies and antipathies in the life of soul. But we become aware of it when our connection with the outer world becomes abnormal, and when the antipathetic element that derives from sleep also works in an abnormal way. This happens when our breathing, for example, functions irregularly during sleep and we have nightmares. In a nightmare, the soul is putting up an antipathetic defence against something that is trying to penetrate into us, preventing us from full experience of our egohood.

We are gazing here into deep secrets of human experience. If a man unfolds the element of antipathy in his life of feeling so strongly that it plays into his waking life, his whole being is permeated with antipathy which

then lays hold of his astral body; his astral body is steeped in the element of antipathy; antipathy streams out from him like an abnormal aura. It may then happen that he begins to feel antipathy to people to whom his attitude was otherwise neutral, or indeed even to those he loved or knew intimately. These conditions can give rise to persecution mania in all its forms. When feelings of antipathy not to be explained by outer circumstances are experienced, this is due to the overflowing antipathies in the soul, that is to say, to an abnormal intensification of the one pole in the life of soul which forces its way upwards out of sleep. If this antipathy gets the upper hand in a human being, he becomes a world-hater, and such hatred can assume incredible proportions. The aim of all education and all social endeavour should be to prevent human beings from becoming world-haters.

But think of it.—If what surges up from the ocean-depths of man's being can promote overweening egotism when it gets the upper hand—and persecution mania in all forms is nothing but superabundant, excessive egotism—if all this is possible, what is there to be said of the inner will itself, which a beneficent creation conceals by means of sleep? We have no knowledge at all of how this inner will permeates our limbs, our entire organism. The most that can be said is that now and then, through strange dreams, something comes up into the consciousness of what lies in the will that works in our organism during sleep. What

lives in this will lies—and rightly so for the ordinary consciousness—on yonder side of the Threshold. He who comes to know it, learns to know the force by which the human being can be led to uttermost evil. The deepest secret of human life is that we have the counterbalance of our organic activity in the very forces which, were they to gain control in the conscious life of a man, would make him into a criminal.

Let it be remembered that nothing in the world is *in itself* evil or good. What is radically evil when it breaks into our conscious life, is the counterbalance for our spent life-forces when it takes effect in its right place, namely as the regulator of organic activity during the sleeping state.

If you ask: What is the nature of the forces which make compensation for the spent life-forces?—the answer is: They are the forces of evil. Evil has its mission—and it is here. If this becomes known to anyone through spiritual training, it is for him as it was for earlier seers, something of which they said: Of its essential nature it is not lawful to speak, for sinful is the mouth that speaks of it, and sinful the ear that hears of it.—Nevertheless man must realise that life is a process fraught with danger and that evil lies in its deep foundations as a necessary force.

Now these waves of the will surge even higher—into the conceptual life, the mental life. The sleeping will lights up in feeling, and when it surges upwards into mental life, it becomes still clearer but at the same time

denuded qualitatively—it becomes abstract. In feeling fraught with antipathy there is still a certain lively intensity. When this element of antipathetic feeling surges into the conceptual life, it comes to expression in the form of negative judgments, judgments of rejection or denial. Everything we negate in life, everything the logician calls “negation”, negative judgment, is the uprush of antipathetic feeling, or of the inner will, into the conceptual life!

And when sympathetic feeling—which has its origin in the will of waking life, in the outer will—rises up into the conceptual life, our judgments are affirmative. We have arrived at something which, as you see, lives in us as abstraction only. In feeling, inasmuch as we unfold sympathies and antipathies, there is still intensity of life. Whereas in acts of judgment—which are a mental, conceptual activity—we are, as it were, immobile, contemplative observers of the world! We affirm and negate. We do not come to the point of actual antipathy; we merely negate. It is an abstract process. We do not rouse ourselves to antipathy: we merely say, no. In the same way we do not rouse ourselves to sympathy: we merely say, yes. We are raised above our relation to the outer world—to the level of abstract judgment.

This, then, is a purely mental, concept-forming activity, which can be called *spiritual* activity! But will, feeling and conceptual activity can surge even higher—into the domain of the senses. When negative judgment surges into the domain of the senses, what is the result:

The condition wherein we perceive nothing. If we think of it in relation to the most obvious process of perception, we can say: It is the experience of *darkness*—where we see nothing. On the other hand, affirmative judgment becomes experience of *light*. The same could be said with regard to the experience of silence, or of tone and sound. To all the twelve senses it would be correct to apply what has here been said in connection with the experiences of light and of darkness.

And now let us ask: What, in reality, is this activity in the domain of the senses? We have spoken of organic activity, activity of the life of soul, spiritual activity. Spiritual activity is merely a concept-forming activity but it is still our *own*! What takes place between the senses and the outer world is in truth no longer our own activity, for there the world is playing into us. It would be quite correct to depict the eye as an independent entity; what takes place in the eye is that the outer world penetrates into the organism as it were through a gulf. We are no longer standing in the world with our own activity, but this is *divine* activity. This divine activity weaves through the world surrounding us. Darkness inclines in the direction of negation, light in the direction of affirmation.

The influence of this divine activity upon man in his relationship to the world was an especially vivid experience in the wisdom of the second Post-Atlantean epoch.—God in the Light—that is to say, the Divine with a Luciferic quality; God in the Darkness—the

Divine with an Ahrimanic quality.—Thus did the ancient Persians experience the world. And to them the sun was the representative of the outer world. The sun as the divine source of *Light*—so it was experienced in the second Post-Atlantean epoch. On the other hand in the third Post-Atlantean epoch (Egypto-Chaldean) men experienced more strongly the sphere lying between judgment and feeling. At that time they did not feel so intensely that the Divine in the outer world is experienced in light or darkness, but rather in the impact between conceptual activity and feeling. Experience of divine activity among the Egyptians and Chaldeans caused men to bring an element of antipathy into negative judgments and sympathy into affirmative judgments. And only when we are able to decipher and understand the pictorial or other records of the Egypto-Chaldean epoch shall we realise that all were created and shaped out of sympathetic affirmation or antipathetic negation. When you look at Egyptian statues, figures on tombs, and so forth, you can still feel that their forms give expression to sympathetic affirmation or antipathetic negation. It is simply not possible to create a sphinx without bringing into it sympathies and antipathies inhering in the conceptual life. Men did not experience merely light and darkness but something of the element of life that is present in sympathies and antipathies. In that epoch the sun was experienced as the divine source of *Life*.

And now we come to the Greco-Latin epoch when

man's experience of direct communion with the outer world was largely lost. In my book *Riddles of Philosophy** I have shown that although in that age man still felt his thoughts as we today feel sense-impressions, he was already approaching the condition in which we live at the present time, when owing to the development of the ego we no longer feel any really living connection with the external world, when with our ego we are practically asleep within the body, are in a state of slumber. This condition was not so pronounced in the Greeks, but to some extent it was certainly present. To understand the Greek nature we must realise that the Greek had already begun to live very intensely in his body—not as intensely as we do, but nevertheless intensely.—Not so the ancient Persians. The wise men among them did not believe that they were living enclosed within their skins but rather that they were borne on the waves of the light through the whole universe. In the Greek, this experience of cosmic life was already losing intensity, falling into slumber within the body. When we ourselves are asleep, the ego and astral body are outside the physical body; but our waking, in comparison with that of the ancient Persians, really amounts to sleep. When the Persians woke from sleep—I am speaking of course of the ancient Persians as described in my *An Outline of Occult Science*†—it was as though the light actually penetrated into them, into their senses.

* Not yet published in English

† *An Outline of Occult Science*, Rudolf Steiner Publishing Co.

We no longer feel that at the moment of waking from sleep we summon the light into our eyes. For us the light is outside, phantomlike. Nor could the Greeks any longer see in the sun the actual source of Life; they felt that the sun was something that pervaded them inwardly. They felt the element in which the sun lives within the human being as the element of Eros—the element of Love. Thus: the sun as the divine source of Love. Eros—the sun-nature within the human being—this was what the Greek experienced.

Then, from about the fourth century A.D. onwards, came the time when, fundamentally speaking, the sun was no longer regarded as anything but a physical orb in space, when the sun was darkened for man. To the ancient Persians the sun was the actual reflector of the *Light* weaving through space. To the Egyptians and Chaldeans the sun was the *Life* surging and pulsating through the universe. The Greeks felt the sun as that which infused *Love* into the living organism, guiding Eros through the waves of sentient existence.

This experience of the sun sank more and more deeply into man's being and gradually vanished into the ocean-depths of the soul. And it is in the ocean-depths of the soul that man bears the sun-nature today. It is beyond his reach, because the Guardian of the Threshold stands before it; it lies in the depths of being as a mystery of which the ancient teachings said: Let it not be uttered—for sinful is the mouth that speaks of it and sinful the ear that hears of it.

In the fourth century A.D. there were schools which taught that the sun-mystery must remain untold, that a civilisation knowing nothing of the sun-mystery must now arise. Behind everything that takes place in the external world lie forces and powers which give guidance from the universe. One of the instruments of these guiding powers was the Roman Emperor Constantine. It was under him that Christianity assumed the form which denies the sun.

Living in that same century was one whose ardour for what he had learnt in the Mysteries as the last remnants of the ancient, instinctive wisdom, caused him to attach little importance to the development of contemporary civilisation. This was Julian the Apostate. He fell by the hand of a murderer because he was intent upon passing on this ancient tradition of the threefold Mystery of the Sun. And the world would have none of it.

Today, of course, it must be realised that the old instinctive wisdom must become *conscious* wisdom, that what has sunk into the subconsciousness, into purely organic activity and even into sub-organic activity, must once again be lifted into the light of consciousness. We must re-discover the Sun-Mystery.

But just as when the Sun-Mystery had been lost, bitter enemies rose up against the one who wished this mystery to be proclaimed to the world, and brought about his death, so again enemies are working against the new Sun-Mysteries which must be brought to the world by spiritual science. We are living now at the

other pole of historical evolution. In the fourth century A.D. there was sunset; now there must be sunrise.

In this sense Constantine and Julian the Apostate are two symbols of historical evolution. Julian the Apostate stands as it were upon the ruins of olden times, intent upon building again out of these ruins the forms of the ancient wisdom, upon preserving for humanity those ancient memorials which Christianity, assuming a material form for the first time in the days of Constantine, had destroyed. Countless treasures were destroyed, countless works of art, countless scripts and records of the ancient wisdom. Everything that could in any possible way have given men an inkling of the ancient Sun-Mystery was destroyed.

It is true that in order to reach inner freedom, it was necessary for men to pass through the stage of believing that a globe of gas is moving through universal space—but the fact is that physicists would be very astonished if they could take a journey in space; they would discover that the sun is not a globe of gas giving out light—that is nonsense—but that it is a mere reflector which cannot itself radiate light but at most throw it back. The truth is that in the spiritual sense, light streams out from Saturn, Jupiter, Mercury, Venus and the Moon.

Physically it appears as though the sun gives the planets light, but in reality it is the planets that radiate light to the sun and the sun is the reflector. As such it was recognised by the wise men of ancient Persia with their instinctive wisdom, and in this sense the sun was

regarded as the earthly source of *Light*—not indeed as the source itself, but as the reflector of the Light. Then, among the Egyptians and Chaldeans, the sun became the reflector of *Life* and among the Greeks, the reflector of *Love*.

This was the conception that Julian the Apostate wanted to preserve—and he was done away with. In order to reach freedom it was indeed necessary that men should hold for a time to the superstition of the sun as a globe of gas in space, giving out light—a superstition enunciated as a categorical truth in every book of physics today. But our task must be to penetrate to the reality.

In truth, Julian the Apostate and Constantine stand before us as two symbols . . . Julian the Apostate was bent upon preserving those ancient memorials of the world which could, in a certain way, have made it possible for the true Sun-Mystery to find its way to men. Indeed during the first centuries of Christendom, Christ was still a Sun-Figure—an Apollo.

This Sun-Mystery was felt to be the greatest spiritual treasure possessed by mankind. And it was symbolised by what was known as the Palladium. It was said that the Palladium had once been in Troy and that the priests of the Mysteries there saw in it the means whereby, in sacred ritual and cult, they revealed to the people the true nature of the sun. Then the Palladium was taken to Rome, and its presence there was a secret known to the initiates in Rome. The initiated priests of the Romans,

and even the first Emperors—Augustus, for example—worked in the world out of a direct consciousness that the greatest of all treasures was represented in Rome, at all events in an outer symbol, inasmuch as beneath the foundations of the most venerated Roman temple, lay the Palladium, its existence known only to those who were initiated into the deepest secrets of Roman existence and destiny. But in a spiritual sense it had become known to those whose task it was to bring Christianity to the world. And out of the knowledge that the Palladium was guarded in Rome, the early Christians made their way thither. A spiritual reality lay behind these journeys.

But when, under Constantine, Christianity was secularised, the Palladium was taken away from Rome. Constantine founded Constantinople, and he caused the Palladium to be buried in the earth under a pillar erected there by his orders. Thus it transpired that in its further development Roman Christianity was deprived of the knowledge of the Sun-Mystery by the very Emperor who established Christianity in Rome in its rigid, mechanical forms. In the secularisation of Christianity brought about by Constantine, the cosmic wisdom was lost to Christianity—and this comes to expression in the removal of the Palladium from Rome to Constantinople.

In certain Slavonic regions—people always interpret things according to their own conditions—a belief reigned for centuries, lasting indeed until the beginning

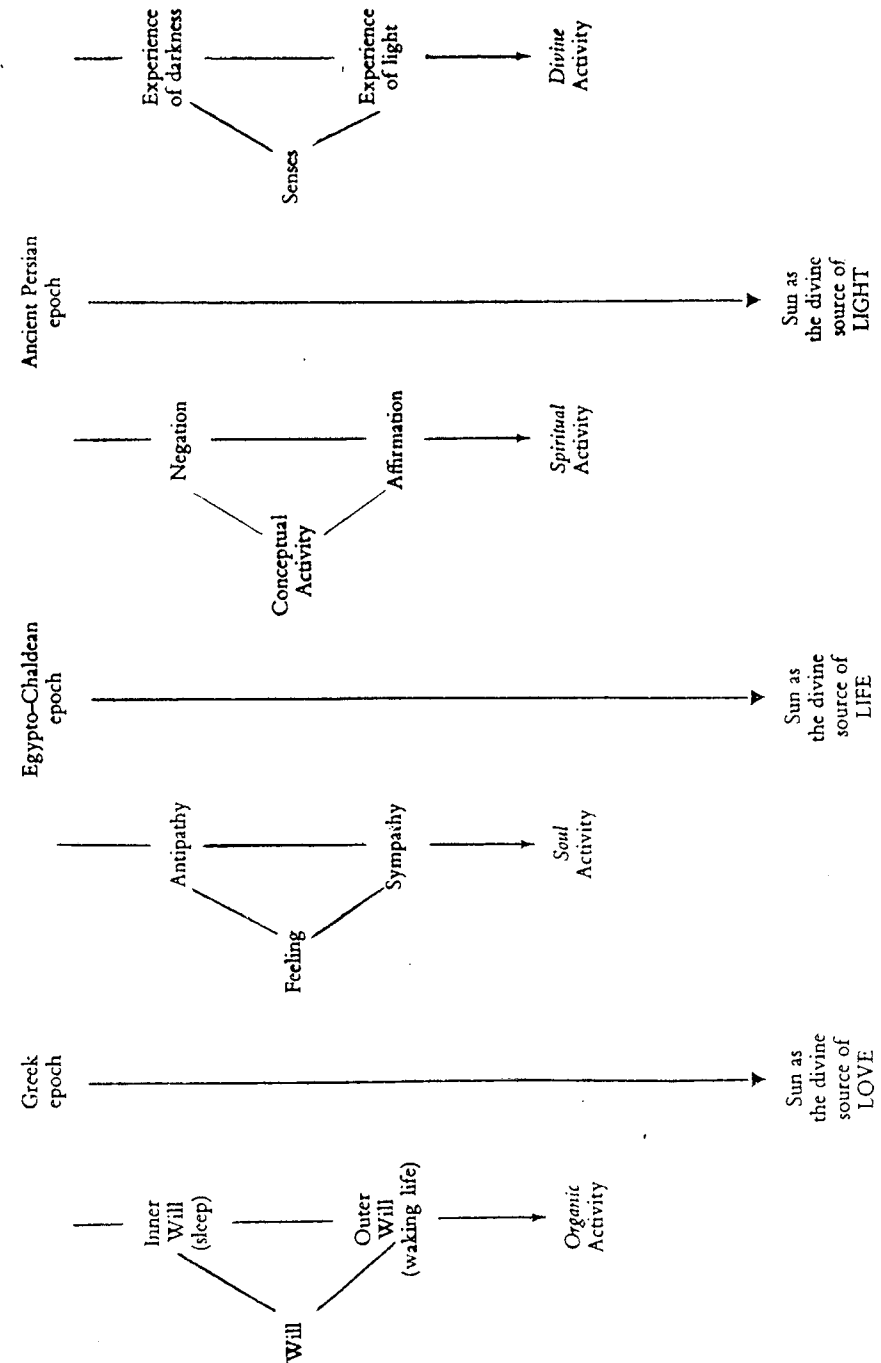
of the twentieth century, that in a none too distant future the Palladium will be removed from Constantinople to another place—to a Slavonic town, as the people believed. At all events the Palladium is waiting, expecting to be removed from the darkening influence shed upon it by Constantinople to that locality which, by its very nature, will bring it into complete darkness. Yes, the Palladium goes to the East, where the decadence of the ancient wisdom still survives but is passing into darkness. And in the further evolution of the world, everything depends upon whether—just as the sun is the reflector of the light bestowed upon it from the universe—the Palladium-treasure is illumined by a wisdom born from the riches of the knowledge living in the West. The Palladium, the ancient heritage brought from Troy to Rome, from Rome to Constantinople, and which, as it is said, will be carried still farther into the darkness of the East—this Sun-treasure must wait until it is redeemed spiritually in the West, released from the dark shadows of a purely external knowledge of nature. Thus the task of the future is bound up with the holiest traditions of European development.

Legends are still extant, even today, among those who are initiated into these things—often they are quite simple people going about here and there in the world. These legends tell of the removal of the Palladium, the treasure of wisdom, from Troy to Rome, from Rome to Constantinople when Roman Christianity was secularised; they tell of its future removal to the East when the

East, denuded of the ancient wisdom, will have fallen into utter decadence; and they tell of the necessity for this sun-treasure to receive new light from the West.

The Sun-Mystery has disappeared into the nether regions of human existence. Through spiritual-scientific development we must find it again. The Sun-Mystery must be found again—otherwise the Palladium will vanish into the darkness of the East. It is wrongful today to utter a saying as untrue as *Ex Oriente Lux*. The light can no longer come from the East, for the East is in decadence. Nevertheless the East waits—for it will possess the sun-treasure, even though it be in darkness—it waits for the light of the West. But today men are groping in darkness, arranging conferences in the darkness, are looking expectantly towards—Washington! Only those “Washingtons” that speak with the tones of the spiritual world—not conferences looking for the darkness that surrounds the Palladium, for an open door for trade in China—only those conferences will bring salvation which are conducted in the West in such a way that the Palladium can be kindled once again to light. For like a fluorescent body, the Palladium, in itself, is dark; if it is suffused with light, then it becomes radiant. And so it will be with the wisdom of the East: dark in itself, it will light up, will become fluorescent when it is permeated by the wisdom of the West, by the spiritual light of the West.

But this the West does not understand. Only when the Palladium legend is brought into the clear light of



consciousness, only when men can again feel true compassion for one like Julian the Apostate who felt constrained to ignore the age in which the light of freedom could germinate in the darkness, who longed to preserve the old instinctive wisdom and therefore met with his death—only when men realise that Constantine, in giving an externalised form of Christianity to the Romans, took from them the light, the wisdom, and sent Christianity into the darkness—only when men realise that the light whereby the Palladium can again be made to shine must be born out of modern nature-knowledge in the best sense—only then will an important chapter of world-history be brought to fulfilment. For only then will that which became Western when the Greeks set Troy on fire, become *Western-Eastern*. The light that flamed from Troy is present even to-day; it is present but it is shrouded in darkness. It must drawn forth from the darkness; the Palladium must again be illumined.

If our hearts are in the right place, knowledge of the course of history can fire us with enthusiasm; and this same enthusiasm will give us the right feeling for the impulses which spiritual science would fain impart.

