



The Apocalypse of St. John



Rudolf Steiner

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THE APOCALYPSE OF ST. JOHN

Lectures on the Book of Revelation



Rudolf Steiner

*A cycle of twelve lectures
with one introductory lecture
given at Nuremberg
from 17 to 30 June 1908*

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Plates showing the seven Apocalyptic seals painted by C. Rettich in Munich in 1907 after sketches by Rudolf Steiner

Readers' attention is drawn to the pull-out diagram inserted before the Plates.

*From the Preface by Marie Steiner to the first German edition of
these lectures published in book form in 1945*

This cycle of lectures, giving an introduction to the Apocalypse, has already appeared in typescript in two private editions. Despite many requests, the publishers have hesitated for a long time to publish it in book form because those who had heard the spoken word in 1908 were upset by the abbreviations the stenographer had been unable to avoid if he was to carry on to the end. These readers missed the emotional impact they had experienced, the rousing inspiration of the words burning with spiritual fire. Now that many years have passed, this lack is no longer so noticeable; the tremendous content stands out in its objective greatness while the simplicity of the language makes way for the urgency of the seeking soul without impairing the significance of the material. Repetitions and explanatory intermediate passages assist the progress of understanding, holding out a helping hand in the spirit to the wanderer striving to assail the lofty heights.

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

Nuremberg, 17 June 1908

In the autumn of this year, Nuremberg can celebrate a fine centenary, for it was in 1808 that this city received one of the greatest German spirits within her walls. He was one of those spirits of whom we hear little today and whose works are understood still less; but he will signify very much for man's spiritual life in the future once he is understood. He is certainly difficult to understand and it may be some time before people grasp him again. In the autumn of 1808 *Hegel*¹ became Head Master of the Royal Grammar School in Nuremberg.

He made a statement that we may today perhaps take as a guiding maxim for what we are going to study. He said²: The most profound thought is united with the figure of Christ, with the outer historical figure. And the very greatness of the Christian religion lies in the fact that with all its profundity it is easily grasped by consciousness with regard to the historical facts, while at the same time challenging us to penetrate more deeply. This goes for every educational level and it also satisfies the highest demands.—These are the words of Hegel, the German philosopher.

That the Christian faith, the message of the Gospel, can be understood at every level of consciousness has been taught for a span of time to be reckoned almost in millennia. To show that it is a summons to the deepest thought, to the deepest penetration into mankind's whole fund of wisdom, will be one of the tasks of the anthroposophical spiritual stream, of Spiritual Science, if this is understood in its true sense and inmost impulse and made the master of human life. What we are to consider today will be misunderstood if it is thought that Anthroposophy or Spiritual Science is in any way a new religion or desires to establish a new religious faith in place of an old one. One might say, so as not on any account to be misunderstood, that once Spiritual Science is grasped aright, it will be clear that though it is the surest and firmest supporter of religious life, in itself it is no religion, nor will it ever contradict any religion as such. It is another matter, however, that it can be the tool with which to explain the

profoundest wisdom and truths and the most earnest and vital secrets of religions and show how they may be understood.

It may seem somewhat far-fetched if we make the following comparison in order to show the relation of Anthroposophy to ancient religious documents (and today we shall be concerned with the ancient religious documents of Christianity): Anthroposophy is related to ancient religious documents as mathematics is related to the documents or books on mathematics that have appeared in the course of mankind's historical development. We have an old work which is really of interest only to students of history versed in mathematics, namely the geometry of *Euclid*. It contains for the first time in a scholastic form the mathematical and geometrical facts that are now even taught to children in school. How few of the children are aware, however, that all that they learn about parallel lines, triangles, angles, etc., stands in that old book, that it was given to humanity then for the first time! It is quite right to make the child conscious that one can realize these things in oneself, that if the human spirit sets its forces in motion and applies them to the forms of space it is able to realize these forms without reference to that ancient book. Yet someone who has never heard of the book and has been taught mathematics and geometry will value and understand it in the right sense if he one day comes across it. He will know how to prize what was given to mankind by the one who set this work for the first time before the human spirit.

In this way one might characterize the relation of Spiritual Science to ancient religious documents. The sources of Spiritual Science are such that if it is understood in its true impulse it is not to be dependent on any kind of document or tradition. Just as mankind's other knowledge gives us what we know about the sense world surrounding us because man freely uses his powers, so the deeper spiritual, supersensible forces and faculties, for the moment slumbering in man's soul, provide a knowledge of all that is supersensible and invisible underlying everything visible. When man uses the tools of his senses he can perceive what the sense world offers him and also link and join with his intellect what he perceives. In the same way someone using the means handed down to him through Spiritual Science can look behind the veils of sense-existence to the spiritual origins, to where beings weave and work which are imperceptible to the physical eye and ear and yet can be perceived supersensibly. Thus it is in the free use of

man's forces, though they are still slumbering as supersensible forces in the majority of humankind, that we have the source, the free, independent source of spiritual knowledge, just as the source of external knowledge lies in the free use of those forces that are directed to the sense-world. And when man has come, by whatever means, into possession of the knowledge that leads him into the supersensible behind the sensible, the invisible behind the visible, a knowledge as definite as his knowledge of outer objects and events, then he may go to the traditional books and records. Furnished with supersensible knowledge he may approach the records through which, during the course of evolution, tidings have reached man of the supersensible world, just as the geometrician approaches the geometry of Euclid. And then he tests them from a standpoint similar to that of the modern geometrician who tests the geometry of Euclid; he can prize and recognize these documents at their true value. Nor does one who approaches the records of the Christian message equipped with knowledge of the supersensible world find that they lose in value; indeed, on the contrary, they appear in a more brilliant light than they showed first to those armed only with faith. They prove to contain deeper wisdom than had been dreamt of earlier, before the advent of anthroposophical knowledge.

But we must be clear on another point before we can find our proper position with regard to the right relation of Anthroposophy to the ancient religious documents. Let us ask ourselves who is better able to judge the geometry of Euclid—one who can translate the words literally and wants to reveal the contents without having first penetrated into the spirit of geometry, or one who already understands geometry and is therefore able to discover it in the book? Let us think of a mere philologist, one who knows nothing of geometry: how many incorrect statements would appear if he tried to convey the meaning of the contents! That is what many have done with the ancient records of religion, even those who are supposed to be chosen to fathom their true sense. They have gone to these records without first having any independent knowledge of supersensible facts. And so we have today most careful explanations of religious documents, explanations that explore the history of the time and show how the documents originated, and so on. But the explanations resemble explanations of Euclid's geometry by a non-geometrician.

Religious knowledge—and this we will hold fast—can only be found if one is aided by spiritual-scientific knowledge, although Spiritual Science can only be an instrument of the religious life, never a religion itself. Religion is best characterized through the content of the human heart, that sum of feelings and emotions through which man sends up to the supersensible beings and powers all that is best in the susceptibility of his soul. The character of a man's religion depends on the fire of these feelings, the strength of his sensitivity, the nature of these feelings, just as it is on the warm pulse-beat in his breast and on his feeling for beauty that a man's approach to a picture will depend. True it is that the content of the religious life is what we call the spiritual or supersensible world. But just as little as an aesthetic feeling for art is the same as an inner spiritual grasp of its laws—though it may assist understanding—just as little are the wisdom, the science, that lead into the spiritual worlds the same as religion. This science will make religious feeling more earnest, worthier, greater, broader, but it will not be religion itself. Grasped in its true sense it may lead to religion.

If from this spiritual scientific standpoint we wish to understand the force and significance, the sense and spirit of the Christian religious message, we must penetrate widely into spiritual life. We must look back into times of a primeval past, the pre-religious age of mankind, and try to envisage the origin of religion. Is there a pre-religious age of humanity? Yes, a time existed on earth when there was no religion; this is acknowledged by Spiritual Science though in a very different sense from the assertions of materialistic cultural wisdom. What does religion signify for mankind? It was and for a long time will still be what the word itself signifies. The word 'religion' means the uniting of man with his divine element, with the world of the spirit. The religious ages were essentially those in which man longed for union with the divine, be it out of the sources of knowledge, or from a certain feeling, or because he felt that his will could only be strong if it was permeated by divine forces. Ages in which man had an inner premonition rather than external knowledge, in which he sensed rather than saw that a spiritual world was around him—these are the religious ages of our earth. And before these ages were others when man did not need such a sense of longing for union with the supersensible spiritual world, because he *knew* that world, as today he knows things of the sense world. Does man need to be convinced of the

existence of stones, plants, animals? Does he need documents or doctrines to prove to him or let him surmise that there are rocks, plants, animals? No, for he sees them round him and therefore does not need a religion of the sense-perceptible world. Let us imagine someone from quite another world, possessing quite different senses and organs of knowledge, one who would not see the stones, plants and animals because to him they would be invisible. Let us imagine that he was informed through writings or in some other way of their existence, which to you is a matter of direct sight and knowledge. What would that be for him? It would be religion. If he were informed through some book of the existence of stones and plants and animals it would be religion to him, for he has never seen them.

There was a time in which humanity lived amongst those spiritual beings and facts that are recorded in religious doctrines and teachings of wisdom.

The word 'evolution' has become a magic word in many fields of thought about the world today, but it has been applied by science solely to outer sense-perceptible facts. To one who regards the world from the standpoint of Spiritual Science absolutely everything is in process of evolution, and most of all human consciousness. The state of consciousness in which you live today, through which when you wake in the morning you are able to grasp the world with your senses, this state has evolved from a different one. We call this present consciousness clear day-consciousness. But this clear day-consciousness has evolved from an ancient state which we call the twilight picture-consciousness of mankind. There, however, we reach back to mankind's early evolutionary conditions of which anthropology has nothing to report, since it uses only the instruments of the senses and methods of the intellect. It believes that man went through conditions in the far past which were the same as those through which the creatures of the animal world are passing today.

We have seen in earlier lectures how the relation of man to the animal is to be understood. Man was never a being like the animals of today, nor is he descended from such beings. If we were to describe the forms out of which man has evolved they would prove very different from those of present-day animals. These are creatures that have stayed behind at earlier stages of evolution, having conserved these stages and hardened them. Man has grown beyond his earlier evolutionary stages, the animal has gone down below them. So in the animal world we see something like backward

brothers of mankind, who no longer, however, bear the form of those earlier stages. The earlier stages of evolution took their course when there were different conditions of life on the earth, when the elements were not distributed as they are today, when man was not encumbered with the kind of body he now bears, and yet was man. He was able to wait, figuratively speaking, within the course of evolution for his entry into the flesh, was able to wait until the fleshly materiality had reached a condition in which he could develop the forces of the present spirit. The animals were unable to wait, they became hardened at an earlier stage, took on flesh earlier than was right. They were therefore obliged to stay behind. We can thus picture that man once lived under other conditions and in other forms of consciousness. If we follow these forms of consciousness back for thousands and thousands of years we shall always find different ones. What today we call logical thought, intellect, understanding, only evolved later in man's history. Much stronger were certain forces in him that are already beginning to decline, such as, for instance, memory. In an earlier age memory was far more developed than it is now. With the growth of the intellect in mankind, memory has receded considerably into the background.

If one uses some measure of practical observation one can still recognize that what Spiritual Science relates is not said without foundation. People might assert that if that were true about memory, then a person remaining backward in development by some chance should be backward least of all in memory. It would also have to be shown that if intellectuality were fostered in a person artificially kept back, then his memory would suffer. Here in this city it has been possible to observe a characteristic case of this very nature.

Professor *Daumer*³, whom one must hold in the very highest esteem, observed this case very thoroughly. It was the case of that human being, so enigmatic for many people, who was once placed into this city in a mysterious way, and who in just as mysterious a way met his death in Ansbach. An author, in order to indicate the mystery of his life, wrote⁴ that as he was carried out to burial the sun was setting on the one horizon and the moon was rising on the other. I speak, as you know, of *Caspar Hauser*. If you disregard all the pros and cons that have been asserted, if you look only at what has been fully verified, you will know that this foundling—who was one day simply there in the street and who, since he did not know

whence he came, was called the Child of Europe—could neither read nor write when he was found. At the age of twenty he possessed nothing of what is gained through the intellect but he had a remarkable memory. As they began to instruct him, as logic entered his soul, his memory disappeared. This transition in consciousness was accompanied also by something else. He possessed at first an incredible, an entirely inborn truthfulness and it was precisely in this truthfulness that he went more and more astray. The more he nibbled, so to say, at intellectuality, the more it vanished.

There would be many things to study were we to enter deeply into this human soul that was artificially held back. It is not difficult for the student of Spiritual Science to credit the popular tradition, so unacceptable to the learned people of today, which relates that while Caspar Hauser still knew nothing, while he still had no idea that there were beings besides himself of different form, he exercised a remarkable effect upon quite savage creatures. Savage animals became cowed and mild; something streamed from him that made such creatures gentle, although they savagely attacked anyone else. We could in fact penetrate deeply into the soul of this remarkable personality, so enigmatic to many, and you would see how things that cannot be explained from ordinary life are led back through Spiritual Science to spiritual facts. Such facts cannot be learnt by speculation but only by spiritual observation, though they are comprehensible to an unbiased and logical thinking.

All this has only been said in order to show you the way to the thought that modern consciousness has evolved from another age-old state of consciousness when man was not in direct touch with outer objects in the modern sense, but on the other hand was in connection with facts and beings of the spiritual world. A man did not see another's physical form—which anyway did not exist as we know it today. When another being approached him a sort of dream-picture arose in his soul and by its shape and colouring he knew whether the other was antagonistic to him or sympathetic. Such a consciousness perceived spiritual facts and the spiritual world. Today man is among beings of flesh; at that time, when he turned his gaze to himself and himself was soul and spirit, he lived among spiritual beings. They were present for him, he was a spirit among spirits. Although his consciousness was only dream-like, yet the pictures that arose in him were in living relation to his environment. That was the far

distant age when man still lived in a spiritual world. Later he descended from it in order to create for himself a corporeal nature for the consciousness that befits him today. Animals already existed as physical creatures while man still perceived in spiritual realms. He lived at that time among spiritual beings, and just as you need no proof to be convinced of the presence of stones, plants and animals, so man in those primeval times needed no testimony in order to be convinced of the existence of spiritual beings. He lived among spirits and divine beings and therefore needed no religion. That was the pre-religious age.

Then man descended; the earlier form of consciousness changed into the modern. Colours and forms are no longer perceived as floating in space, colour is laid upon the surface of sense-objects. In the same measure as man learnt to direct his external senses to the outer world, did this outer world draw itself like a veil, like the great *maya*, over the world of spirit. And mankind had to receive tidings of the spiritual world through this veil. Religion became necessary.

There is also a condition, however, between the time preceeding a religious consciousness and the time of actual religious consciousness: there is an intermediate condition. Thence stem the mythologies, sagas, folk-stories of the spiritual worlds. It is a dreary arid learning with no inkling of real spiritual processes that asserts that all the figures of Nordic or Germanic mythology, of Greek mythology, all the records of gods and their deeds, are merely inventions of popular fantasy. They are not the inventions of popular fantasy. The people do not indulge in such fancies and say that a few clouds scudding across the sky are little sheep. That the people have such fantasies is a fiction of our modern learnedness which abounds in lively fantasy about such things. The truth of the matter is quite different. Everything in the old sagas and stories of the gods is the last relic, the last memory of pre-religious consciousness. The lore has remained of what men themselves have seen. Those who described Woden, Thor, Zeus and so on, did so because they remembered that such things had been experienced once upon a time. Mythologies are fragments, broken pieces of what has once been experienced.

The intermediate stage was present in another way as well. Even when clever men had already—let us say—become very clever, there were still persons who under exceptional conditions (call them states of entrancement or insanity, as you will) could see into the spiritual worlds,

who could still perceive what in earlier times was seen by all. They recounted that they themselves still saw something of the spiritual world. This was linked with the memories in a way that led to a living faith among the people. That was a state of transition leading to the actual religious condition.

How was the way paved in mankind to an actual religion? By man finding ways and means of so developing his inner being that he was once more able to behold the worlds from which he had sprung, which he used to see in a dull consciousness. And here we come upon a chapter that to many modern minds contains but little probability: the question of initiation. What are the initiates of mankind? They were those who so developed their inner nature of soul and spirit through certain methods that they grew again into the spiritual world. There *is* initiation! In every soul supersensible forces and faculties lie dormant. There is, or at least there can be, for every human being a great and mighty moment when these forces awaken. We can gain some idea of this moment if we picture the general course of mankind's evolution. To speak in the words⁵ of *Goethe* we can say: We look back into the far past when the human body had no such physical eye or physical ear as exist today. We look back to times when there were undifferentiated organs, able neither to see nor to hear, at the places where these organs are now situated. A time came for physical mankind when such blind organs evolved to radiant points, gradually unfolding more and more until light itself dawned upon them. In the same way a time came when the human ear had developed to a point when the former silent world revealed itself in tones and harmonies.—Just as the sun worked with its forces to form man's eyes out of his organism, so today man can live in accordance with his spirit in a way that will let the organs of soul and spirit, that are largely undeveloped in present-day mankind, unfold in a similar way. The moment is possible and for many has already dawned when the soul and spirit are transformed just as once the external physical organism was transformed. New eyes and ears arise through which the light shines and tones resound out of the spiritually dark and silent world. Development is possible, even to the point of living into the higher worlds. That is initiation. And in the Mystery Schools methods of initiation are given into men's hands just as in ordinary life the methods of the chemical laboratory or of biological research are made available. The difference is only this: external science has to prepare instruments and

other apparatus for its use, while he who would become an initiate has but one instrument to perfect, namely himself in all his forces. Just as the force of magnetism can lie dormant in iron, so there slumbers in the human soul the power to penetrate into the spiritual world of light and sound. And so the time came when normal mankind saw only physical sense-existence while the leaders were initiates who could see into the spiritual worlds and give information and explanation of the facts of that world in which man had earlier lived.

Where does the first stage of initiation lead? How does it appear to the human soul? Do not believe that this development is merely a matter of philosophic speculation, a puzzling out of concepts, a refinement of ideas. The ideas man has about the sense-world are transformed in one who grows into the spiritual world. No longer does he apprehend things through sharply outlined concepts, but through pictures, through Imaginations. For man grows into the spiritual process of world creation. The firm definite contours of objects in the physical material world exist, in fact, nowhere else. In the world creative process the animal does not appear with a clear outline. One has there something like a basic idea of the animal from which the diverse external forms can originate, a living reality, membered in itself. One must take one's stand strictly on the basis of Goethe's words⁶: 'All things corruptible are but a semblance.' The initiate learns at first to know and grasp in pictures, in pictures he learns to ascend into the spiritual world. There his consciousness must be more mobile than the one which serves us for apprehending the surrounding sense-world. Hence this stage of development is called Imaginative consciousness. It leads man again into the spiritual world, but not in a twilight state. The initiate consciousness to be gained is clear and bright, as clear as man's consciousness by day. The human being is thus enriched, for to his day-consciousness is added consciousness of the spiritual world. Thus in the first stage of initiation man lives in Imaginative consciousness. And it is the experiences in the spiritual worlds of those thus initiated that are told to mankind in the ancient documents, just as the lower science of geometry was imparted to mankind by Euclid. We recognize what stands in these records when we go back to the sources—the spiritual vision of the initiates.

Thus it was among mankind up to the appearance of the greatest Being who has trodden upon the earth, Christ Jesus. With his appearance a new

element enters evolution. If we would understand the essential nature of the new element bestowed on mankind through Christ Jesus, we must realize that in all pre-Christian initiation the candidate had to step completely outside the rest of human evolution; his soul was worked upon in centres of profoundest mystery. Above all we must realize that when man raised himself again into the spiritual world something of that ancient merely dreamlike picture-consciousness still remained. Man had to retreat from this sense-world to be able to enter the spiritual world. That this is no longer necessary today has been brought about through the appearance of Christ Jesus on the earth. Through the fact that the Christ-principle has entered mankind, the Central Being, the very Centre of the spiritual world, has once existed historically in a human being on this earth. It is the same Being for whom all those have longed who have developed a religious life, who have beheld in the Mystery Centres, who have left the sense-world in order to enter the spiritual world. The Being of whom it has been proclaimed that man confronts Him as his highest nature, this has entered mankind's evolution with Christ Jesus. One who understands something of genuine spiritual science knows that all religious prophecy before the coming of Christ Jesus is an annunciation of his coming.

When the ancient initiates wished to speak of the highest that was accessible to them in the spiritual world, what they were able to see as the origin of all things, then under the most diverse names it was of Christ Jesus that they spoke. We need remember only one example, the Old Testament, which is itself a prophecy. We remember how when *Moses*⁷ was to lead his people he received the command: Say to thy people that the Lord God has said unto thee what thou shalt do.—Then Moses asks: How will the people believe me, how can I convince them? What shall I say when they ask who has sent me?—And he was commanded: Say the ‘I Am’ has sent thee.—Read it again and compare as exactly as you can with the original text and you will see its significance. The ‘I Am’, what does that mean? The ‘I Am’ is the name for the divine Being, the Christ-principle of man—the Being of whom man feels a drop, a spark within himself when he can say ‘I am’. The stone cannot say ‘I am’, the plant cannot say ‘I am’, the animal cannot say ‘I am’. Man is the crown of creation inasmuch as he can say ‘I am’ to himself, inasmuch as he can utter a name which does not hold good for anyone but the one who utters it. You alone can call yourself ‘I’; no one else can call you ‘I’. Here the soul

speaks within itself in a word to which none other has entrance except a Being who comes to the soul through no external sense, on no outer path. Here the God speaks. Hence the name 'I Am' was given to the Godhead who fills the world: Say that the 'I Am' has told thee!—Thus was Moses to speak to his people.

Men learn only gradually to understand fully the deep meaning of this 'I Am'. They did not feel themselves as individuals at once. You can still find this in the Old Testament; there man did not as yet feel himself an individual. Even the members of the Germanic tribes, right into the time of the Christian church, did not feel themselves to be individualities. Think back to the Cherusci, the Teutons and so on, the Germanic tribes in whose land modern Germany now lies. The separate members felt the tribal ego, and themselves as a part of it. A man would not have said 'I am' in the clear, definite way it is said today; he felt himself part of an organism composed of those who were related by blood.

This blood relationship assumes the greatest proportions among the followers of the Old Testament religion. The individual feels himself sheltered in the whole folk which for him is ruled by one ego. He knows the meaning of 'I and the Father Abraham are one', for he traces the blood-relationship back through the generations to Abraham. If he wishes to go beyond his single ego he knows himself to be sheltered in the Father Abraham, from whom all the blood flows down that is the external bearer of the common folk-ego through the generations.

Now if this expression, which signified the highest they knew to the people of the Old Testament, is compared with what has been brought through Christ Jesus, then as with a lightning flash the whole advance that has come about through Christian evolution is illumined. Before Abraham was, was the 'I Am'⁸. What does this mean: Before Abraham was the 'I Am'?—(That is the right rendering of the biblical passage.) It means: Go back through all generations, and you find something in yourself, in your own individuality which is even more eternal than what flows through all blood-related generations. Before the ancestors were, was the 'I Am', that Being which extends into every human being, of which each human soul can directly feel something in itself. Not 'I and the Father Abraham', not I and a temporal father, but I and a spiritual Father, who has no part in anything perishable, we are one. I and the Father are one. The Father

dwells in the individual, the Divine Principle lives in him, something which was, which is, and which shall be.

Men have actually only begun during the course of 2,000 years to feel the force of this world-impulse; in future ages, however, they will fully realize the significance for mankind of this forward leap in the mission and evolution of the Earth. What ancient initiates sought could only be realized if one went beyond the individual human being and grasped the spirit of a whole people.

If in the ordinary world some person heard this, he said: That is something transient that begins with birth and ends with death.—But if he was initiated in the secret of the mysteries, he saw what the other sensed and felt as the same as what flows through the blood of the generations, something that is an actual being, his folk-spirit. He could see what can be reached only in the spiritual realm and not in external reality. He could see a divine Being who flows through the blood of the generations. To stand face to face in spirit before this God was possible only in the mysteries.

Those who were gathered with full understanding round Christ Jesus as his intimate pupils were conscious that a Being of divine spiritual nature stood outwardly before them, clothed in the flesh of a human personality. They sensed Christ Jesus to be the first who in a single man encompassed a Spirit such as was otherwise felt only by interrelated groups and could only be seen in the spiritual world by initiates. He was the Firstborn among men.

The more a man becomes individual, the more he can become a bearer of love. Where blood links men together they love because they are led by the blood to what they should love. When man is granted individuality, when he tends and nurtures the divine spark within him, then the impulses of love, the waves of love, must pass from man to man in freedom of the heart. And thus with this new impulse man has enriched the old bond of love that is bound to the blood-tie. Love passes over gradually into spiritual love which flows from soul to soul and which will ultimately encompass all humanity in a common bond of brother-love. But Christ Jesus is the Force, the living Force, once historically and externally present, through whom for the first time mankind has been brought to fraternity. And men will learn to understand this bond of brother-love as perfected spiritualized Christianity.

People say very lightly today that Theosophy ought to seek the common kernel of truth in all religions⁹, for the contents of all religions are the same. People who talk like that and only compare religions in order to note the abstract resemblance have no understanding of the principle of evolution. It is not for nothing that the world evolves. All religions undoubtedly contain the truth, but inasmuch as they evolve from form to form they evolve to higher forms. As far as truth is concerned, if you search deeply enough you can find teachings in other religions that are also to be found in Christianity. Christianity has not brought new doctrine. The essential element of Christianity does not lie in its teachings. Take the founders of pre-Christian religions. In their case it was what they taught that mattered. If they themselves had remained unknown, their teaching would have been preserved and this would have been enough for mankind. But with Christ Jesus that is not the point. What matters is that he was there, that he has lived here on this earth in a physical body. Not belief in his *teaching* but in his *person*—that is the essential thing. The point is that he has been beheld as the Firstborn among mortals, he whom one asks: If you were in the position in which I find myself, would you feel as I do, would you think as I am now thinking, will as I am willing?—That is the important thing, that he is the greatest example as Personality, with whom it is not a matter of listening to his teaching, but of looking at him himself, and seeing *how he acted*. And so the intimate pupils of Christ Jesus speak quite differently from the pupils and disciples of other religious founders. These pupils and disciples say: The Master has taught this or that.—The disciples of Christ Jesus say¹⁰: We are not telling you invented myths and doctrines; we tell you what our eyes saw, our ears heard; we have heard the voice, our hands have touched the Source of Life whereby we have community with you—And Christ Jesus himself said: You shall bear witness for me in Jerusalem, in Judea to the end of the earth¹¹.—Those words say something very important: Testimony shall you bear for me to the end of the earth.—That means that there will at all times be those who, just like the men in Judea and Galilee, can say out of direct knowledge who Christ was in the sense of the Gospel.

‘In the sense of the Gospel’—what does that mean? Nothing less than that he was from the beginning the Principle that lived in all creation. He says: If you do not believe in me, believe at least in Moses, for if you believe in Moses, then you believe in me, for Moses has spoken of me¹².—

We have today seen this. Moses spoke of him by saying: The 'I Am' has said it to me;—the 'I Am' who up to then was only perceptible in the spirit. The fact that the Christ entered visibly into the world, appearing as man among men, is what distinguishes the Christ-gospel from the divine proclamations of other religions. In all of these religions spiritual wisdom was directed to something which was outside the world. Now, with Christ Jesus something entered the world which was itself to be grasped as a sense-phenomenon. What did the first disciples experience as the ideal of their wisdom? No longer merely to understand the life of the spirits in spirit-land, but how the Highest Principle could have been present on the earth in the historical Personality of Christ Jesus.

It is much easier to deny divinity to this Personality than to feel in this way. Here lies the distinction between a certain doctrine of early Christian times and what we may call inner Christianity—the distinction between Gnosis and esoteric Christianity. Gnosis certainly recognizes Christ in his divinity, but it could not raise itself to the conception that the Word has become flesh and dwelt among us, as the writer of the John Gospel emphasizes. He says: You shall look upon Christ Jesus not as something to be grasped purely in the invisible, but as the Word which has become flesh and dwelt among us. You must know that with this human personality a force has appeared which will work into the farthest future, which will encircle the earth with true spiritual love as a force that lives and works in all that lives into the future—And if man gives himself up to this force he grows into the spiritual world from which he has descended. He will ascend again to where the initiate's vision can already reach today. Man will divest himself of what belongs to the senses when he penetrates into the spiritual world.

The candidate who was initiated in ancient times could see in retrospect the far past of spirit-life; those who are initiated in the Christian sense through receiving the impulse of Christ Jesus are enabled to see what becomes of this earthly world of ours when mankind acts in the sense of the Christ-impulse. As one can look back to earlier conditions, so, starting from the coming of Christ, one can look into the farthest future. We can say: Thus consciousness will alter again, thus will man stand in the relationship of the spiritual to the sense-world.—Earlier initiation was directed to the past, to age-old wisdom; Christian initiation reveals the future to one who is to be initiated. That is a necessity; man is to be

initiated not only for his wisdom or for his feelings but for his will. For he knows what he is to do if he can set himself goals for the future. Ordinary people in the sense-world set themselves aims for the afternoon, for the evening or the morning; the spiritual man is able, out of spiritual principles, to set himself distant aims which pulse through his will and make his forces quicken. To set goals in this way before mankind means in the true, highest sense, in the sense of the original Christ-principle, to grasp Christianity esoterically. In this way it was grasped by the one who has written the great principle of the initiation of the will—the writer of the Apocalypse. We misunderstand the Apocalypse if we do not understand it as the impulse-giver for the future, for action and deed.

Everything we have let pass before us today is to be understood out of anthroposophical Spiritual Science. I have been unable to give more than a slight sketch. When through Spiritual Science one grasps what lies behind the sense-world, one can look with understanding at all that has been given in the Gospels, at what has been proclaimed in the Apocalypse. And the more deeply penetrating one's approach to the supersensible worlds can be, the more profound will be one's findings in the ancient Christian documents. The records of Christianity will appear in higher brilliance and with deeper truths when one goes to them strengthened with the spiritual vision that may be gained by the help of Anthroposophy. True it is that the simplest heart can have some feeling of what truths lie hidden in Christianity. But man's consciousness will not be satisfied for ever with a dim sensing, it will evolve higher and wish to have knowledge and understanding. Yet even when it mounts to the highest wisdom, there will still be profound mysteries in Christianity. Christianity is for the simplest heart but also for the most developed intellectuality. The initiate experiences it again as pictures, and so the naive consciousness may divine what truths are slumbering there. Man, however, will demand knowledge and not faith—and even then he will find satisfaction in Christianity. If the explanations of the Gospels are given him through Spiritual Science, he will find full and satisfying content in Christianity. Hence Spiritual Science will take the place of even the highest philosophies of the past. It will bear testimony to the beautiful words of Hegel quoted at the beginning: Profoundest thought is linked with the historical external figure of Christ Jesus, and every kind of consciousness—therein lies the greatness of Christianity—can grasp this Christianity externally. At the same time,

however, Christianity demands the deepest and most penetrating wisdom. Christianity is for every level of education, but it can meet and satisfy the highest demands.—

LECTURE ONE

Nuremberg, 18 June 1908

During the next few days we shall concern ourselves with a very significant, very profound anthroposophical subject. Before beginning our studies let me express my great satisfaction that we can place before friends from so many parts of Germany, and indeed Europe, some considerations on this deep and important subject. Especially do I express it to our dear friends in Nuremberg, who for their part are certainly not less happy than the speaker to cultivate anthroposophical life here in this city for a relatively longer period together with our friends from elsewhere. There has always been in this city a most earnest search for the knowledge of great spiritual truths; and a deep understanding of anthroposophical life, of the true anthroposophical attitude towards life, has always been manifest. This kind of life—which is only understood when our anthroposophical teachings are not merely a theoretical interest, but something which spiritualizes, kindles and uplifts our inmost life, right into the depths of our soul—links us in closer bonds with our fellow men and with the whole world. It means much to man to feel that everything he sees externally in the sense-world, in visible sense-existence, can appear as the external physiognomy of an underlying invisible supersensible existence. The world and all it contains will at length become, to one who applies Anthroposophy to life, more and more an external countenance of divine spiritual realities; and when he observes the visible world around him it will be to him as if he penetrated from the features of a person's face to his heart and soul. All that he sees externally, the mountains and rocks, the plant mantle of the earth, the animals and human beings, human activities—everything in the world surrounding him— will be to him the countenance, the facial expression of a divine spiritual existence lying behind it. From this mode of observation new life rises up within him and permeates him; and a different, a noble enthusiasm fires all that he wishes to undertake.

Let me give you a small symptomatic example I recently experienced on one of my lecture tours¹³, showing how significant world history is when looked upon as an expression of divine spiritual working, and how it can speak to us in a new language. A few weeks ago in Scandinavia I noticed that in the entire life of Northern Europe there is still an echo of that ancient period of the Norse world when all spiritual life was permeated by consciousness of the beings that stand behind the gods of Northern mythology. One might say that in those countries one may hear the echos everywhere of what the initiates of the Druid and Drotten¹⁴ Mysteries imparted to their pupils as old Norse spiritual life. One becomes aware of the magic breath of that spirit life pervading the North; one sees something like the expression of beautiful karmic connections. One feels oneself placed—as was my privilege in Uppsala—in the midst of all this, when one sees before one the first Gothic translation of the Bible, the *Codex Argenteus* of *Ulfilas*¹⁵. It came to Uppsala through karmic complications of a strange kind. Previously it had been in Prague. In the Swedish War it was taken as booty and brought to Uppsala, and there it now lies; a token of what permeates those who can look a little more deeply into the nature of the ancient mysteries. The mysteries within the ancient European cultures, in which pupils were taught how to penetrate into the spiritual world, were all pervaded and permeated by a remarkable common characteristic, which could be felt more deeply by those who received initiation in those ancient times. A ripple of tragedy ran through their hearts when it was made clear to them that although they were indeed able to glimpse the secrets of existence, nevertheless something would appear in the future which would be like a perfect solution of the riddle. They were shown again and again that a higher light was to ray into the knowledge which could be given in the ancient mysteries. We may say that all these mysteries contained a prophetic indication of what was to come about in the future, namely the appearance of Christ Jesus. The undertone, the attitude of expectation, the mood of prophecy lay in the nature of the Northern mysteries.

The statement I shall now make must not be pressed too far nor outlined too sharply in thought. It is only intended to express symptomatically the deeper underlying truth. In the legend of Siegfried, which has remained like a last page out of the traditions of the old Germanic mysteries, there is something secretly present of that mood. When we are shown that

Siegfried is really the representative of the ancient Nordic initiation, that on the spot where he is vulnerable there lies a leaf, that this spot is on his back, then one who is able to sense such a thing symptomatically feels: That is the spot on the human being where something different will rest when such injury as the initiates of the ancient Nordic mysteries could experience can no longer touch him.—This spot the Cross shall cover, there the Cross of Christ Jesus shall rest. It did not yet rest there for the initiates of the ancient Nordic mysteries. In the old mysteries of the Germanic peoples this is indicated in the legend of Siegfried. Thus even here is symptomatically indicated how the ancient initiations of the Druids and Drotten should be thought of as harmonizing with the Christian mysteries. The place of the first Gothic translation of the Bible in the Northern world reminds one of this like a facial expression. And the fact that it is like a karmic chain of events may also be symbolized for you by the circumstance that eleven leaves were once stolen from this *Codex Argenteus* and that the one who later on possessed them felt such qualms of conscience that he would not keep these eleven leaves and so returned them. As already said, these things ought not to be pressed too far, but they may be taken as figurative illustrations of those karmic circumstances which come to physiognomical expression in the placing in the Northern world of the first Gothic translation of the Bible. And just as in the case of this historical event, so will everything which meets us in life, great or small, also be deepened and irradiated with a new light through the anthroposophical outlook, which sees everything physically perceptible as the facial expression of supersensible spirit.

May we, during this course of lectures, be filled with the conviction that this is the case, and may the spirit and feelings which are to fill our hearts and minds during this series of twelve lectures on the Apocalypse proceed from this conviction. In this frame of mind let us approach these lectures which will take as their starting point the most profound document of Christianity, the Apocalypse of John. The deepest truths of Christianity can be considered entirely naturally in connection with this document, for it contains nothing less than a great part of the mysteries of Christianity, that is the profoundest part of what may be described as esoteric Christianity. It is therefore not to be wondered at that of all Christian documents this one has been most misunderstood. Almost from the beginning of the spiritual movement of Christianity it has been misunderstood by all who were not

really Christian initiates. And it has always been misunderstood at various times according to the prevailing thought and disposition of those times. It has been misunderstood by the times which, one might say, have thought in a spiritually materialistic way; by times that have forced great religious movements into onesided fanatical party affairs; and it has been misunderstood in modern times by those who, in the grossest and most sense-bound materialism, believed themselves able to solve the riddle of the universe.

The high spiritual truths proclaimed at the starting point of Christianity, which those who were capable of understanding were brought to contemplate, are hinted at as far as is possible in writing in the Apocalypse of John, the so-called canonical Apocalypse. But even in the early days of Christianity those in the more exoteric stream were little inclined to understand the deep spirituality of esoteric Christianity. Thus in the very early days of Christianity the idea came into the exoteric stream that things which in the world's evolution first take place in the spiritual worlds, that such purely spiritual proceedings ought to take place externally in material life. And so it came about that while the writer of the Apocalypse expressed in his work the results of his Christian initiation, others only understood it exoterically; and their opinion was that what the great seer saw, what the initiate knows can be seen spiritually taking place over thousands of years, must happen in the very near future in external life and be visible to the senses. They imagined that the writer was indicating something like a speedy return of Christ Jesus, a descent from the physical clouds. When this failed to occur, they simply extended the period and said: With the advent of Christ Jesus a new period has begun for the earth in contrast to the old religious teachings, but (this again was understood materialistically) after a thousand years the next events described in the Apocalypse will take place in the physical world—Thus it came about that when the year A.D. 1000 was dawning, many people actually expected the coming of some power hostile to Christianity; an Antichrist was to appear in the sense-world. As this again did not occur, the period was further extended, but at the same time the whole prediction of the Apocalypse was elevated to a kind of symbolism—whereas the crass exoteric approach had represented the prophecy more literally. With the advent of a materialistic world-conception these things were enveloped in a certain symbolism; external events were invested with a symbolic significance.

Thus in the twelfth century *Joachim of Floris*¹⁶, who died at the beginning of the thirteenth century, gave a notable explanation of this mysterious document of Christianity. It was his opinion that Christianity contained a deep spiritual power, that this power would have to expand more and more, but that external Christianity has always given this esoteric Christianity an external interpretation. Many people adopted this man's view that the Papal Church, this externalization of the spirituality of Christianity, was something hostile and anti-Christian. And this attitude was particularly fostered in the following centuries through the way certain Orders attached higher value to the spiritual aspect of Christianity, the element of spiritual fervour. Thus Joachim of Floris found followers among the Franciscans, and these looked upon the Pope as the symbol of Antichrist. Then in the age of Protestantism this conception passed over to those who looked upon the Roman Church as an apostate of Christianity and Protestantism as its salvation. More than ever they considered the Pope to be the symbol of the Antichrist, and the Pope retaliated by calling Luther the Antichrist.

Thus the Apocalypse was understood in such a way that each party drew it into the service of its own view, its own opinion. Each regarded the other as Antichrist and identified itself with true Christianity. This continued into modern times when modern materialism developed, with which, for grossness, even the materialism I described as belonging to the early centuries of Christianity cannot be compared. For at that time spiritual faith and a certain spiritual comprehension still existed. Men were unable to understand only because they had no initiates among them. A certain spiritual sense was there; for although it was crudely imagined that a Being would descend in a cloud, there still belonged to it a spiritual faith. A spiritual life such as this was no longer possible with the crass materialism of the nineteenth century. The thoughts of a genuine materialist of the nineteenth century regarding the Apocalypse may be described somewhat as follows: No man can see into the future, for I myself cannot. No one can see anything more than I can see. To say that there are initiates is an old superstition. Such persons do not exist. What I know is the norm. I can scarcely see what will happen in the next ten years, therefore no man can say anything about what is to happen over thousands of years. Consequently whoever wrote the Apocalypse, if he is to be taken as an honest man, must have been describing something which he had already

seen—for I only know what has already taken place and what I can discover from documents. Therefore the writer of the Apocalypse could see nothing more either. What, therefore, according to this, can he relate? Only what had happened up to his time. Thus it is obvious that the events of the Apocalypse, the conflicts between the good, wise and beautiful world and the ugly, foolish and evil world, this dramatic contrast, is only intended to represent what the author had himself experienced, what had already taken place—The modern materialist speaks in this way; it is his opinion that the writer of the Apocalypse describes things as he himself does.

What, then, was the most dreadful thing to a Christian of the first century? It was the beast which rebelled against the spiritual power of Christianity, against the true Christianity. Unfortunately the few people who perceived that there was something behind this did not know how to interpret it correctly.

In certain esoteric schools there was a kind of writing in numbers. Certain words which it was not wished to impart in ordinary writing were expressed by figures. And, like much else, some of the deep secrets of the Apocalypse were hidden in numbers, particularly that dramatic event in the number 666. It was known that numbers were to be dealt with in a particular way, especially when such a distinct indication is given as in the words: Here is wisdom. The number of the beast is 666¹⁷.—When such an indication was given it was known that the figures must be replaced by certain letters in order to ascertain what was intended. Now those who had heard something, and yet really knew nothing, came to the conclusion in their materialistic conception that when letters were substituted for the number 666, the word ‘Nero’ or ‘Caesar Nero’ resulted. And nowadays in a large part of the literature dealing with the deciphering of the Apocalypse you may read: Formerly people were so foolish that they imagined all sorts of things in connection with this passage, but the problem is now solved. We now know that nothing else is meant than Nero, Caesar Nero. It is clear that the Apocalypse must have been written at a time when Nero had already lived, and the writer wished to say by all this that the Antichrist had appeared in Nero, and that what is contained in this dramatic element is an enhancement of what had preceded it. We need now only investigate what happened immediately before and we shall discover what the writer of the Apocalypse really wished to describe. It is reported that earthquakes

took place in Asia Minor when the struggle between Nero and Christianity was raging. Therefore it was to these earthquakes that the writer was referring in the opening of the seals and the sounding of the trumpets. He also mentions plagues of locusts. Quite correct! We know from history that at the time of the persecution of the Christians by Nero there were plagues of locusts. He was, therefore, speaking of these.—Thus the nineteenth century has come to materialize the profoundest document of Christianity so far as to see nothing in it but the description of what may be found by a mere materialistic observation of the world. I have only mentioned this in order to point out how fundamentally this deepest and most important document of esoteric Christianity has been misunderstood.

I shall postpone to the last lectures what is to be said about the historical part of the Apocalypse, when we shall have understood what is contained in the Apocalypse itself. To those who have found their way into Anthroposophy to some extent there can be no doubt that even the introductory words of the Apocalypse show us what it is intended to be. We need only remember that it says that he from whom the contents of the Apocalypse proceeded was placed in an island solitude¹⁸ which had always been surrounded by a kind of sacred atmosphere, one of the ancient places of the mysteries. And when we are told that the author was in the spirit, and that in the spirit¹⁹ he perceives what he gives us, it may indicate to us that the contents of the Apocalypse originate from a higher state of consciousness, to which a person may attain through the development of his inner creative capacity of soul, through initiation. In the so-called secret Revelation of John is contained what cannot be seen or heard in the sense-world, what cannot be perceived with external senses; and it is given in the way in which it can be imparted to the world through Christianity. In the Apocalypse of John we have therefore the description of an initiation, a Christian initiation. We need only briefly recall what initiation is. We shall, of course, go more and more deeply into the question of what takes place in initiation, and how initiation is related to the contents of the Apocalypse, but to begin with we will only draw something like a rough pencil sketch, and paint in the details later.

Initiation is the development of the powers and capacities slumbering in every soul. If we wish to have an idea of the manner in which it really takes place we must clearly bear in mind what the consciousness of the present normal man is; we shall then also recognize in what way the

consciousness of the initiate differs from that of the ordinary man of today. What is, then, the consciousness of the normal human being like? It is a changing one; two entirely different states of consciousness alternate, that of wakefulness during the day, and that during sleep at night. Our waking day-consciousness consists in our perceiving sense objects around us and connecting them by means of concepts which can only be formed with the aid of a tool belonging to the sense-world, namely the human brain. Then, each night, the astral body and the ego withdraw from the lower principles of the human being, the physical and etheric bodies, and therewith the sense objects around man sink into the darkness; and not only this, for until reawakening, total unconsciousness prevails. Darkness spreads around man. For the human astral body today under normal conditions is so organized that it is unable of itself to perceive what surrounds it. It must have tools. These tools are the physical senses. Therefore in the morning it must submerge itself in the physical body and make use of the sense organs. Why does the astral body see nothing when during sleep at night it is in the spirit-world? Why does it not perceive? For the same reason that a physical body without eyes or ears could experience neither physical colours nor physical sounds. The astral body has no organs with which to perceive in the astral world. In primeval times the physical body was in the same position. It too did not yet possess what later was moulded into it as ears and eyes. The external elements and forces chiselled out and formed the eyes and ears, and thus this world was revealed to man, a world which was previously hidden from him. Let us imagine that the astral body, which is now in the position in which the physical body was formerly, could be so treated that organs could be built into it in the same way that the sunlight moulded the physical eyes, and the world of sound the physical ears, in the soft substance of the physical human body. Let us imagine that we could mould organs in the malleable substance of the astral body; then the astral body would be in the same condition as the present physical body. It is a question of moulding the organs of perception for the supersensible world into this astral body, as a sculptor moulds his clay. This is the first thing. If a man wishes to become a seer, his astral body must be treated as a sculptor treats a piece of clay; organs must be worked into it. This was, in fact, what was always done in the schools of initiation and in the mysteries. The organs were moulded in the astral body.

In what does the activity consist by means of which it is possible for the astral body to have organs moulded into it? It might be thought that a person must first have the body in front of him before he can work the organs into it. He might say: If I could take out the astral body and have it in front of me, I could then mould the organs into it.—That would not be the right way, and above all it is not the way for modern initiation. Certainly an initiate who is able to live in the spiritual worlds could mould the organs like a sculptor, when during the night the astral body is outside. But that would entail doing something of which the person concerned is not conscious; it would mean interfering in his sphere of freedom, with the exclusion of his consciousness. We shall see why this has not been allowed to happen for a long time past, and particularly not at the present time. For this reason even in esoteric schools such as the Pythagorean or old Egyptian, everything had to be avoided whereby the initiates would work from outside upon the astral body which was taken out of the physical and etheric bodies of the neophyte. This had to be avoided from the very outset. The first step towards initiation had to be undertaken with man in the ordinary physical world, in the same world where he perceives with his physical senses. But how can this be done? For it is exactly through physical perception coming into earthly evolution that a veil was drawn over the spiritual world formerly perceived by man, although his consciousness was dull. How can one work from the physical world upon the astral body?

Here it is necessary that we should consider what happens with regard to our ordinary daytime sense perceptions. What happens when man perceives during the day? Think of your daily life, follow it step by step. At every step the impressions of the outer world press in upon you, you perceive them; you see, hear, smell, and so on. When you are doing your work impressions storm in upon you all day long and you work upon these impressions with your intellect. The poet who is not an inspired poet permeates them with his imagination. All this is true. But it cannot, to begin with, lead man to the consciousness of the supersensible spiritual which lies behind the sensible and material. Why does it not come to his consciousness? Because all this activity which man exercises with respect to the surrounding world does not correspond with the essential nature of the human astral body as it exists today. When in the primeval past the astral body proper to man saw the pictures of the astral perceptions rise up

—those pictures of joy and sorrow, of sympathy and antipathy—inner spiritual impulses were present, causing something to rise in man which formed organs. These were killed when man attained the ability to allow all the influences from outside to stream in upon him, and at the present time it is impossible for anything to remain in the astral body from all the impressions received during the day which could mould or shape it.

The process of perception is as follows: All day long we are subjected to the impressions of the external world. These work through the physical senses upon the etheric and astral bodies, until the ego becomes conscious of them. The result of what affects the physical body is expressed in the astral body. When the eyes receive impressions of light, these influence the etheric and astral bodies and the ego becomes conscious of them. So, too, with the impressions made upon the ears and other senses. Thus the whole of one's daily life affects the astral body throughout the day. The astral body is continually active under the influence of the outer world. Then in the evening it withdraws from the physical body. It now has no power in itself to become conscious of the impressions in its present environment. The ancient perceptive forces of the distant past were killed with the first perception of the present sense-world. During the night it has no power because the entire life of the day is not suited to leaving anything in the astral body which could work formatively upon it. All the things you see around you produce effects as far as into the astral body, but what then takes place is unable to create forms capable of becoming astral organs. It must be the first step of initiation to allow a person to do something during the life of the day, to allow something to play into his soul, which continues during the night when the astral body is withdrawn from the physical and etheric bodies. Imagine that—speaking pictorially—something is given to a person while he is fully conscious, which he has to do, which he has to allow to happen, and which is so chosen, so constructed that it does not cease working when the day is over. Imagine this activity as a sound, which continues when the astral body is withdrawn; this resounding would then constitute the force which works to mould the astral body, as at one time external forces have worked upon the physical body. This was always the first step of initiation—to give a person something to do during the life of the day which has an after-effect in the life of the night. What is called meditation, concentration, and other exercises which a person undertakes during his daily life are nothing but

activities of the soul, the effects of which do not die away when the astral body withdraws, but which reverberate, and then in the night become constructive forces in the astral body.

This is called the purification of the astral body, purification from all that is unnatural to it. This was the first step, which was also called catharsis, purification. It did not yet constitute activity in supersensible worlds; it consisted in exercises of the soul which the pupil performed during the day as a training of the soul. It consisted in adopting certain forms of life, certain attitudes to life, a certain way of treating life, so that it could continue to sound; and this worked upon the astral body until it had been transformed, until organs had developed in it.

When the pupil had progressed so far that these organs had developed in the astral body, the next thing was that everything which had been formed there should be imprinted in the etheric body. Just as the characters on a seal are imprinted in sealing-wax, so must everything which has been formed in the astral body be imprinted in the etheric body. This imprinting is the next stage of initiation; it was called illumination. For it brought with it an important stage in initiation. A spiritual world then appeared around the pupil, just as formerly the sense-world was around him. This stage is also characterized by the fact that the events of the outer spiritual world do not express themselves as physical objects do, but in pictures. At this stage of illumination the spiritual world at first expresses itself in pictures. The pupil sees pictures. Think of the ancient initiate I referred to yesterday who saw the group-soul of a people. When he had progressed to this stage, he at first saw this group-soul in pictures. Imagine an initiate such as *Ezekiel*, who, when his illumination began, became aware of spiritual beings as folk-souls, group-souls; he felt himself in their midst; he saw group-souls in the form of four symbolic beasts.

So to begin with, the spiritual world appeared to the pupil in significant pictures—that was the first stage. Then followed a further penetration into the etheric body. What at first was present like the impression of a seal was followed by a further penetration into the etheric body. Then there began to be added to the pictures what was known as the music of the spheres. The higher spiritual world is perceived as sound. The higher initiate, having through illumination perceived the spiritual world in pictures, begins spiritually to listen to those sounds which are perceptible to the spiritual ear. Then he comes to the later transformation of the etheric body, and

afterwards in a still higher sphere something else approaches him. If, for example, there is a screen here and behind it a man is speaking whom you cannot see, yet you may hear sounds. It is somewhat similar with the spiritual world. At first it appears in pictures, then sounds are heard, and then the last veil falls away—as if we were to take away the screen behind which the man is standing and speaking. We see the man himself—we see the spiritual world itself, the beings of the spiritual world. First we perceive the pictures, then the sounds, then the beings, and lastly the life of these beings. It is indeed only possible to give a hint of what exists as pictures in the so-called Imaginative world by making use, as symbols, of pictures from the sense world. One can only give an idea of the harmony of the spheres by comparing it with ordinary music. Now what may be compared with the impressions of the beings at the third stage? It is comparable alone with what today constitutes the inmost being of man, his acting in accordance with the divine universal will. If the pupil works according to the will of the spiritual beings who are helping the world onwards, the being within him will then become similar to these beings and he will perceive in this sphere. He perceives that the element within him which opposes the evolution of the world, which retards its progress, is something which must be thrown off in this world, something which must fall away like a last covering.

Thus the pupil first perceives a world of pictures as a symbolic expression of the spiritual world, then a world of sphere-harmony as a symbolic expression of a higher spiritual sphere, then a world of spiritual beings of whom he can today only form an idea by comparing them with the depths of his own being, with what works within him in accordance with the good powers or even in accordance with the evil spiritual forces.

The neophyte passes through these stages, and they are faithfully portrayed in the Apocalypse of John. The start is made from the physical world. What is first to be said by means of the physical world is said in the seven letters. What we wish to do in physical culture, what we wish to say to those working in the physical world, we say in letters. For the word expressed in the letter can produce its effect in the sense world. The first stage provides the symbols which must be brought into relation with what they express in the spiritual world. After the seven letters comes the world of the seven seals, the world of pictures of the first stage of initiation. Then comes the world of the sphere-harmonies, the world as it is perceived by

those who can hear spiritually. It is represented in the seven trumpets. The next world, where the initiate perceives beings, is represented by those beings who appear at this stage and who cast off the vials of the forces opposed to the good. The opposite of the divine love is the divine wrath. The true form of the divine love which carries the world forward is perceived in this third sphere by those who for the physical world have cast off the seven vials of wrath.

Thus the neophyte is led step by step upward into the spheres of initiation. In the seven letters of the Apocalypse of John we have what belongs to the seven categories of the physical world, in the seven seals what belongs to the astral world of Imagination, in the seven trumpets what belongs to the world of devachan above it, and in the seven vials of wrath what must be cast aside if the pupil wishes to rise into what is spiritually the highest to be attained in our world, because this spiritually highest is still connected with our world.

Today we wished to give merely a sketch of the outer structure of the Apocalypse of John, which serves to show that this is a book of initiation. In our next lecture we shall begin to fill in this brief sketch.

LECTURE TWO

Nuremberg, 19 June 1908

Yesterday we described the spirit of the Apocalypse of John in a general way. We tried to give a few broad guidelines showing that in this Apocalypse is described what may be called a Christian initiation. Today it will be my task to present to you in general the nature of initiation, to describe what takes place in a man when through initiation he is enabled to see for himself into those spiritual worlds which lie behind the sense worlds; and further it will be my task to give in broad outline a description of the experiences in initiation. For only by entering a little more closely into the nature of initiation can we gradually understand this significant religious record known as the Apocalypse.

First of all we must again consider closely the two states of human consciousness, the one lasting from morning when a person awakes until evening when he goes to sleep, and the other which begins when he goes to sleep and ends when he awakes. We have often brought to mind that man as we know him in his present form is, to begin with, a fourfold being; that he consists of the physical, etheric and astral bodies and the ego. To spiritual vision these four principles appear in their external form with the human physical body enclosed in the centre like a kind of kernel. Let us make a diagram we can look at. (Rudolf Steiner drew as he spoke.) During the day this physical body is permeated by the so-called etheric or life-body which projects very slightly round about the head as a luminous halo, but which also completely permeates the head; further down it becomes more cloudy and indistinct and the more it approaches the lower parts of man the less definitely does it show the form of the physical body.

Now these two principles of man are during the day enveloped by what we call the astral body, which projects on all sides like an ellipse, in the shape of an egg, and in its fundamental form it has luminous rays which look as if their direction really were from outside inward, as if they would penetrate from outside to the inner part of man. Within this astral body are outlined innumerable different figures, all kinds of lines and rays, many

like flashes of lightning, many in curious twists; all this surrounds the human being in the most varied manifestations of light. The astral body is the expression of his passions, instincts, impulses and desires, but also of all his thoughts and ideas. The clairvoyant consciousness sees portrayed in this astral body all that one calls soul-experiences, from the lowest urges to the highest moral ideals. Then we have the fourth principle of man, which one might sketch as if something were sending its rays to a point lying about one centimetre behind the forehead. This would be the diagrammatic representation of the fourfold man. In the course of these lectures we shall see how the several parts are distinguished in the whole.

This is a picture of man during the day from morning when he wakes until night when he goes to sleep. Now, when he goes to sleep, the physical and etheric bodies remain in bed and a kind of streaming-out of the astral body takes place. 'Streaming-out' does not express it quite exactly; it is really as if a kind of mist were to form. So that in the night we see the astral body which has withdrawn from the physical and the etheric bodies like a kind of spiral mist around the man, while the fourth principle of the human being disappears almost entirely towards one side, that is, it disperses and becomes vague. The lower part of the astral body can only just be seen; it is the upper part which is addressed as the 'astral body that has stepped out'.

Yesterday we emphasized what has to happen to a person if he is to receive initiation. If he occupies himself only with the customary activities of the present day he is unable to receive initiation. He must be so prepared that during ordinary daily life he performs the exercises of meditation, concentration, etc., prescribed for him by the schools of initiation. With regard to their significance for the human being, these exercises are basically the same in all initiation schools. They only differ slightly in that the further we go back into pre-Christian schools of initiation, the more they are directed to the training of thought, to the exercise of the power of thinking. The nearer we approach to Christian times the more are these exercises directed to training the forces of feeling; and the nearer we come to modern times the more we see how, in the so-called Rosicrucian training—conditioned by the demands and requirements of mankind—a particular kind of will cultivation, the exercise of the will is introduced. Although the meditations are at first similar to those of pre-Christian schools, there nevertheless prevails everywhere at the basis of the Rosicrucian exercises

a particular training of the element of will. What matters, however, and what was achieved just as well by the exercises of the Oriental mystery schools, the Egyptian and the Pythagorean schools and by the exercises that emanate chiefly from meditation on the Gospel of St. John, is that the person is so influenced during the day, even if only briefly, perhaps for five or fifteen minutes, that the influence continues when he falls asleep and his astral body withdraws. The astral body of a man who performs such, shall we say, occult exercises, gradually manifests many different changes at night. It manifests different light-effects; it shows that moulded formation of the organs of which we have already spoken and this becomes ever more distinct. The astral body gradually acquires an inner organization such as the physical body possesses in its eyes, ears and so on.

Yet still this would never lead one to see much, particularly in the case of the man of the present day; one does, however, have some slight perception when the inner organs have been developing for a while. One begins to have consciousness during sleep. A spiritual environment dawns from the otherwise universal darkness. Man perceives wonderful pictures of plant life; this was more especially the case in ancient times; today it is rarer. These are the most primitive achievements of clairvoyance. Where previously there was only the darkness of unconsciousness there now arises something of a dreamlike plant structure, yet living and real. Much of what is described in the mythologies of ancient peoples was seen in this way. When we read in legends that *Woden*, *Vilje* and *Ve* found a tree on the seashore and that from it they created man, this indicates that it was first seen in such a picture. In all mythologies you may perceive this primitive kind of sight, this vision of plants. Paradise is also the description of such a vision, Paradise with its two trees of knowledge and of life. It is the result of this astral vision. It is not without reason that in Genesis itself is indicated that Paradise, together with all that is described in the beginning of the Bible, was thus seen. First we must learn to read the Bible, then we shall understand how closely and significantly it portrays this mysterious condition in its descriptions. In former times they did not teach of Paradise, of the beginning of the Bible, as we do now. Then it was pointed out that Adam fell into a sleep; and that was the sleep, so it was told to the early Christians, in which Adam, looking back, perceived the visions described at the beginning of Genesis. Only in our day do we believe that such words as 'Adam fell into a sleep' are just an accident. They are no

accident. Every word in the Bible has a deep meaning and only he can understand the Bible who knows how to value every single word.

That is the first thing. Then, however, in the pre-Christian mysteries something special had to take place. When the pupil had performed his exercises for a long period—and this lasted for a very long time—when he had more or less taken in what was necessary to produce order in his soul, when he had absorbed what we now call Anthroposophy, then he was at last able to participate in the old initiation proper. In what did this old initiation consist?

It is not sufficient that organs be formed in the astral body. They must be imprinted in the etheric body. Just as the letters of a seal are imprinted in sealing-wax, so must the organs of the astral body be imprinted in the etheric body. For this purpose the neophyte in ancient initiations was brought into a particular condition. For three and a half days he lay in a death-like condition. We shall see more and more that this condition cannot and may not be brought about in our day, but that there are now other means of initiation. I am now describing pre-Christian initiation, in which the neophyte was for three and a half days put into a death-like condition by the hierophant. Either he was laid in a kind of small chamber, a kind of grave where he lay in a death-like sleep, or he was bound in a particular position with outstretched hands on a cross, for this facilitated the arrival of the condition aimed at.

From many different lectures we know that death takes place in man when the etheric body withdraws together with the astral body and the ego, so that only the physical body remains behind. At death something takes place which otherwise has never occurred between birth and death in the ordinary course of life. The etheric body never, even in the deepest sleep, leaves the physical body, but is always within it. At death it leaves the physical body. Now during that deathlike condition, part at least of the etheric body left the physical body, so that a part of the etheric body which was within it before, in this condition found itself outside. This is described, as you know, in more exoteric lectures by saying that the etheric body is withdrawn. That is not actually the case, but we can only now make the necessary fine distinctions. In the three and a half days during which the priest-initiate carefully watched over the neophyte, only the lower part of the body of the pupil was united with the etheric body. This is the moment when the astral body, with all the organs formed in it, imprints

itself in the etheric body. At this moment illumination takes place. When the neophyte was awakened after three and a half days, what is called illumination had come to him, namely that which had to follow after purification, which consists merely in the development of the organs of the astral body. The pupil was now a 'knower' in the spiritual world; what he had previously seen was only a preparatory stage of vision. This world consisting of forms somewhat resembling plants was now supplemented by essentially new images.

We have now to describe more exactly what the initiate then began to see. When he had been led to illumination it was clear to him when he was awakened that he had seen something which he had previously never been able to include in his knowledge. What then had he seen? What was he able to call up in a certain sense before his soul as an important memory-picture of his vision? If we wish to understand what he had seen we must cast a glance at the evolution of man. We must remember that man has only gradually gained the degree of individual consciousness he now possesses. He could not always say 'I' to himself as he does today. We need only go back to the time when the Cherusci, the Heruli, and so on, lived in the parts now inhabited by the Germans. The different human beings did not then feel themselves as separate human egos, but as members of the tribe. Just as fingers do not feel themselves to be something existing independently, so each Cheruscan did not feel that he could unconditionally say 'I' to himself; his 'I' was the 'I' of the whole tribe. The tribe represented a single organism and a group of men who were related by blood had one ego-soul in common. In those days you yourselves were members of a greater community, just as today your two arms belong to your ego.

This may be clearly seen in the case of the people dealt with in the Old Testament. Each single member felt himself to be a member of the race. The individual did not speak of himself in the highest sense when he uttered the ordinary 'I', but he felt something deeper when he said 'I and Father Abraham are one'. For he felt a certain ego-consciousness which descended from Abraham through all the generations to each member of the race. Whoever was related by blood was included in one 'I'. It was like a common group-soul-ego which included the whole race, and those who understood the matter said: What really forms our inmost immortal being dwells not in the separate members but in the entire race; all of the several

members belong to this common ego—Hence such a one knew that when he died he united himself with an invisible being which reached back to Father Abraham. The individual really felt that he returned to Abraham's bosom. He felt that his immortal part found refuge in the group-soul of the race. This group-soul of the entire race could not descend to the physical plane. The people themselves saw only the separate human forms, but these were to them not the reality, for the reality was in the spiritual world. They dimly felt that what flowed through the blood was the Divine. And because they had to see God in Jehova they called this divinity 'Jahve' or also his countenance, 'Michael'. They saw Jahve as the spiritual group-soul of the people.

The individual human being on the physical plane could not see these spiritual beings. The initiate, on the other hand, who experienced the great moment when the astral body was imprinted in the etheric body, was able to see first of all the most important group-souls. When we look back into ancient periods of mankind we everywhere find that the present ego has developed from such a group-consciousness, a group-ego; so that when the seer looks back he finds that the individual human beings flow together more and more into the group-souls. Now there are four chief types of group-soul, four archetypes. If we observe all the various group-souls of the different souls we notice a certain similarity, but there are also differences. If we classify them, there are four groups, four archetypes. The spiritual observer sees them clearly when he looks back to the time when man was not yet in the flesh, when he had not yet descended to the earth. We must now consider more exactly the moment when from the spiritual regions man descended into flesh. This can only be represented in great symbols.

There was a time when our earth was composed of very much softer material than it is now, when rock and stone were not so solid, when the forms of the plants were quite different, when the whole was as if embedded like a primeval ocean in water-caves, when air and water were not separated, when all the beings now dwelling on the earth, the animals and plants, were moulded in water. When the mineral beings began to assume their present form, man emerged from invisibility. The neophyte saw it in this way: Surrounded by a kind of shell, man descended from the regions which are now regions of air. He was not yet as physically condensed when the animals already existed in the flesh. He was a delicate

airy being even in the Lemurian epoch and he so developed that the clairvoyant picture shows the four group-souls. On the one side something like the image of a lion, on the other the likeness of a bull, up above something like an eagle and below in the centre something similar to man. Such is the clairvoyant picture. Thus man comes forth from the darkness of the spirit-land. And the force which formed him appears as a kind of rainbow. The more physical powers surround the entire structure of this man like a rainbow. We have to describe this development of man in various realms and in various ways. Just now we have described how it appears to the investigator when he looks back and sees how these four group-souls have developed out of the common god-man which descends. From time immemorial this stage has been symbolized in the form represented in the second of the so-called seven occult seal pictures²⁰. That is the symbolic representation, but it is more than a mere symbol. There you see these four group-souls emerging from an undefined spiritual background, the rainbow surrounding it and the number twelve. We must also understand what this twelvefoldness signifies.

When what has just been described is seen coming forth, there is a clairvoyant feeling that it is surrounded by something of an entirely different nature from what is emerging from the indeterminate spiritual realm. In ancient times this something by which it is surrounded was symbolized by the Zodiac, by the twelve signs of the Zodiac. The moment of entering into spiritual vision is also connected with many other experiences. The first thing perceived by one whose etheric body goes forth is that he seems to be growing larger and larger and extending himself over what he then perceives. The moment comes when the initiate says: I do not merely see these four forms, but I am within them, I have expanded my being over them.-He identifies himself with them. He perceives what is symbolized by the twelve constellations, by the twelvefoldness. We shall best understand what thus spreads itself around, what reveals itself, if we remember that our Earth has passed through previous incarnations²¹. We know that before the Earth became Earth it went through the condition of Saturn, then through that of Sun, then through that of Moon, and only then did it become Earth in today's sense. This was necessary, for only in this way was it possible for the beings we see on the earth around us to come forth as they have done. They had gradually to work their way through such changing forms.

So when we look back into the primeval past we see the first condition of our Earth, that of ancient Saturn which at the beginning of its existence did not even shine. It consisted of a kind of warmth. You would not have been able to see it as a shining sphere, but had you approached you would have come into a warmer space, because it then consisted only of warmth.

Someone might now ask: Did the development of the world begin with Saturn? Did not perhaps other conditions bring about what became Saturn? Was not Saturn preceded by other incarnations?—It would be difficult to go back before Saturn because only with Saturn does something begin without which it is impossible to go back beyond Saturn, namely what we call time. Previously there were other forms of being; that is to say, we cannot really speak of a ‘before’, because time did not yet exist. Even time had a beginning! Before Saturn there was no time, there was only eternity, duration. All was then simultaneous. Only with Saturn did it come about that events followed one another. In that state of the universe where there is only eternity, duration, there is also no movement. For movement takes place in time. There is no circulation, no revolution; there is duration and rest. As one says in occultism: There is blissful rest in duration.—That is the expression for it. Blissful rest in duration preceded the Saturn condition. The movement of the heavenly bodies only commenced with Saturn. The path indicated by the twelve signs of the Zodiac was conceived of as a sign of this, and the time during which a planet passed through one of these constellations was spoken of as a cosmic hour; twelve cosmic hours, twelve hours of day and twelve of night! To each cosmic body, Saturn, Sun and Moon, is reckoned a consecutive number of cosmic hours which are grouped into cosmic days; and of these twelve periods of time seven are outwardly perceptible and five are more or less outwardly imperceptible. We distinguish therefore seven Saturn revolutions or seven great Saturn days and five great Saturn nights. We might also say five days and seven nights, for the first and last days are twilight days. We are accustomed to call these seven revolutions, these seven cosmic days, Manvantaras, and the five cosmic nights, Pralayas. If we wish to have it exactly correspond to our reckoning of time, we reckon two planetary conditions together, that is, Saturn and Sun, Moon and Earth; and we then get twenty-four revolutions. These twenty-four revolutions form important epochs in the representation of the world and we picture these twenty-four revolutions ruled by beings in the universe who are represented in the

Apocalypse as the twenty-four Elders, the twenty-four rulers of the cosmic revolutions, the cosmic periods. In the occult seal picture they are shown as the cosmic clock. The numbers on the clock are here only interrupted by the double crowns of the Elders to indicate that these are the time-kings because they rule the revolutions of the cosmic bodies. (See the second occult seal picture.)

The initiate sees this when he first looks back into this picture of the past. We must now ask: Why does the initiate see this picture?—Because in it are represented symbolically in astral pictures the forces which have formed man's etheric body in its present shape, and corresponding with this the physical body. Why this is so you may easily imagine. Imagine a man lying in bed. With his astral body and ego he leaves the physical body and etheric body. But now to the physical and etheric bodies as they are today, to man's present physical and etheric bodies belong the astral body and the ego. This physical and this etheric body cannot exist alone. They have become what they are because the astral body and ego have been membered into them. Only a physical body which contains neither blood nor nerves can exist without an astral body and ego. That is the reason why the plant can exist without astral body and ego, because it has neither blood nor nervous system. For the nervous system is connected with the astral body and the blood with the ego. There is no being with a nervous system that can have a physical body not permeated by an astral body, and there is no being with a blood system that can have a physical body into which the ego has not entered. Think of what you do every night. You callously desert your physical and etheric bodies and leave them to themselves with their blood and nervous systems. If it merely depended upon you, your physical body would have to die every night through your deserting your nervous and blood systems; it would die the very moment the astral body and ego left the physical and etheric bodies. But the clairvoyant eye sees how other beings, higher spiritual beings, then occupy it. It sees how they pass into it and do what man does not do in the night, namely take care of the blood and nervous systems. These are the same beings, however, who have created man, in so far as he consists of a physical body and etheric body, not only today but from incarnation to incarnation. They are the same beings who caused the first rudiments of the physical body to originate upon ancient Saturn and who formed the etheric body upon the Sun. These beings who from the very beginning of

the Saturn and Sun periods have ruled in the physical and etheric bodies, now rule every night while man is asleep and callously leaves his physical and etheric bodies, surrendering them to death, so to speak; they penetrate and take care of his blood and nervous systems.

Hence, too, it is comprehensible that at the moment when the astral body touches the etheric body in order to imprint itself there, man, who is pervaded by those forces which have formed him, then sees the picture of these forces which are symbolized in the second occult seal picture. All that upholds him in life and connects him with the whole universe flashes out at this moment of initiation. He sees what has formed the two members of his being, the physical body and etheric body, and what preserves their life every night; but he himself has still no share in it for he cannot yet work into these two principles of his being. If it depended upon man, the physical body and the etheric body, which during the night lie in bed, would be condemned to a plant existence, for he leaves them to themselves. Hence to man the state of sleep is an unconscious condition such as the plant always possesses.

Now what has happened, in the case of an ordinary man, to the part that has withdrawn during sleep? What has become of the astral body and the ego? These also are unconscious during the night. The ordinary man experiences nothing in his astral body during sleep at night. But suppose a person were passing through the seven stages of the John initiation—those important stages in Christian initiation. He experiences not merely what has been described up to now; quite apart from the fact that when the astral body touches the etheric body he is able to develop clairvoyant power, something else would come about. He becomes conscious of the soul characteristics, the human soul qualities of the astral and devachanic worlds out of which he is actually born as far as his soul is concerned. To this picture is added a still higher symbol which seems to fill the whole world. To this symbol of the old initiation there is added for one who passes through the stages of the initiation of John something else which may best be represented by the first occult seal picture²². He sees a spiritual vision of the priest-king with the golden girdle, with feet as of cast metal, his head covered with hair as of white wool, out of his mouth a fiery sword flaming and in his hand the seven cosmic stars, Saturn, Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus. (Revelation I, 12.)

The form in the centre of the second occult seal picture was only indicated in the old initiation as the fifth of the group-souls. It is what only existed germinally in ancient humanity and only emerged as what is described as the Son of Man who rules the seven stars when he fully appears to man in his true form.

Thus from this symbolical representation we must first of all clearly understand that the separation of the various principles in present-day humanity—physical body and etheric body on the one hand and astral body and ego on the other—may be so considered, that each may contribute its part, as it were, to initiation, first of all through the form of initiation when the astral body touches the etheric body, when the four group-souls flash out, and then in the treatment of the astral body so that this too acquires the ability to see. Previously the highest vision in the supersensible world only reached as far as a kind of plant experience of the world. Through Christian initiation a higher stage of initiation is reached in the astral body, as symbolically shown in the first occult seal picture.

Here you have the two things mentioned at the beginning of the Apocalypse described from the principle of initiation itself. The writer of the Apocalypse has, however, described them in the reverse order, and rightly so. He first describes the vision of the Son of Man, the appearance of him who is, who was and who is to come; and then the other. Both are symbols of what the initiate experiences during initiation.

Thus we have described what happens in certain cases of initiation and what is at first experienced. Tomorrow we shall proceed further to the details of these real, actual experiences and we shall find them reflected in the mighty presentation given in the Apocalypse of John.

LECTURE THREE

Nuremberg, 20 June 1908

At the close of our last lecture we were able to point out what the specifically Christian and the later Christian-Rosicrucian initiation first give us in a great and significant symbol. We indicated the meaning of this symbol, this initiation sign which is also described as the Son of Man who has the seven stars in his right hand and the sharp two-edged sword in his mouth. We saw that this initiation enables a person to have a certain higher degree of vision within his ego and astral body and outside the physical and etheric bodies. We shall consider all this still more closely. Every kind of initiation enables a person now really to see and understand what can only be observed with spiritual vision, with spiritual eyes, what is only clear for spiritual vision. Now one of the first and most important things a candidate for the Christian initiation has to know is the development of mankind in our epoch, so that he may understand the tasks of man to a higher degree. All that should give higher knowledge and higher perfection to man is connected with the question: What am I and what is my task in this epoch?—The answering of this question is now, of great importance.

Every stage of initiation leads to a higher standpoint of human observation. Even in the first lecture we were able to point out that man ascends step by step, first to what we call the Imaginative world, where in the Christian sense he comes to know the seven seals, then to what we call Inspired knowledge, when he hears the trumpets, and finally to a still higher stage where he is able to understand the true significance and nature of the spiritual beings, the stage of the so-called vials of wrath. But let us now turn our attention to one particular stage of initiation. Imagine that the pupil has reached the stage of initiation where he experiences what was described at the close of our last lecture. We shall imagine him just on the border, between the most ethereal beings of our physical world and the one above it, the astral world, where he is permitted to stand as if on a high peak and look down. What can the pupil see from this first pinnacle of initiation?



He sees in spirit all that has happened in accordance with his inner being since the Atlantean Flood destroyed ancient Atlantis and post-Atlantean man came into existence. He sees how the cultural ages follow one another up to the time when our epoch will come to an end and give place to a new one. Ancient Atlantis came to an end through the waters of the Atlantean Flood. Our epoch will come to an end through what we call the War of All against All, by frightful, devastating moral entanglements. And we further divide this great epoch from the Atlantean Flood to the mighty War of All against All into seven consecutive ages of culture as shown in the table. At one end we imagine the great Atlantean Flood, at the other the great world War, and we divide this into seven sub-ages, seven cultural ages. The whole epoch containing these seven sub-ages is again the seventh part of a longer period; so you have to imagine seven such parts as our epoch between Flood and War, two following the great War and four preceding the great Flood. Our epoch, the post-Atlantean, is then the fifth great epoch.

When the pupil rises to a still higher pinnacle of initiation he can survey these seven times seven periods; he sees them when he arrives at the boundary of the astral and of the spiritual or devachanic world. And so the ascent continues step by step; we shall see later what the still higher stages are.

Now we must bear in mind that the pupil is first able to rise to a peak from which the wide plain of the seven cultural ages of the post-Atlantean epoch become visible as if from a mountain top. We all know these seven cultural ages. We know that when the Atlantean Flood had swept away

Atlantis, the ancient Indian culture was the first to blossom, and that it was succeeded by the ancient Persian culture. This was followed by the Assyrian-Babylonian-Chaldean-Egyptian-Hebrew culture and this by the fourth age, the Graeco—Latin culture, which was followed by the fifth, the one in which we are now living. The sixth, which will follow ours, will be in a certain sense the fruit of what we have to develop in the way of spiritual culture. The seventh cultural age will run its course before the War of All against All. Here we see this terrible devastation of civilization approaching, we see also the small band of people who have succeeded in taking the spiritual principle into themselves and who will save themselves from the general destruction which comes through egoism.

As we have said, we are now living in the fifth of the subages. Just as from the summit of a mountain towns, villages and woods appear, so do the results of these cultural ages appear from the pinnacle of initiation. We perceive their significance. They represent what has taken place in our physical world as human culture. For this reason we speak of ages of culture in contra-distinction to races. All that is connected with the idea of race is still the remains of the epoch preceding our own, namely the Atlantean. We are now living in the period of cultural ages. Atlantis was the period when seven great races developed one after another. Of course the fruits of this race development extend into our epoch, and for this reason races are still spoken of today, but the sharp distinctions of Atlantean times are already blurred. Today the idea of culture has superseded the idea of race. Hence we speak of the ancient Indian culture, of which the culture announced to us in the Vedas is only an echo. The ancient and sacred Indian culture was the first dawn of post-Atlantean civilization; it followed immediately upon the Atlantean epoch.

Let us recall once more how man lived at a time which now lies more than eight or nine thousand years behind us. If we speak of the actual periods of time, then these figures hold good. The culture of which we are now speaking stood directly under the influence of the Atlantean Flood, or the great ice age, as it is called in modern science. The engulfing of Atlantis by the Flood was a gradual process, and there then lived upon the earth a strain of men of which some members had worked their way to the highest attainable stage of development. These constituted the ancient Indian people, a strain which then dwelt in distant Asia, and lived more in the memory of the ancient past than in the present. The greatness and

might of the culture of which written descriptions such as the Vedas and Bhagavad Gita are only echoes, lies in the fact that the people lived in the memory of what they themselves had experienced in the Atlantean epoch. You will remember that in the first lecture of this course we said that most human beings of that epoch were capable of developing a certain dim kind of clairvoyance. They were not limited to the physical sense-world; they lived among divine spiritual beings; they saw these divine spiritual beings around them. In the transition from the Atlantean to the post-Atlantean epoch, man's vision was cut off from the spiritual, astral and etheric worlds and limited to this physical world. In the first post-Atlantean age of culture men were possessed by a great longing for what their ancestors had seen in ancient Atlantis, on which, however, the door had closed. Our ancestors saw most ancient wisdom with their own spiritual eyes, though dimly. They dwelt among spirits, they had intercourse with gods and spirits. And so the feeling of those who belonged to that ancient sacred Indian culture was that they longed with every fibre of their being to look back and see what their forefathers had seen, that of which the ancient wisdom spoke. And thus the land which had just appeared before the physical vision of man—the rocks of the earth, which had just become visible, which previously had been seen spiritually—all this external world seemed of less value to them than what they could remember. All that the physical eyes could see was called *maya*, the great illusion, the great deception, from which they longed to escape. And the most advanced souls in that first age were to be raised to the stage of their ancestors by the method of initiation of which a few remnants remain in yoga. From this proceeded a fundamental religious mood which may be expressed in the words: What surrounds us here in external sense-appearance is a worthless and vain deception; the real and true is above in the spiritual worlds which we have left.—The spiritual leaders of the people were those who could transpose themselves into the regions in which man had formerly lived.

That was the first age of the post-Atlantean epoch. And all the ages of this epoch are characterized by the fact that man learned more and more to understand and recognize the outer sensible reality, finding that what surrounds us here and is perceptible to our outer senses is not to be considered as a mere appearance; it is a gift of the spiritual beings, and the gods have not given us senses for nothing. What forms the foundations on earth of a material world culture must gradually be recognized.

What the ancient Indian looked upon as *maya*, from which he fled, from which he longed to escape, was looked upon by those who belonged to the second age as their field of action, as something upon which they had to work. Thus we pass to the ancient Persian age, which lies about five thousand years back, that age of culture in which the earth around man at first seemed to be hostile, but no longer—as formerly—an illusion from which he had to flee; he looked upon it as a field of work upon which he had to imprint his own spirit. This earth is ruled in its material character by evil, by a power opposed to the good, by the god Ahriman. He controls it but the good god Ormuzd helps man; men put themselves in his service. When they fulfil the will of Ormuzd they change this world into workable land of the spiritual world above, they imprint into the sensibly real world what they themselves know in the spirit. In the second cultural age, the physically real world, the sensibly real world, was a field of work. To the Indian the sense-world was an illusion or *maya*; to the Persian it was indeed ruled by evil demons, but it was nevertheless a world out of which man had to drive the evil and bring in the good spiritual beings, the servants of Ormuzd, the god of light.

In the third age man comes still nearer to the external sensible reality. It is no longer merely a hostile power which he has to overcome. The Indian looked up to the stars and said: All that is there, all that I can see with external eyes, is only *maya*, illusion—The Chaldean priests saw the orbits and positions of the stars and said: When I observe the positions of the stars and follow their courses they become to me a script from which I know the will of the divine spiritual beings; I recognize what the gods intend from what they have already done.—To the Chaldeans the physically sensible world was no longer *maya* but, as the writing of a human being is the expression of his will, so what was visible in the stars of heaven, what lived in the forces of nature, was to them a divine script. And with love they began to decipher nature's handwriting. Thus arose the wonderful star-lore of which mankind today has hardly any knowledge; for what is known as astrology today has originated through a misunderstanding of the facts. In the writing of the stars a deep wisdom was revealed to the ancient Chaldean priest as astrology, as secrets of what his eyes beheld. He considered this as the revelation of something inward and spiritual.

And what was the earth to the Egyptians? We need only point to the discovery of geometry, when man learnt to divide the earth according to the laws of space, according to the rules of geometry. The laws within *maya* were investigated. In the ancient Persian culture man ploughed up the earth, and now the Egyptians learnt to divide it according to the laws of space. They begin to investigate the laws and furthermore they say: The gods have not left us a writing in the stars to no purpose, not for nothing have they announced their will to us in the laws of nature; if we wish to accomplish salvation through our own work, then in the arrangements we make here we must produce a copy of what we can discover from the stars.—If you could only look back into the laboratories of the Egyptian initiates! You would find a different kind of work from that in the realm of science today. At that time the initiates were the scientists. They investigated the courses of the stars, they understood the laws of the position and the orbits of the stars and the influence of their aspects upon what took place on the earth below. They said: When this or that constellation appears in the heavens, this or that must take place below in the life of the State, and when a different constellation arises, something else must take place; in a hundred years' time certain constellations will appear, and then something corresponding to these must take place.—What was to be done was predetermined for thousands of years in advance. Thus what are called the Sibylline books came into being. What is contained in them is not delusion; after careful observations the initiates wrote down what was to happen for thousands of years, and their successors knew that this should be carried out. They did nothing which was not indicated in these books for thousands of years according to the courses of the stars. Let us say some law was to be made. They did not vote as we do; they consulted the sacred books in which was written what should happen here on the earth, so that it might be a mirror of what is written in the stars. They carried out what was written in the books. When the Egyptian priest wrote those books he knew that his successors would carry into effect what was written, for they were convinced of the necessity of these laws.

Out of this third cultural age developed the fourth. Sparse remnants of this prophetic art of the Egyptians have been preserved. One such remnant can still be seen. When they wished to exercise this prophetic art in ancient Egypt, they divided the next age into seven parts and said: The first must

contain this, the second that, the third that, and so on—And this was the plan which succeeding generations carried out. That was the chief characteristic of the third cultural age. The fourth contained but faint echoes of it. You may still recognize these in the story of the origin of the ancient Roman civilization. Aeneas, the son of Anchises of Troy, a place belonging to the third age, set out on his wanderings and came at length to Alba Longa. This name indicates a place where an ancient sacred priestly culture flourished; Alba Longa or the Long Alba, the city of a priestly culture, from which the culture of Rome was to proceed. We still see the remains of this in the vestment worn by a Catholic priest for the celebration of the Mass. Still in the ancient priestly manner a sevenfold cultural age was predicted in advance. The reigns of the seven Roman kings were outlined beforehand! The historians of the nineteenth century have once again been the victims of a bad joke as regards these seven reigns. They hit upon the idea that in the secular material sense there is no truth in the story of these Roman kings; but they were unable to discover what lay behind, namely that here we have a copy of a cultural age from the Sibylline books planned out prophetically in advance in accordance with the sacred number seven.

This is not the place to go into details regarding the several kings. You would be able to see how each king, Romulus, Numa Pompilius, Tullus Hostilius, and so on, corresponds exactly to the consecutive cultural ages according to the seven principles which present themselves in such different domains.

So in the third age man has been able gradually to permeate *maya* with the human spirit. This was completed in the fourth cultural age, the Graeco-Latin, when in wonderful works of art man produced a perfect image of himself in the outer material world, and portrayed in dramas, for instance those of Aeschylus, pictures of human fate. Observe in contrast how in the Egyptian culture men still sought the will of the gods. The conquest of matter such as we see in the Greek age signifies another stage, in which man made a step further in love of material existence; and finally in the Roman age he completely stepped out upon the physical plane. One who understands this knows also that in this we must recognize the full appearance of the principle of personality. Hence in Rome first appears what we call the conception of justice where for the first time man appears before us as a citizen. Only a confused science is able to trace

jurisprudence back to all sorts of previous ages. What was previously understood as justice was something quite different. The old law is much more correctly described in the Old Testament in the Ten Commandments. What God commanded belonged to the ancient idea of law. It is absurd in our age to try to trace back the ideas of law to Hammurabi and so on. True law and the idea of man as a citizen was first brought to recognition in Rome. In Greece the citizen was still a member of the city-state. An Athenian or a Spartan counted for much more as a citizen than as an individual. He felt himself to be a member of the city-state. It was in Rome that the individual first became a citizen; only then had he reached this stage. This could be proved in detail. What we now call a testament or will did not exist in this sense before Roman times. A will or testament in its present meaning first originated at that time, because only then did the separate human being become determinative in his egoistic will, so as to impose his will upon his successors. Previously other impulses than the personal will were present which held the whole together. Thus it could be shown by many examples how man stepped out upon the physical plane.

We are now living in the fifth age, when culture has descended even below the level of man. We are living in an age when man is the slave of outer conditions, of his milieu. In Greece the mind was employed to spiritualize matter; we see spiritualized matter in the form of an Apollo or a figure of Zeus, in the dramas of a Sophocles, and so on; there man has emerged as far as to the physical plane but has not yet descended below the level of man. Even in Rome this was still the case. The deep descent below the sphere of the human has only now come about. In our age the mind has become the slave of matter. An enormous amount of mental energy has been used in our age to penetrate the natural forces in the outer world for the purpose of making this outer world as comfortable a place as possible for man.

Let us compare our age with former ones. In those ancient times man beheld the vast writing of the gods in the stars; but with what primitive means were the attainments of the civilization of that age, the pyramids, the sphinxes, produced! How did man in those days procure his food! Think of all the conveniences of civilization man has achieved up to the present day! What an enormous amount of spiritual energy was expended to invent and build the steam engine, to think out the railway, the telegraph, the telephone, and so on! Enormous forces of spiritual life had

to be used to invent and construct these purely material conveniences of civilization—and to what end are they used? Does it make any essential difference to the spiritual life, whether in an ancient civilization a man crushed his grain between two stones, for which naturally very little mental power was needed, or whether today we are able to telegraph to America and obtain thence great quantities of grain which we grind into flour by means of ingeniously constructed mills? The whole apparatus is set into motion simply for the stomach. Try to realize what an enormous amount of spiritual life-force is put into purely material culture. Spiritual culture has not yet been advanced very much by these external means. For example, the telegraph is very seldom used in anthroposophical affairs. If you were to make a statistical comparison between what is used for material culture and what benefits spiritual life, you would understand that the spirit has plunged below the human level and has become the slave of material life.

Thus we have a decidedly descending path of culture up to our age, the fifth age of culture, and it would descend ever more and more deeply. For this reason mankind must be preserved by a new impulse from slipping completely into matter. The being of man has never before descended so deeply into matter. A strong, indeed the strongest of the earth impulses had to come. This was the appearance of Christ Jesus, who gave the impulse to new spiritual life. We owe to the mighty impulse which came through Christ Jesus such upward impelling forces as exist in our spiritual life during the descent. There were always spiritual impulses present in this descent into matter. Then there began to unfold, first slowly and then more and more: the Christian life which is only now gradually beginning to develop. In the future it will rise to a transcendent glory, because only then will mankind understand the Gospels. When these are fully understood it will be seen what an enormous amount of spiritual life they contain. The more they are disseminated in their true form, the more will it be possible for mankind, in spite of all material culture, to develop a spiritual life and rise again into spiritual worlds.

Now what develops from age to age in the post-Atlantean epoch is represented by the writer of the Apocalypse as being expressed in small communities. These small communities, divided in space in the external world, represent to him these cultural ages. When he speaks of the community or Church at Ephesus he means: I assume that at Ephesus there

was a community which accepted Christianity in a certain sense; but as everything develops only gradually, there is always something remaining from each cultural age. In Ephesus we have indeed a school of initiates, but the Christian teaching is there coloured in such a way that we can still recognize everywhere the ancient Indian culture.—He wishes to show us the first post-Atlantean age. Hence this first age is represented by the community at Ephesus, and what is to be announced is to be communicated in a letter to the community at Ephesus. We must represent it approximately thus: The character of that remote Indian cultural age of course remained; it continued in various streams of culture. We still find something of this character in the community at Ephesus, which comprehended Christianity in such a way that it was still determined by the typical character of the ancient Indian culture.

Thus in each of these letters we have a representative of one of the seven post-Atlantean cultural ages. In each letter it is said: Ye are so and so. This and that side of your nature is in accordance with Christianity, but the rest must become different.—The writer of the Apocalypse says to each cultural age what may be retained, and what no longer harmonizes and should become different.

Let us see whether the seven consecutive letters or messages really contain something corresponding to the character of the seven consecutive cultural ages. Let us try to understand what the tenor of these letters would have to be if they were to correspond with what has just been said. The writer thinks: In Ephesus is a community, a church; it has adopted Christianity but colours it with the tone of the first cultural age, alien to external life, not filled with love for what is the real task of post-Atlantean mankind.—The one who directs this letter to the community is pleased that they have put away the worship of gross sensuality and turned to the spiritual life. We know what the writer of the Apocalypse means from the circumstance that Ephesus was the place where the mysteries of the chaste Diana were cultivated; he indicates that the turning away from matter specially flourished there, the renunciation of the sensual life and the turning to the spiritual; but ‘I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love’, the love which the first post-Atlantean age should have, which expresses itself in looking upon the earth as the field in which the divine seed must be sown.

How, then, does he who dictates this letter characterize himself? He describes himself as the forerunner of Christ Jesus, as it were the leader of the first cultural age. It is as though Christ Jesus spoke through this leader or master of the first age of culture, that age when the initiate looked up to the spiritual world. He says of himself that he holds the seven stars in his right hand and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are nothing other than symbols for the seven higher spiritual beings who are the leaders of the great ages of culture. And of the seven candlesticks we are expressly told that they are spiritual beings who cannot be seen in the sense world. Reference is also made to these in clear words in the yoga initiation; but it also shows that man never works according to evolution if he hates external works, if he ceases to love external works. The community at Ephesus forsook the love of external works. So it is quite rightly said in the Apocalypse of John: Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes.—‘Nicolaitanes’ is nothing but a designation for those who express life merely in a material sense. In the time referred to in this letter there was a sect called the Nicolaitanes, who considered the external fleshly sensual life as the only valuable thing for man. The one who inspires the first letter says: This you shall not do.—And he also says: But do not forsake thy first love, for inasmuch as you love the external world you quicken it, you exalt it to spiritual life.—And it is also said: He that hath an ear, let him hear; to him that overcometh will I give to eat not merely of the perishable tree, but of the tree of life.—That is, he will be able to spiritualize what is in the senses and so elevate it to the altar of spiritual life.

The representative of the second cultural age is the community or Church at Smyrna. The leader of mankind addresses this one through his second ancestor, the inspirer and master of the ancient Persian culture. The way of thinking of the ancient Persian was as follows: There was once the god of light who had an enemy, the dark Ahriman. At first I was united with the Spirit of Light, who was the first. Then I was membered into the world of matter, into which the retarded and hostile power, Ahriman, instilled himself; and now, in conjunction with the Spirit of Light, I shall work upon matter and embody the spirit in it. Then, after the evil deity has been conquered, the good deity, the Spirit of Light, will reappear.—He is the one who says: I am the First and the Last,—who is killed in material life and made alive again in the spiritual resurrection. So we read in the second

letter: I am the First and the Last, Which is, Which was, and Which is to come, He who has become alive again.—(Revelation II, 8.) It would lead too far to go through every sentence in this way, but we must consider more closely the one which describes minutely how a person stands as a member of the community at Smyrna when he transforms it into the Christian principle. There we read that he gives life to dead matter, that he spiritualizes what is dead. He is not destroyed by it. If he were, then death would be an event leading him to a spiritual life in which the fruits of this earthly life could have no place. Let us take a person who has not lived his life in such a way that he can gather its true fruits. He takes no fruits with him into the spiritual life. But only from these fruits can he live in the spiritual world. If, therefore, he brought no fruits with him, he would experience the 'second death'. By working this earthly field he is saved from the 'second death': He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.—(Revelation II, 11.)

Now we shall pass on to the community at Pergamos. It is the representative of the age when mankind came down more and more to the physical plane, when man saw in the starry script something that his spirit could understand, something that was given him in the third age of culture. Man works by means of that which is within him. Through having an inner being he can investigate the outer world. Only because he was gifted with a soul could he investigate the courses of the stars and invent geometry. This was called 'exploration by the word' and is expressed in the Apocalypse as the 'sword of my mouth'. Hence the one who caused this letter to be written points out that the power of this age is an incisive word, a sharp two-edged sword. It is the Hermes word of the old priests, the word by which the powers of nature and the stars were explored in the old sense. That was the culture gained primarily by means of the inner astral soul-forces of man in the physical world. If it is still achieved in that old form, it is very much a two-edged sword, for then wisdom lies perilously near the edge between white and black magic, between what leads to blessedness and what ends in damnation. Therefore he says he knows well that where the representatives of this age dwell, there also is Satan's seat. This indicates all that could lead astray from the really great purposes of evolution; and the doctrine of Balaam is none other than the doctrine of the black magicians. For this is the teaching of the devourers of the people.

The devourers of the people, the destroyers of the people, are the black magicians who work only in the service of their own personality and therefore destroy all community, they devour everything which lives in the people. But the good in this culture consists in the possibility for man to begin purifying and transforming his astral body. This is called the 'hidden manna'. That which is merely for the world, transformed into food of the gods, that which is only for the egotistical man, transformed into the divine, is called the 'hidden manna'. All the symbols here indicate that man purifies his soul so as to make himself into the pure vehicle of Manas.

To this end, however, it is still necessary to pass through the fourth cultural age. Now the Saviour appears, Christ Jesus himself. It is the community at Thyatira. Here he announces himself as the 'Son of God' who has 'eyes like unto a flame of fire and feet like brass'. He now announces himself as the Son of God. He is now the leader of the fourth cultural age, when man has descended to the physical plane, when he has created his image even in the media of external culture. The period has now come when the deity himself becomes man, becomes flesh, becomes person; the age in which man descended to that stage of personality where in the scriptures of the Greeks the individualized deity appears as personality, where in the Roman citizen the personality comes into the world. At the same time this age had to receive an impulse through the divine appearing in human form. Man, who had descended, could only be saved through God himself appearing as man. The 'I Am' or the 'I' in the astral body had to receive the impulse of Christ Jesus. What earlier only existed as a germ, the 'I' or the 'I Am', was to appear in history in the outer world. The Son of God may therefore, as the leader of the future, say: And all the churches shall know the 'I Am', which searcheth the reins and hearts.—(Revelation II, 23.) Stress is here laid upon the 'I Am', upon the fourth principle of the human being: As I have received from my Father; and I will give him the morning star.—(Revelation II, 28.)

What does the morning star mean? We know that the earth passes through the conditions of Saturn, Sun, Moon, Earth, Jupiter, Venus and Vulcan. This is the way it is usually expressed, and it is quite correct. But I have already pointed out that the Earth-evolution is divided into the Mars period and the Mercury period²³ on account of the mysterious connection existing in the first half of the Earth-evolution between the earth and Mars, and in the second half between the earth and Mercury. Thus in the place of

Earth we sometimes put Mars and Mercury. We say that the Earth in its evolution passes through Saturn, Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus. Thus the most potent stellar force in the second half of the Earth-evolution is seen in Mercury. Mercury is the star representing the directional force, the upward journey on which man must embark.

Here I come to a point where a little secret, so to say, must be unveiled, one which may only be divulged at this point. The teachers of spiritual wisdom have always had what might be called a mask against those who would only have misused Spiritual Science, especially in bygone times. They did not express themselves directly, but presented something which was intended to conceal the true state of affairs. Now the esotericism of the Middle Ages knew only rather rough and ready measures and called Mercury Venus and Venus Mercury. In truth if we wish to speak esoterically, as the writer of the Apocalypse has done, we must speak of Mercury as the morning star. By the morning star he meant Mercury: I have given the direction upwards to thine 'I', to the morning star, to Mercury.—You may still find in certain books of the Middle Ages, which describe the true state of affairs, that the stars of our planetary system are enumerated thus: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, and then Earth is followed not as it is now by Venus, Mercury, but by the reverse, Mercury, Venus. Therefore it says here: Even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star.—

And now we have come to our own age, the one to which we belong and have to ask: Is this Revelation fulfilled right into our own age?—Were it to be fulfilled, he who has spoken through the four preceding ages would have to speak to us, and we should have to learn to understand his voice and become familiar with our task for the spiritual life. If there is to be a spiritual movement and if it is to agree with the Revelation of John, it must fulfil what the speaker, this great inspirer, demands of this age. What does he demand and who is he? Can we know him? Let us try.

In Revelation III, 1, we read: And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars.—We must feel that we ourselves are spoken to here. What are the seven Spirits and the seven stars? In accordance with the concept of the writer of the Apocalypse, man as he appears to us here is an outer expression of the seven human principles we have enumerated. These are: the principle of the physical body, of which the external physical body is

the expression; the principle of the life body whose expression is the etheric body; the principle of the astral body which when transformed yields Manas; Buddhi or the transformed etheric body; and Atma or the transformed physical body; in the centre is the ego-principle. These are the seven spiritual constituents in which the divine nature of man is displayed as in the sections of a fan. According to the technical expression used in occultism these seven principles are called the seven Spirits of God in man. And the seven stars are those from which we understand what man is today and what he is to become in the future. The consecutive stars of the incarnations of the Earth: Saturn, Sun, Moon, Earth, Jupiter, Venus and Vulcan, are the seven stars which make the evolution of man comprehensible. Saturn gave to man the plan for his physical body, Sun that of his etheric body, Moon that of his astral body, and Earth has given him the 'I' or ego. The next three—Jupiter, Venus and Vulcan— develop the spiritual members of man. If we understand the call of the spirit who has these seven stars and the seven Spirits of God, the sevenfold nature of man in his hand, then we shall be practising Anthroposophy in the sense of the writer of the Apocalypse. To practise Anthroposophy is to know that the writer is here referring to the fifth age of man's evolution in the post-Atlantean epoch, it is to know that in our age, when man has descended most deeply into matter, we are again to ascend to spiritual life by following the great individuality who gives for our guidance the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, so that we may rightly follow our path.

And if we follow this path we shall bring into the sixth age the right spiritual life of wisdom and of love. Then the anthroposophical wisdom we have acquired will become the impulse of love in the sixth age, which is represented by the community expressing itself even in its name as the community of brotherly love, Philadelphia. All these names are carefully chosen. Man will develop his ego to the necessary height, so that he will become independent and in freedom show love towards all other beings in the sixth age, which is represented by the community at Philadelphia. This is the spiritual life that is to be prepared for the sixth cultural age. We shall then have found the individual ego within us in a higher degree, so that no external power can any longer play upon us if we do not wish it; so that we can close and no one without our will can open, and if we open no opposing power can close. This is the key of David. For this reason he who inspires the letter says that he has the key of David: And to the Angel of

the community in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth. . . . Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.—(Revelation III, 7.) That is the ego that has found itself within itself.

In the seventh age those who have found this spiritual life will flock around the great leader; it will unite them around this great leader. They will already belong so far to the spiritual life that they will be distinguished from those who have fallen away, who are lukewarm, ‘neither cold nor hot’. The little flock which has found spirituality will understand him who may then say, when he makes himself known: I am he who contains in himself the true final Being towards which everything is steering—For this final Being is described by the word ‘Amen’. Thus in Revelation III, 14: And unto the Angel of the Church of Laodicea write; Thus saith the Amen, —he who in his being represents the being of the end.

So we see how in the Apocalypse of John are presented the contents of an initiation. Even the first stage of this initiation, where we see the inner progress of the seven post-Atlantean ages, where we still see the spirit of the physical plane, shows us that we are dealing with an initiation of the will. For this book can fire our will right up to the present time when we know that we ought to listen to the inspirers who teach us, when we learn to understand what the seven stars and the seven Spirits of God signify, when we learn to understand that we are to carry the spiritual knowledge into the future.

LECTURE FOUR

Nuremberg, 21 June 1908

Yesterday we saw how the Apocalypse of John prophetically points to the cycle of human evolution lying between the great upheaval upon our earth which the legends of various peoples describe as a flood and geologists call the ice age on the one hand, and that event which we designate the War of All against All on the other. In the epoch between these two events lies everything prophetically referred to in this apocalyptic book with the seven messages to the Churches, this book which reveals to us the beings of past ages in order to show what is to fire our will and our impulses for the future. We have seen how we ourselves, in the spiritual movement to which we belong, should consider the words of the so-called fifth message as a summons to action, to work. We have seen that we ought to follow that Being with the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. And we have seen how through this spiritual movement the next age is prepared which is represented by the community of Philadelphia, the age when among all those who have understood the word of the summons there is to be that brotherly love over the whole earth which is described in the Gospel of John. Afterwards another age, the seventh, will follow, which the writer of the Apocalypse describes by showing on the one hand all that is bad in the community representing the seventh age, that is lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, that could not warm to the spiritual life and hence must fall away, and on the other hand those who have understood the word of invitation, those who will become the followers of him who says, 'I am the Amen', that is: I am he who unifies in himself the goal of man, who contains the Christ-principle in himself.—

Now let us keep for a later occasion all that could be added in further explanations of the several messages and in justification of the several names of the cities. Today we shall pass on in our studies to what presents itself to the pupil when he advances to the next stage of initiation. We were confronted by the seven sub-periods of the present cycle of mankind, and we said that this entire cycle with its seven sub-periods is itself a small

cycle contained in a longer period also containing seven epochs. Our cycle, which embraces seven ages, was preceded by the Atlantean cycle, during which were developed the races whose echoes still exist. When the seventh age of our present cycle is at an end, it will be followed by another cycle again consisting of seven parts. The present cycle is preparing indirectly for the next one, so that we may say our age of culture will gradually pass over into one of brotherly love, when a comparatively small part of mankind will have understood the spiritual life and will have prepared the spirit and attitude of brotherly love. That culture will then again divide off a smaller portion of human beings who will survive the event which will have such a destructive effect upon our cycle, namely the War of All against All. In this universal destructive element there will be everywhere individuals who lift themselves above the rest of warring humanity, individuals who have understood the spiritual life and who will form the foundation for a new and different epoch, the epoch of the sixth period.

Something similar also took place during the transition from the fourth epoch to ours. When one who with spiritual vision can review the course of time has passed back through the ages we have considered, the Graeco-Roman, the Babylonian-Egyptian, the ancient Persian and the ancient Indian and beyond the time of the great Flood, he comes into the Atlantean epoch. We need not now consider it in detail but we must at least understand how this Atlantean civilization passed over into our own. There, too, the greater part of the Atlantean population was not sufficiently mature to develop further, it was incapable of coming over into our times. A smaller part, living in a region near to present-day Ireland, developed to the highest flowering of the civilization of Atlantis and then journeyed towards the East. We must understand that this was only the principal stream. There were always peoples who migrated from the West to the East, and all the later peoples of Europe, of Northern and Central Europe, proceeded from that stream which went from the West to the East. That most advanced part of the Atlantean population was under the guidance of a great leader of mankind and eventually settled down as a very small tribe of chosen individuals in Central Asia. From this point the colonists migrated to the various regions of culture mentioned, to ancient India, to Persia, Egypt, Greece, etc.

You might now be inclined to say: Is it not an extremely bitter thought that whole bodies of peoples remain immature and unable to develop their

capacities; that only a small group becomes capable of providing the germ for the next culture?—This thought will no longer disquiet you if you distinguish between race-development and soul-development, for no soul is condemned to remain in one particular race. The race may fall behind; the community of people may remain backward, but the souls progress beyond the individual races. If we wish to form a true conception of this we must say that all the souls now living in bodies in civilized countries were formerly incarnated in Atlantean bodies. A few developed there in the requisite manner, and did not remain in Atlantean bodies. As they had developed further they could become the souls of the bodies which had also progressed further. Only the souls which as souls had remained backward had to take bodies which as bodies had remained at a lower stage. If all the souls had progressed, the backward races would either have decreased very much in population, or the bodies would have been occupied by newly incoming souls at a low stage of development. For there are always souls which can inhabit backward bodies. No soul is bound to a backward body if it does not bind itself to it.

The relation between soul-development and race-development is preserved for us in a wonderful myth. Let us imagine race following race, civilization following civilization. The soul going through its Earth mission in the right way is incarnated in a certain race; it strives within this race, and acquires the capacities of this race in order next time to be incarnated in a higher one. Only the souls which sink down into the race and do not work their way out of the physical materiality are held back in the race by their own weight, as one might say. They appear a second time in the same race and possibly a third time in bodies in similarly formed races. Such souls hold back the bodies of the race. This has been wonderfully described in a legend.

We know, indeed, that man progresses further in the fulfilment of the mission of the Earth by following the great leaders of mankind who point out the goals to be attained; if he rejects them, if he does not follow them, he must remain behind with his race, for he cannot then get beyond it. Let us think of a personality who has the good fortune to meet a great leader of humanity, let us suppose such a personality confronting Christ Jesus himself, for example; he sees how all Christ's deeds are evidence for leading mankind forward, but he will have nothing to do with this progress, he rejects the leader of mankind. Such a personality, such a soul

would be condemned to remain in the race. If we follow this thought to its conclusion such a soul would have to appear again and again in the same race, and we have the legend of *Ahasuerus* who had to appear in the same race again and again because he rejected Christ Jesus.

Great truths concerning the evolution of mankind are placed before us in such legends as this. We must distinguish between soul-development and race-development. No soul is undeservedly obliged to remain in an old body, no soul will undeservedly remain in a body belonging to our age. The souls who hear the voice which calls them to progress will survive the great period of destruction—the War of All against All—and appear in new bodies which will be quite different from those of the present day. For it is very shortsighted if one thinks, for instance, of the Atlantean bodies of men as being like the present bodies. In the courses of thousands of years the external physiognomy of men changes and after the great War of All against All man will have quite a different form. Today he is so formed that in a certain sense he can conceal the good and evil in his nature. Human physiognomy already betrays a good deal, it is true, and one who understands the subject will be able to read much from the features. But it is still possible today for a scoundrel to smile most graciously with the most innocent mien and be taken for an honest man; the reverse is also possible; the good impulses in the soul may remain unrecognized. It is possible for all that exists in the soul as cleverness and stupidity, as beauty and ugliness, to hide itself behind the general physiognomy possessed by this or that race. This will no longer be the case in the epoch following the great War of All against All. Upon the forehead and in the whole physiognomy it will be written whether the person is good or evil. He will show in his face what is contained in his inmost soul, indeed his whole body will be an image of what lives in his soul. How a man has developed in himself, whether he has exercised good or evil impulses, will be written on his forehead. After the great War of All against All there will be two kinds of human being. Those who had previously tried to follow the call to the spiritual life, who cultivated the spiritualizing and ennobling of their inner spiritual life, will show this inward life on their faces and express it in their gestures, in the movements of their hands. And those who have turned away from the spiritual life, as represented for us by the community of Laodicea, who were lukewarm, neither warm nor cold, will pass into the following epoch as those who retard human evolution, who preserve the

backward forces of evolution. They will show the evil passions, urges and instincts hostile to the spiritual in an ugly, unintelligent, evil-looking countenance. In their gestures and hand-movements, in everything they do, they will present an outer image of the ugliness in their soul. Just as mankind has separated into races and cultural communities, in the future it will divide into two great streams, the good and the evil. And what is in their souls will be outwardly manifest, they will no longer be able to hide what they have done with their souls.

If we look back and see how mankind has hitherto developed on the Earth, we shall find that this development of the future just described is quite in harmony with it. Let us look back to the origin of our Earth after Saturn, Sun and Moon and a long interval had passed. The Earth then emerged anew out of the cosmic darkness. At that time, in the first part of the Earth development, there were no other creatures upon the earth besides man. He is the firstborn. He was entirely spiritual, for embodiment consists in a densification. Let us imagine a body of water suspended in space which, through a certain process, partially crystallizes into ice, first a small part and then the same process continually repeated. And now let us imagine that the small pieces of ice which crystallized fall from the body of water, so that they are now separated from the whole mass. Now, because each small piece of ice can only grow larger so long as it is in the whole body of water, when it has separated from this it remains at the stage it has reached up to that point. Let us imagine a portion of the body of water separated in the form of small pieces of ice; let us imagine that the freezing of the water continues and at the next stage more water assumes the form of small lumps of ice; these again fall out, and so on, till finally a very large part is crystallized out of the mass of water and takes the shape of ice. This last has taken the most out of the mother-substance of the water; it has been able to wait the longest before separating.

It is the same in evolution. The lowest animals were unable to wait, they left their spiritual mother-substance too early and hence have thus remained behind at an earlier stage of evolution. Thus the gradually ascending grades of lower beings represent backward stages in evolution. Man waited until the last; he was the last to leave his spiritual, divine mother-substance and descend as a dense substance in fleshly form. The animals descended earlier and therefore remained at that stage. We shall see the reason for this later. At present we are interested in the fact that

they descended and have remained at earlier stages of evolution. What, therefore, is an animal form? It is one which, had it remained united with the spirit from which it proceeded, would have developed up to our present humanity. But the animal forms have remained at a standstill; they have left the spiritual germ; they have separated themselves and are now degenerating. They represent a branch of the great tree of humanity. In ancient times man had the various animal natures within him, as it were, but then separated them off one after another as side branches. All the animals in their different forms represent nothing other than human passions which condensed too early. What man still possesses spiritually in his astral body, the several animal forms represent physically. He kept this in his astral body until the latest period of earth existence, and hence he could progress the furthest.

Man still has something within him which must separate itself from sensual evolution as a descending branch, as the other animal forms have done. What man has within him as tendencies to good and evil, to cleverness and stupidity, to beauty and ugliness, represents the possibility of an upward progress or a remaining behind. Just as the animal form has developed out of progressing mankind, so will the race of evil with the horrible faces develop out of it as it progresses towards spirituality and reaches the later goal of mankind. Thus in the future there will not only be the animal forms which are the incarnated images of human passions, but there will also be a race in which will live what man now hides within him as a portion of evil, which today he can still conceal but which later will be manifest. Let us make clear the chief thing that will appear by an illustration that may perhaps seem strange to you.

We must understand that this separation of the animal forms was actually necessary to man. Each animal form which separated in bygone times from the general stream signifies that man had then progressed a step further. Imagine that all the qualities distributed throughout the animal kingdom were in man. He has purified himself from them. Through this he was able to develop further. If we take a muddy liquid and allow the gross matter in it to settle to the bottom, the finer part remains at the top. In the same way the grosser parts which man would have been unable to use for his present condition of development have been deposited like a sediment in the animal forms. Through man having cast out of his line of development these animal forms—his elder brothers, as it were—he has

reached his present height. Thus man rises by throwing out the lower forms in order to purify himself and he will rise still higher by separating out another kingdom of nature, the kingdom of the evil race. Thus mankind rises upward. Man owes every quality he now possesses to the circumstance that he has rejected a particular animal form. One who with spiritual vision looks upon the various animals knows exactly what we owe to each one of them. We look upon the lion form and say: If the lion did not exist in the outer world, man would not have had this or that quality; for through his having rejected the lion he has acquired this or that quality.—This is the case too with all the other forms in the animal kingdom.

Now the whole of our five ages of human development, the various cultural ages from the ancient Indian to our own, really exist in order to develop intelligence and reason and all that belongs to those two capacities and forces. Nothing of this existed in the Atlantean epoch. Memory was present and also other qualities, but to develop the intelligence and what pertains to it, while turning our attention to the outer world, is the task of the fifth epoch. Directing our clairvoyant vision to the surrounding world we inquire: To what do we owe the fact that we have become intelligent? What animal form have we put forth from ourselves in order to become intelligent?—Curious and grotesque as it may appear, it is nevertheless true to say that if there were not around us the animals which belong to the horse nature, man would never have been able to acquire intelligence.

In former times men were still aware of this. All the intimate relations existing between certain races of men and the horse originate from a feeling which may be compared to the mysterious feeling of love between the two sexes, from a feeling of what man owes to this animal. Hence when the new culture arose in the ancient Indian age, it was a horse that played a mysterious role in religious ceremonial, in the worship of the gods. And all customs connected with the horse may be traced back to this fact. If you observe the customs of ancient peoples who were still close to the old clairvoyance such as, for instance, the old Germanic peoples, and notice how they fixed horse-skulls to the front of their houses, this leads you back to the awareness: man has grown beyond the unintelligent condition by separating out this form. There is a profound consciousness that the acquisition of cleverness is connected with it. You need only remember Odysseus and the wooden horse of Troy. Such legends contain

deep wisdom, much deeper than our science contains. The horse species is not employed in legend without reason. Man has grown out of a form which once contained within it what is now embodied in the horse; and in the form of the centaur art still represented man as connected with this animal in order to remind him of the stage of development out of which he had grown, from which he had struggled free in order to become the present human being.

What thus took place in bygone times in order to lead to present mankind will be repeated at a higher stage in the future. It is not the case, however, that this would in the future have to run its course in the same way in the physical world. Those who become clairvoyant at the boundary between the astral and the devachanic planes can see how man continually purifies and develops what he owes to the separation from the horse nature. He will accomplish the spiritualizing of intelligence. After the great War of All against All he will elevate to wisdom, to spirituality, what is today merely reason, merely cleverness. This will be experienced by those who then will have reached the goal. The fruits of what was able to develop in humanity in consequence of the separation of the horse nature will be manifested.

Now let us imagine one who clairvoyantly looks into the future of mankind. What will he see, what will it show him? Everything that man has prepared throughout the seven cultural ages (for his soul was incarnated in the past ages and will again be incarnated in the future ones) will be embodied in a following epoch, will survive the great War of All against All into the more spiritual epoch. In each age he took up what could be taken up. Think back in your soul how you lived in the ancient Indian culture. You then received the wonderful teachings of the Holy Rishis; although you have forgotten them, you will remember them again later. Then you progressed further from one incarnation to another. You have been able to learn what the Persian, the Egyptian and the Graeco-Roman cultures made possible. All this is within your soul today, but it is not yet outwardly manifest in your countenance. You will live further into the age of Philadelphia and into the age which will be ruled by the Amen. And a community of people will develop more and more who will manifest in their countenances what has been prepared in the various ages of our epoch. What is already working in your soul, what you received in the Indian age, will appear in your physiognomy in the first sub-period of

the epoch following upon the great War of All against All. And what a man acquired in the ancient Persian age will change his countenance at the second stage. And so on, stage after stage. The spiritual teaching which you who now sit here receive and unite with your souls will bear its visible fruit in the epoch after the great War. You are now uniting with the life of your soul what the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars give. You carry it home. No one will read it in your faces today, nor even after centuries; but it will all show after the great War of All against All. There will come a fifth sub-period when you will bear the image of it in your face; on your forehead will be written what you have now worked out, what are now your thoughts and feelings.

So step by step, after the great War, will issue and reveal itself all that is now being hidden in the soul. Let us imagine the beginning of the great War; the soul that has heard the call which from age to age the Christ-principle has uttered, will live on into all that is indicated in the messages to the Churches. Through seven ages has been laid into it what these ages can give. Let us imagine how the soul waits, how it waits on. It is sealed seven times. Each cultural age has added its seal. Within you is sealed what the Indians wrote in your soul; within you is also imprinted what the Persians, the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans have written in your soul, and what our own cultural age inscribes in it. The seals will be unloosed; that is, the things written there will be outwardly revealed after the great War of All against All. And the principle, the power, which brings it about that the true fruits of our cultural ages shall be made manifest in the countenance, is to be found in Christ Jesus. Seven seals of a book must be opened. What is this book? Where is it?

We will explain what a book is according to the Bible. The word 'book' occurs in the Bible only seldom. This must not be overlooked. If you search the Old Testament, you will find the word in Genesis (V, 1): This is the book of the generations of Adam; In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him. Male and female created he them,—and so on. You may then open the Bible where you will, you will only find the word 'book' again in the first Gospel (Matthew I, 1): This is the book of the generation of Christ Jesus, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob,—and so on. Again generations are enumerated, something that flows through a long series is enumerated. And again the expression 'book' appears here in the

Apocalypse of John. It appears where it is said that the Lamb alone is worthy to open the book with the seven seals. The expression 'book' has always the same significance, it is never used otherwise. We only need to understand the records literally. A book in our present sense is not intended. An expression such as the 'Domesday Book' has far more closely retained the old meaning of the word. The word 'book' is used where something is entered consecutively, where one thing follows from another, where a possession is registered so that it may be handed down from generation to generation. So here we have such a record whereby a foundation is made for something that is to continue on into the future. In the Old Testament the word 'book' signifies a document in which are recorded the generations transmitted through the blood. It is there used in no other sense than that the generations are recorded. It is used afterwards in the first Gospel in the same way for the recording of the lineage. Hence what follows consecutively in time is written in a 'book'. By a 'book' nothing else is ever meant than the recording of what follows in time, that is to say, approximately in the sense of a chronicle, a history.

The book of life which is now being compiled in mankind, in which from age to age is being written in the ego of man what each age offers, this book which is written in the soul of man and which will be unsealed after the great War of All against All, is here meant in the Apocalypse. In this book will be the entries made by the various cultural ages. Just as through the generations the entries were made in the genealogical tables of the old books, so it is here, only that in this case what is written down are man's spiritual achievements. And since he acquires through intellectuality what it is possible to acquire in our age, the gradual progress of this development will be represented imaginatively by the symbol which corresponds with this quality. By having passed through the Indian age in a frame of mind in which he turned away from the physical world and directed his gaze towards the spiritual, man will, in the first age after the War of All against All, gain the victory over the things of sense. He will be the victor by acquiring what was written in his soul in the first age. Further what emerged in the second age, the conquest of matter by the ancient Persians, will appear in the second age after the War of All against All: the sword that here signifies the instrument for the overcoming of the external world. What man acquired in the Babylonian-Egyptian age, when he learned how to measure everything correctly, is seen in the third age after

the great War as that which is represented by the scales. And the fourth age shows us something most important, namely what man acquired in the fourth age of our epoch through Christ Jesus and his appearance on earth: the spiritual life, the immortality of the ego. For this fourth age it must be shown that everything unfit for immortality, everything doomed to die, falls away.

Thus everything that has been prepared throughout the ages of this present epoch comes out consecutively in the next, and it appears because it is indicated by the symbol which corresponds with intelligence. If we read about the opening of the first four seals in the sixth chapter of the Apocalypse of John, we shall see that what is revealed expresses stage after stage in a mighty symbolism what will in the future be revealed: And I saw, and behold a white horse . . . (this indicates that the spiritual intelligence comes forth). And he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, 'Come and see'. And there went out another horse that was red. And to him that sat thereon was given power to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another. . . (that that might be destroyed which is not worthy to take part in the ascent of mankind). And to him was given a great sword. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, 'Come and see'. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, 'A measure of wheat for a penny and three measures of barley for a penny.'-Measure and penny to indicate what mankind had learned in the third age; the fruits are carried over and unsealed. And in the fourth age Christ Jesus came to conquer death, and the revelation of this achievement is seen: And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, 'Come and see'. And I looked and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat upon him was Death, and Hell followed with him—'Behold a pale horse'—this all falls away, falls into the race of evil; but whatever heard the call and overcame death, partakes in the spiritual life. Those who have understood the 'I Am' and his call are those who have overcome death. They have spiritualized intelligence. And now what they have become can no longer be symbolized by the horse. A new symbol must appear for those who have understood how to follow the call of him who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. They now

appear under the symbol of those who are clothed in white raiment, who have put on the robes of the immortal, eternal, spiritual life.

We are then further told how all that appears which goes upward to good and downward to evil. This is clearly expressed: And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain because of the word of God and because of the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?’ And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until there came to them their fellow-servants and their brethren, who should be killed as they were, —that is will be killed as to the external form and live again in the spiritual. How is this expressed?

Let us realize what in true anthroposophical life becomes of the external sense-world. How have we described the seven stars? We went back to Saturn and showed how the physical human body originated, how it was constructed out of warmth. We then saw how the Sun appeared; we drew a mental picture of this world. The Sun is for us not merely a physical sun; it is the bringer of life which in the future of mankind will appear as the highest form of spiritual life. The Moon is to us the element which retards the rapid march of life and slows man down to the necessary pace. Thus we see spiritual powers in Sun and Moon. And the knowledge we acquire through Anthroposophy also appears rightly symbolized in a future age; to our spiritual vision the Sun and Moon appear as the forces which have constructed man. Symbolically the external physical sun and the external moon disappear, they become like a human being, but in an elementary form: And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.—All this is the symbolical fulfilment of what we are seeking in spiritual life.

Thus we see that what is being prepared in this epoch is prophesied in significant pictures for the next epoch. We now carry invisibly within us the transformation which we undergo with the Sun and Moon when the physical changes into the spiritual elements. When spiritual vision is directed toward the future, the physical disappears indeed and the symbol of the spiritualizing of mankind appears before us.

Today we have pointed out in somewhat bold features what the seven seals and their unveiling in the Apocalypse should say to us. We must go still deeper into the subject, and then much of what might seem improbable to us today will become quite clear. We can, however, see how the mighty pictures described by the seer regarding the present and future development of mankind are arranged in an inner order, and how this goes on into the future and thereby gives us ever stronger impulses to live into the future and to do our share in the spiritualizing of human life.

LECTURE FIVE

Nuremberg, 22 June 1908

Yesterday we saw how the human race will develop when our present cycle of ages has run its course, how it will divide, so to speak, into two streams, into the good and the evil races, and how the secrets of this future are unsealed for us through the seven seals which are symbolically unloosed in the Apocalypse of John. After this general description of the manifestation in the outer physiognomy of what is being prepared in our cycle of ages in the souls of men, one might well ask: How is it that the writer of the Apocalypse describes especially the first seals in such frightful pictures?—We shall best answer this question if we now introduce an intermediate consideration into our whole study of the Apocalypse.

So far we have tried to confirm the statement that the Apocalypse of John represents an initiation, the Christian initiation, through which the future of mankind is revealed. We shall best understand what follows if we now look back and consider once more the times of man's past evolution. We will do this to the extent which is necessary for the explanation of the Apocalypse. You already know the general outlines. You know that our Earth, which forms the present dwelling-place of man, originated in the far-distant past, but that it was the reincarnation of another planetary being usually called ancient Moon or the Cosmos or Planet of Wisdom, in contradistinction from our present Earth, which we designate as the Cosmos or Planet of Love. The Cosmos of Wisdom or the ancient Moon is again only the reembodiment of a still earlier condition which we call the Sun Planet; that is not the present sun, which is a fixed star, but the Sun Planet. And the Sun Planet is the re-embodiment of ancient Saturn. We have therefore to distinguish four consecutive conditions of our planetary existence which we call Saturn, Sun, Moon and Earth.

We will now describe these four conditions of our planetary existence so far as we need this for the explanation of the Apocalypse of John. When with spiritual vision we go back to the ancient Saturn existence, we come

to a remarkable planet. This ancient Saturn is a heavenly body upon which is to be found nothing of our present minerals or solid earthly substances, no animals or plants, no water or fluid substances, no current of air or gas. If you were to imagine that with your present eyes—which did not then exist—you were somewhere in space and approached this Saturn, you would be able to see nothing of its first condition, for it did not yet shine. With your eyes you would have been unable to see anything of Saturn from outside in the first half of its existence. Had you approached it and penetrated into the space it filled, you would have felt somewhat as if you had crept into a heated oven, if you had then been able to use your present senses. You would only have been able to distinguish this spherical space from the rest by its being warmer than its surroundings. Of all the conditions we now know, warmth is the only one we meet with on ancient Saturn; but it is a remarkable kind of warmth. You would not find it equally warm in all parts. In some parts it is warmer and in others cooler, so that if you were to trace and connect the parts of equal warmth by lines, there would appear figures perceptible only through the difference in warmth. Everything is warmth, but organized, differentiated warmth. Were you to fly through the whole of Saturn in this way you would say to yourself: There is indeed something present, but something which I can only perceive through the various degrees of warmth.—

These differentiated conditions of warmth were all that existed of the present characteristics of our earth, and the first beginnings of man's physical body were expressed at that time in this warmth. What then existed you still have within you today, only it has withdrawn from outer space and is within your being—it is the warmth of your blood. If you were to construct figures from your blood-warmth you would have the echoes of that part of your physical body which existed on ancient Saturn. The warmth you now have in your blood is the first foundation of the physical body, the oldest part of it, so that you may also say: The whole of Saturn consisted of blood-warmth.—You would be able to find something like the figures which could be drawn today, if you were to trace the various channels of your blood according to the different degrees of warmth. That is the physical existence of ancient Saturn. Of all the present physical substances it only possessed warmth, and of all the beings now peopling the earth there was only man, and of him there existed only the foundation of the physical body. Saturn consisted only of such foundations

of physical human bodies formed out of warmth. Just as a blackberry is made up of separate little balls, so was Saturn composed at that time, but of men such as we have just described. On the other hand it was at first surrounded by spiritual beings. Just as the earth is now enveloped in air, Saturn was enveloped in a spiritual atmosphere. Beings lived there who were at various stages of development, but they all needed this dwelling-place of Saturn at their stage of development at that time. It was necessary to them; they could not have done without this dwelling-place. There were those, for example, who also had seven principles, but not like the present man. The latter has his seven principles, which we call the Seven Spirits of God, in such a way that the physical body is the starting point. With these beings it was not so. For example, there were beings who had an etheric body as their lowest principle. They had a physical body only by anchoring their etheric body to the physical bodies of Saturn and so using these. As compared with our present earth this Saturn is in substance a very rarefied cosmic body; it did not even possess anything like our air or gas; even these would have been too gross for it. It possessed only warmth, and surrounding the warmth were spiritual beings.

Now through the beings in its environment developing further, Saturn passed through various transformations. One of these may easily be described by saying that in the middle of its development Saturn actually begins externally to light up; so that if one follows it, it appears at the beginning as a dark warmth-body, then it begins to glimmer, and towards the end sends forth a dim light into the world. This spiritual atmosphere around Saturn which has within it various beings, contains among others a certain definite kind of being in whom we are particularly interested. About the middle of the Saturn evolution these beings passed through the stage man is now passing through upon the earth. They are the Spirits of Personality. About the middle of the ancient Saturn period they have approximately reached the human stage of development. You will, of course, not fall into the mistake of asking: Did they then have bodies such as those of man today?—It would be a great mistake to suppose that these human beings had fleshly bodies like those of today. It is possible to pass through the human stage in the most varied forms, and these Spirits of Personality passed through their human stage on Saturn in such a way that to begin with they used as physical body what was present in the atmosphere as warmth; that as ether body (which they also did not yet

possess) they used what was in the atmosphere; and lastly they also used what existed as astral substance; as yet they possessed nothing of this themselves. Essentially they had at that time an ego-bearer, an ego, and this ego, which was at the human stage, which lived exactly as the present human ego upon the earth, passed at that time through these various stages of humanity upon Saturn in another form and in another way. Thus about the middle of the Saturn period we have the Spirits of Personality, the Archai, in this human stage. If one reckons in this way, what I have just related is the middle stage of the Saturn evolution. There are three others which precede it and three others following it. These are called rounds or periods of Saturn. If you imagine the whole evolution of Saturn you may picture it thus:

In the middle (x) are the Spirits of Personality. At each of the three preceding and the three following stages (just as our Earth can be divided into periods according to the number seven, so too can the Saturn evolution) certain beings become human, at every stage some beings or others, and it is always just when the time has come for them to be able to use what is on Saturn in order to pass through the human experience.



Thus we have seven kinds of being upon Saturn who there passed through their human stage, who rose to the human stage and who therefore in the ensuing stages no longer need to develop this. The present man was not yet human upon Saturn. The beings who have become human upon Saturn—whose representatives are the Spirits of Personality—progress further and are today exalted above man, they have the human being within themselves, so to speak. They carry him within them as a stage of evolution that is past for them.

Now after Saturn had proceeded with its evolution for a certain length of time, the whole passed over into a spiritual sphere, into a condition not externally perceptible to the senses like those of the present day. Then came the second embodiment of our Earth, the Sun Planet. This was distinguished by the fact that comparatively early in its development it had progressed so far that it radiated light. This was because it consisted not

only of warmth but because the warmth material had already condensed into gaseous, airy material. There was as yet neither water nor solid substance; it consisted of an airy or gaseous mass. But it was already able to be a luminous body; it could have been seen by the present eye as a planet shining in space. When this planet had so far developed, it was possible for the etheric body to be membered into the first rudiments of man's physical body. Thus man now consisted of physical and ether body, while on Saturn he possessed only the first rudiments of the physical body. But he had not progressed far enough to have his own astral body. Therefore human forms looked quite different from those of today. Man had the form of plant existence, for like a plant he possessed a physical body and an etheric body, but upon the Sun he looked quite different from our present plants.

With this progress of development was connected the fact that a second kind of being appeared upon the Sun. Upon Saturn there was only man, no other beings. It consisted only of men, as a blackberry consists of little berries. Now some of these germs remained at the Saturn stage; they had not all achieved what was to be achieved. These backward beings coming from Saturn cannot therefore acquire an etheric body and still on the Sun are provided only with a physical body. Thus they have only progressed as far as man did upon Saturn. These beings who upon the Sun have only the physical body are the first germs of our present animals, so that upon the Sun we have germs of men with physical body and etheric body, and germs of animals with physical body only.

Again in the middle of the Sun period certain beings pass through the human stage. Man could not yet do so. The spiritual beings around the Sun who now pass through the human stage are called the Fire Spirits, Archangels. Today they are two stages above man. They bear the human within themselves; they experienced in another form what man is experiencing now in his earthly existence. But the Sun also passes through seven stages, and at each stage there are beings who reach the human stage, so that again during the Sun period we have seven phases of development. If they go back into their own past, they see, as it were, a cosmic stage in their life of which they may say: Even though there was then no solid earth and no watery globe, I experienced what man is experiencing today; I can therefore feel and experience what man is experiencing upon the earth—These beings can say this today. They

understand it because they too have experienced what man is now experiencing during his earthly life.

Then once again comes a kind of intermediate condition in which to outer observation (if this had indeed been possible) the luminous planet gradually ceases to glow, and even disappears for a certain stage of clairvoyant observation, being apparent only to the highest spiritual vision. Then it again emerges in a new form of existence, to a third condition which we call the Moon condition. This is the third embodiment of our planet, the ancient Moon. This has now developed so far in the evolution of its substance that what formerly upon the Sun was merely gas has now condensed to water. Through the entry of the watery element, man—who gradually emerges again like a plant from a seed—can receive the astral body; so that man now consists of three parts, the physical body, etheric and astral bodies. He is not yet really human, for he does not yet possess an ego in these three bodies.

Certain beings always remain behind at every stage, therefore the beings who remained behind upon the Sun, who were unable to attain to the Moon stage and who only passed through their Sun stage on the Moon, are now unable to incorporate the astral body; upon the Moon they consist only of physical and etheric body. These are especially those who were already backward upon the Sun, but who meantime had developed so far that they could take up an etheric body. These are again the ancestors of our present animals. Those, however, who were not yet far enough advanced upon the Moon to take up an etheric body, are the ancestors of still lower beings, the present plants. Thus upon the Moon we have three kingdoms: the kingdom of man, consisting of physical body, ether body and astral body; the animal kingdom, consisting of physical body and etheric body; and the plant kingdom, consisting only of physical body.

Again there are certain beings who about the middle of the Moon period pass through their human stage. They are the spirits who in the literature of Spiritual Science are usually called the Spirits of Twilight, or Angels. They also carry the human within them as a memory. And again the Moon passes through seven such stages. At each stage there are beings who can pass through human existence. It is always the case that some beings hurry forward and others remain behind. Thus upon the Moon too we have seven grades of being who had passed through their human stage when the Moon had finished its evolution.

Now in order to understand the Moon evolution fully, we must mention something important which took place in the course of this ancient Moon evolution. When it began, or at least shortly after the beginning, it was a fluid sphere. Had it developed further in this way throughout its seven stages it would not have been able to give man the right foundation for his further development. It was only fitted to be a preparatory stage for man to become human on Earth by dividing for a time into two planetary bodies. One of these was the forerunner of the present sun, and the other which separated was the forerunner of the present earth, but in such a way that you must imagine the earth mingled with the present moon, so that the present earth and moon were then one. Now imagine these two bodies, earth plus moon on the one hand and the sun on the other, separated from each other; the old moon as a watery body and the old sun on the way to becoming a fixed star. Something very essential was connected with this division. It was primarily the sun which brought about the separation and took with it the finest parts, the most ethereal substances, while the grosser substances remained behind in the moon, that is, the present earth plus the present moon. Hence the sun is composed of extremely fine substances, while the moon becomes a much denser body, a watery mass. Through the sun taking with it the finest and most spiritual forces, it could now be the arena for much more highly developed beings. In fact, many of those high beings who were still able to bear the Saturn existence would have been hindered in their development if they had been bound to the ancient Moon any longer. They needed a field of activity with the finest materials; only there could they develop. So they took with them their field of action and developed further upon the sun. On the other hand, with the moon, which had suffered a densification through the exit of the finer substances, there were connected those germs of man which consisted of physical body, etheric body and astral body, and there were also the germs of the animals and plants.

Now this old moon had an extraordinary appearance. You would not yet find on it anything like rocks or arable soil, although it already circled round its sun. Mineral substances did not yet exist. The principal mass of this moon, upon which these beings hopped about, so to speak, was a kind of pulp, a kind of pulp or purée like boiled lettuce or spinach. The basic substance of the old moon consisted of this purée, just as the basic substance of our earth consists of soil. In it were embedded masses

resembling, shall we say, wood and the bark of trees. When you climb a mountain today you walk upon rocks. At that time you would have passed over a basis which, if it was solid, was something like wood, a wooden plateau. Instead of granite you would have found stumps which might be compared to wood. Of course this is speaking comparatively. Such was the basic substance and out of it excrescences constantly grew. This was the lowest kingdom, the present mineral kingdom, which at that time lay between the present mineral and plant kingdoms. In a certain way it was alive. It continually produced growths. It was not as it is now. If today there is some soil which you want to remove, it has to be carried away by external means. This substance of the old moon died away—but not like separate plants—it died away and formed itself afresh. It was continually in inward living motion. The fundamental substance of the old moon was in a continuous state of decay and growth. And out of this foundation grew another kingdom. Through the exit of the moon from the sun the earlier kingdoms had changed. Upon ancient Sun they corresponded approximately to our kingdoms. Through the exit of the moon the ancient plant kingdom was forced down about half a stage, and so were the other kingdoms, so that the next kingdom was a kind of animal-plant kingdom. It grew out of the ground, the animal-plants grew out of the ground. They were in the form of plants, but when one took hold of them they had sensations, they squeaked, etc. They were actually half animal and half plant; plants inasmuch as they grew on the ground, most of them firmly rooted to the ground, and animals inasmuch as they had a certain capacity for sensation. And the kingdom which preceded the present human beings were man-animals, beings standing between the present man and the present animals; higher than the present apes, but not as high as present man. That was approximately the form of man's ancestors upon the old moon.

Legends and myths have preserved these truths in a wonderful way. Think how a German legend has preserved the secret hidden behind all this. Certain beings always remain behind. Beings between the present plants and the present animals, which could only take root in a vegetable basis such as was the substance of the old moon—these beings have also remained behind, and on this account are incapable of thriving on the mineral ground of our present earth. Our present plants can grow in this, but those which stood between the plants and animals and which needed a

living basis, cannot, if they have remained behind, grow in mineral soil. Mistletoe is such a plant. Hence it has to be a parasite upon the present plants because it is a backward being. It no longer has sensation, although the astral body enveloping mistletoe is quite different from that of other plants. The German legend perceived that mistletoe does not belong to our earth, that it is alien. In the god Baldur the legend recognizes the god of the earth-sun, the earth force. No being of the earth can approach him with hostility. Hence also the god whom the German legend knew to be a straggler, namely Loki, cannot kill Baldur with anything belonging to the earth; he has to kill him with a branch of mistletoe, because this is a stranger among the creations of the earth, and for this reason can serve the straggler, Loki, who is not related to the earth gods. Deep wisdom is hidden behind such legends, and in this legend of Baldur and Loki²⁴ this can be clearly traced. It can also be seen in the customs connected with the mistletoe. If you were to study these you would find that what is said about mistletoe proceeds from an ancient wisdom.

Then in the second half of the Moon-evolution came the time when the sun-beings, as well as the beings who had remained behind upon the old moon, had attained what had to be attained during the old moon period. And the sun and moon united again; they came together and for a time continued their evolution as one body.

Then the evolutionary condition gradually darkened and passed through the purely spiritual condition usually called Pralaya, and then came the dawning of our Earth evolution. At first this dawning cosmic body contained not only our present earth substance; it consisted of what you would obtain if you were to mix together in a gigantic cauldron the substance of the present sun, earth and moon. That was approximately the condition at the beginning of the Earth's evolution. This was first a kind of repetition of the Saturn condition and then of the Sun condition and then of the Moon condition. Now the most important thing for us to realize is that man really only becomes human in the present sense in the middle of the Earth evolution. In the Earth period also we have to distinguish seven conditions. We are now in the fourth. Three have gone before and three will follow. It was in the fourth main round that our present race of man was to become human. Now, just as in all the rounds upon Saturn, Sun and Moon, certain beings reached the human stage (upon Saturn the Asuras or Archai, upon the Sun the Archangels, and upon the Moon the Angels) so

there were always beings who remained behind. Upon the Moon there were also beings who could no longer reach the human stage, backward Angels, shall we say, who could only catch up their human stage upon the Earth Planet during the first three rounds. Man reached this stage during the fourth. We therefore say that before man three other kinds of being passed through the human stage upon the Earth, and the fourth to pass through the human stage upon the Earth is man himself. At that moment in cosmic evolution when man is about to become human, all the beings who have been able to pass through the human stage, throughout Saturn, Sun, Moon and the first three rounds of the Earth, are beings who have more or less progressed beyond man. But they are all able to look back, as it were, and remember the stage at which they themselves passed through the human stage. They could look down upon evolving man and say: He is now becoming something which we have already been, something which we can understand; although we passed through the stage under different circumstances.-For this reason they could guide and regulate his evolution from the spiritual cosmic realm.

Let us enumerate how many of these beings there are who can look back at the human stage, who are able to understand evolving man. Seven from the Saturn evolution, plus seven from the Sun, plus seven from the Moon stage, plus three from the Earth; twenty-four beings in all. Twenty-four human beings look down upon the present man. These are the beings whom for good reasons we have called the guides of evolution, the directors of time. Time is connected with evolution. They are the twenty-four Elders who meet us in the Apocalypse of John. They are the same beings who are described in the part relating to the secret of the seven seals. They are described as the real directors of history, the true Alpha and Omega. Thus we have found the twenty-four Elders again here and you see how the Apocalyptist who wrote this important document has secreted into his pictures in a wonderful way what we ourselves are able to find from the study of the spiritual evolution of the world.

Now certain beings had remained behind at every stage; thus the backward Saturn beings on the Sun appeared as the first foundations of the present animal kingdom, and the backward Sun beings on the Moon appeared as the first foundations of the present plant kingdom. Only upon the Earth did a stage of evolution appear as the mineral kingdom. We have stressed the fact that upon the Moon there was as yet no mineral kingdom;

man had as yet no rocks to walk upon. At the time when present man began to pass through the human stage, the first mineral masses, the first crystals emerged from the planet which then stood at a stage between the substances of the ancient Moon and the present earthly substance. This was the moment when the mineral kingdom burst forth, and you find this bursting forth described in a unique manner in the Apocalypse of John where he says: Around the throne it was crystallized like a sea of glass.— This ‘sea of glass’ is to indicate the bursting forth, the budding forth of the mineral kingdom in its primary form. Thus we see that this secret of cosmic evolution is also indicated in the Apocalypse of John. And from it we have also learnt to perceive that to this degree the writer wishes to present to us in his mighty pictures exactly what we are able to recognize, through spiritual life, in the development of the Earth. But in this way the Apocalyptist has led us, right at the beginning of his book, to the heights where man can see the pictures of the future stages of evolution.

We have now laid a good foundation to link up again with what we have already learnt about the first ages of the future evolution of mankind. In this digression we have cast a glance into the past, to the point where man is ready to become a human being, where the mineral kingdom shoots forth. And now we shall see how human evolution proceeds further up to our own age and thence into the future. We shall find the connection with the secret of the seven seals and their unsealing, up to the outpouring of the vials of wrath.

LECTURE SIX

Nuremberg, 23 June 1908

In material science it is customary—with the exception of a few circles who have recently come to a different explanation—to represent our present solar system as having developed out of a kind of nebula which embraced a space that reached beyond the orbit of Neptune, that is, the orbit of the outermost planet of our solar system. And then, it is supposed, through a condensing process, our sun and the planets moving round it gradually formed. As we have said, there are now a few exponents who have a somewhat different view; but they too do not bring forward anything essential for us who take a spiritual view. So our sun and the planets circling round it are supposed to have formed themselves into spheres. In connection with this a neat comparison²⁵ has always been made use of in schools, and it is still employed today, to demonstrate how a whole planetary system can originate through rotation. Some oily liquid is taken, which, when placed in water takes on a spherical form. Then a small disc is cut and inserted through the equatorial line of this oily ball so that it is divided into two halves. This is then rotated by means of a pin stuck through the centre of the disc, and one sees at first one drop separate itself and circle as a separate body round the large sphere, then a second and a third drop, and finally a large drop remains in the centre around which many smaller ones revolve. The experimenter says: A planetary system in miniature!—Then he says: Why should not our solar system originate from that primeval nebula in this way, if we can now imitate it in this miniature solar system?—

Usually this comparison seems to be extremely convincing and people now understand how once upon a time Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Earth, Venus, Mercury separated from that primeval nebula. But the whole affair, not only the comparison but the whole idea, proceeds from the emptiness of all present-day thinking, for the persons in question, otherwise quite learned men, who put forward this illustration in such a convincing manner, forget only one thing, namely that they themselves are present and turn the pin!

Now self-forgetfulness is very good in certain realms of life, but in this case, if the experimenter is forgotten, the most important thing is forgotten, for without him the drop of oil would never rotate at all. The learned person who believes in such a superstition—this superstition is called the Kant-Laplace system—should at least be logical in his thinking, he should at least presume that some sort of being must have sat on a gigantic stool in space at that time and set the gigantic axis in motion. But human thought has gradually become so accustomed to consider only the material, that the contradiction in such a comparison is no longer noticed.

As a matter of fact, there is a certain truth in this so-called Kant-Laplace system, although the truth is different from the materialistic explanation of the matter. There is a certain truth in it because to spiritual vision everything contained in our present solar system does indeed appear as having proceeded from such a primeval nebula; only to him who can really investigate historically is it clear that the good in the Kant-Laplace hypothesis comes from occult traditions. This was forgotten when the word ‘occultism’ became something of which one was afraid, as children are of the bogey-man. But what really took place when our solar system was formed did not happen without the influence of spiritual beings and powers. Matter can do nothing unless spiritual beings are behind it.

It would take us too far today if, linking on to what was said yesterday, we were to explain the whole of our solar system. Leaving the planets such as Jupiter, Saturn and so on out of our present study, let us only keep in mind what is of special importance to the life and evolution of mankind.

At one time there was, in fact, such a nebula; and in this all the parts of our solar system were as if dissolved. But, bound up with this nebula, so that they belonged to it, were all the beings mentioned in the course of our observations yesterday. For example, all the beings who passed through the human stage in the twenty-four rounds were connected with this cosmic nebula. Other beings too were bound up with it. They all dwelt in this primeval nebula which, if not thought of in connection with these beings, is a fantastic abstraction. The idea the materialistic chemist has of this nebula is an impossibility. It can only thus exist in thought, not in reality. In reality, the nebula only exists because it is inhabited by a number of spiritual beings. For when this nebula again became visible, there were connected with it all the beings who had once inhabited ancient Saturn, who had then passed through the various stages of evolution through Sun

and Moon right on up to Earth, when after a long intermediate pause the Earth-nebula arose, so to speak. The other beings also, with whom we became acquainted on the Sun, were connected with this nebula. It was the whole choir of these beings, who filled the nebula, who produced the movements. For beings create their field of work.

For example, there were beings who needed a dwelling-place quite different from that of man if they were to undergo the evolution suited to them. The men who lived upon the ancient Moon as the ancestors of present man had only physical, etheric and astral bodies. With these three members of their being they re-emerged from the so-called Pralaya again like a plant from a seed. At the beginning the system was unsuitable for the beings who had brought with them the germs for the present man. Had the speed of development been maintained which our solar system had at the beginning when it came forth from the cosmic twilight, man would have been unable to find the path of his evolution. It would have resembled being born one minute and then almost immediately growing old. If the speed of evolution natural to the Sun had been maintained, you would all rapidly grow old; you would be unable to take your slow course through the decades as you now actually do; after a short time you would have white hair, you would be old almost before being a child.

But this was not to be. There were beings who needed a quicker tempo. These only went through a part of evolution with man, then they took out the heavenly body which now stands as the sun in the heavens and made it their dwelling-place. They drew out the substance of the sun together with their own being. For the sun which sends its light to us today is inhabited by spiritual beings, just as our earth is. With every sunbeam descending to the earth come the deeds of those spiritual beings who in the course of the evolutions of Saturn, Sun and Moon had progressed so far that they are able to participate in the rapid development taking place on the present sun. High, exalted beings were connected with this sun existence at the beginning of our Earth development. These separated from the earth; and what then remained you must imagine as if you had mixed together the present moon and earth in a great cauldron, after which this mingled earth and moon circled round the sun for a time.

Thus before we reach the point described yesterday as human incarnation, we have first to recognize the separation of the sun from the earth, that is, the present earth plus the present moon. Upon the sun

remained the beings who are the spiritual directors of earthly events. When they came over from the ancient Moon there were seven such beings; in Genesis they are called Elohim, Spirits of Light. For a time they went through their evolution together with the earth, then they drew forth the sun so that they could now work upon the earth from the sun. These Elohim, these Spirits of Light, were seven in number. Six of them united their existence with the actual cosmic sun, and one, known in the Old Testament as Jahve, separated from them and remained at first united with the earth. He guided and directed the earthly evolution from within, while the others worked upon it from without. That was the position for a time.

But after what was pointed out yesterday concerning the ancient Moon, you will understand that with the withdrawal of the sun was connected a condensation of all that remained as earth plus moon. There came a period in the earth's evolution when not only the substance, but all beings, underwent a coarsening. For example, the beings who later became man, who at that time were very soft and delicate, underwent a coarsening through taking on horrible instincts. A coarsening of all life took place.

Evolution could not remain thus if the human being was to arise. A coarsening would have taken place, everything would have become more and more dense and men would have stiffened into mummies, they would have become mummified. And there would very soon have been a planet upon which something not exactly beautiful, mummies resembling men, like statues, would have collected. The earth would have become mummified. A different event had to take place. Through the government of Jahve, the cosmic spirit, what you now see as the moon, as the burnt-out moon-dross in the heavens, was separated from the whole mass of earth plus moon. Not only were the grossest substances separated but also the grossest beings. Hence through the withdrawal of the sun it was brought about that man did not proceed too quickly in his evolution, and through the withdrawal of the moon it was brought about that he did not develop towards a condition of drying up, densification, or mummification.

Thus the earth was separated from the whole mass, and now the course of man's evolution was guided on the earth under the influence of these two heavenly bodies—that is, of course, of their beings, the six sun spirits and the moon spirit who had detached himself for the salvation of man. And it is so guided that on the whole these two forces are balanced.

Through the exit of both the sun-forces and the moon-forces, exactly the right tempo for man's development was attained.

Now in order to understand this more clearly, imagine men as if influenced only by the sun. You know that they go through their evolution upon the earth in many, many incarnations. They began with their first incarnation, then took on a new body over and over again, until one day they will go through their last incarnation. They pass through a series of incarnations, as a result of which they develop slowly and rise from one incarnation to the next. Men trod the surface of our earth as true spiritual infants. Since the separation of the sun and moon from our earth they have risen to the present stage. All these souls will return in different bodies up to the end of the earth's evolution. Now if man were influenced by the sun alone he would have to pass in a single incarnation through all that he now goes through in so many. The right tempo comes into the many incarnations through the balancing of the forces between the sun and moon from without.

Modern man was gradually shaped during the period when sun and moon withdrew; the first germs of the present-day man were then created. That was at a time when man moved upon this earth not at all as he does now. You must not imagine that when the moon had just gone forth man moved upon this earth in a fleshly form as he does now. There appear first all the forms which had previously been there, as a repetition; and when the earth was liberated from the sun and moon it looked approximately like the old moon, even softer. And if a being with eyes organized like those of the present day had looked at the earth he would not yet have been able to see man. On the other hand, certain other beings were there who were not sufficiently mature to await a later time. These had to take bodily form while the stage of evolution was still incomplete; so that some time after the moon's departure from the earth certain forms of the lower animals could already be seen physically condensed. Man had not yet descended, nor yet the higher mammals. Man was still a spirit being. He floated as a spirit round the earth and took into himself the finest substances from the environment of the earth. Then gradually he densified so far that he could descend to where the earth had already become solid and islands had formed.

Thus we see that the first men appeared comparatively late in the earth's evolution and at that time they had a very different constitution from the

present man. I cannot describe to you the forms of those men which first crystallized, so to speak, out of the spirit. Although you have already heard much that is difficult to believe, you would be too greatly shocked if I were to describe to you the grotesque forms of the bodies in which your souls were then incarnated. You would not be able to bear such a description. However, at a later date, when these things which are only now beginning to come to the consciousness of man through Anthroposophy, when they more and more penetrate men's consciousness, this will have to be made known, and it will have a tremendous result, it will be extremely important to the whole life of man. For only when man learns how his body has developed, how the organs he now possesses have gradually developed out of entirely different forms, will he feel that remarkable relationship existing between the organs in the human body which today are apparently far apart. He will then see the correspondence between certain organs, for example between the appendix and the windpipe, which in their earlier form grew together in those remarkably formed beings. All that today is man is the previous form unrolled, as it were, the previous form unfolded in the most varied ways. Organs which today are separated formerly grew together. They have, however, kept their relationship, and very frequently this relationship is manifested in illnesses. It is seen that when a certain organ is diseased another one becomes diseased in consequence. Hence those who really study medicine²⁶ will have to make many discoveries of which present-day medicine, which is only a collection of notes, does not dream; then only will physicians really learn something about the true nature of man. All this is merely to point out how entirely different was man's earlier form.

The solid parts were only built into this human form gradually. There were originally no bones in the human body, even when it had already descended. The bones developed out of soft cartilaginous structures which traversed the human body like cords. These in their turn originated from quite soft substances, and these soft substances from fluid substances, these from airy, the airy from etheric and the etheric from astral which had densified from spiritual substantiality. If you trace it back you will find that everything material has originated from the spiritual. Everything is in archetype in the spiritual world. It was only in the Atlantean epoch that the bones, formerly merely indicated, actually developed in man.

We must now more closely examine this Lemurian mankind in order the better to understand the writer of the Apocalypse. I need only indicate that following the first period, when the moon had separated from the earth and man descended, he was of a very different nature as regards his will power from what he became later. At that time the will of man worked magically—by his will he could work upon the growth of flowers. When he exerted his will he could make a flower shoot up quickly, a capacity which can only be acquired today by an abnormal process of development. Hence at that time the natural surroundings depended upon how the will of man was constituted. If it was good it worked soothingly upon the billowing waters, upon the storm and upon the fiery structures which were then all around, for the earth was to a great extent of a volcanic nature. Man worked soothingly upon all this through a good will and destructively through an evil will. Thus man's will was in complete correspondence with its environment. The tracts of land upon which man then lived were destroyed essentially by the evil will of man, and only a small part of mankind was saved (we have again here to distinguish between race-development and soul-development), the part that lived on into our epoch which we may describe properly because in our language we can now find words that are adequate for the depiction of what clairvoyant consciousness perceives.

After this catastrophe we come to the ancient Atlantean epoch when the race of mankind developed essentially on a continent which now forms the bed of the Atlantic Ocean, between the present Europe and America. At that time man lived under very different physical conditions. At the beginning of the Atlantean epoch he was a structure which perceived in quite a different way from the present man; we have already indicated this in the first lecture and again later; today we shall again point out this different kind of vision of the man of that epoch.

He still had a kind of spiritual vision, because the construction of his body was different from what it is now. The etheric body was not yet so firmly bound up with the physical body. The etheric body of the head extended far beyond the physical body. Only towards the last third of the Atlantean epoch did the projecting etheric body draw in and take the form of the present physical human head. Since the form of the ancient Atlanteans was so very different from that of present man and his members so differently joined together, his whole life of consciousness, his whole soul life was also different. And here—if we wish to understand the

Apocalyptist—we must touch upon a very important, but a very mysterious, chapter.

If you were to enter this ancient Atlantis, you would find that it was surrounded not by such pure air as the present earth but by air saturated with volumes of mist, with water. This air became clearer and more transparent the further Atlantis developed, but the mists were densest where the more advanced Atlantean civilization referred to developed. The thickest mists were there, and from these developed the foundations of the later cultures. Atlantis was covered far and wide by these mists. A division of rain and sunshine such as we have today did not then exist. Hence in ancient Atlantis what you know as the rainbow could not appear. You might search the whole of Atlantis and you would hardly find it. Only when the condensation of the water led to flooding, when the great Flood spread itself over the earth, could the rainbow come into being physically. And this is a point where from Spiritual Science you will gain the greatest respect for the religious records. For when you are told that after the Flood, Noah, the representative of those who then saved mankind, sees the rainbow first appear, this is really an historical event. After the Flood, mankind saw the first rainbow; previously it was an impossibility simply from the point of view of physics.

Here you will see how profound, how literally true the religious records are. Today many are distressed when one says that the religious records are literally true. Many quote a saying which is true; it is quoted, however, by lazy people, not as a true statement but from indolence. It is the saying: The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life—From this they deduce the right to take no notice at all of what stands in the records, to have no longer the will to recognize what is actually there, for it is the ‘dead letter’ they say. And so they like to let their spirit shine and concoct all sorts of fantasies. These persons may indeed be very clever in their explanations, but that is not the point; the point is that we ought really to see in the records what is contained in them. ‘The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life’ has the same significance in mystical language as the saying of Goethe^{[27](#)}:

If you have not this in you:

Die and then become again!

You are but a sombre guest

On earth's dark and gloomy plane.

This saying does not mean: If you wish to lead someone to a higher knowledge you must slay him.—It means that just through the culture of the physical world man must uplift himself to spirituality. So also the letter is the body of the spirit, and we must first have and understand the letter, then we may say that we can find the spirit in it. The letter, the understood letter, must then die so that the spirit may be resurrected from it. This saying is not an injunction to fancy anything you please about what is contained in the religious records. When we recognize the true significance of this rainbow as we have represented it, something like deep respect for the religious records imbues our soul, and we gain an idea of how, through the deepening of understanding by the teachings of Anthroposophy, man first attains a true and genuine feeling for the religious documents and a true understanding for them in the will.

We will now look back into ancient Atlantis. We have already said that man then lived in a different state of consciousness and that his memory was different from what it is now; but the difference is much more considerable. If we go far back not merely into the later period of Atlantis but to the beginning, we find the human consciousness very different from what we possess today.

Let us once more consider the present consciousness. During the day a person uses his senses. At night he goes to sleep. In his bed lie the physical body and the etheric body; the astral body and the ego withdraw. The sphere of consciousness darkens. The man of today sees nothing and hears nothing. Then again in the morning when the astral body and the ego re-enter the physical body and etheric body, physical objects once more confront him. How was it in the early Atlantean epoch? Let us take the moment when in the morning man plunged into the physical and etheric bodies; at that time he did not have a physical world around him such as we have today. All the present objects which are now seen with clear outlines were then seen as if surrounded with an aura, with coloured edges, quite indistinctly. In ancient Atlantis the appearance was somewhat similar to what is now seen when in the evening there is a dense fog and you see the street lamps not clearly, but surrounded by coloured edges. Thus it was in early Atlantis. All objects were seen indistinctly, not with clear outlines and surfaces as today; everything was as if enveloped in coloured mist.

Only gradually have clear outlines developed. Had we looked at a rose in the first part of Atlantis it would have been as if a cloudy structure arose with a red disc in the middle. Only gradually did the external colour appear to be laid on the surface; only later did objects obtain sharp outlines.

Hence you see that the physical world surrounding man was quite different in ancient Atlantis. It was also different when at night he rose out of his physical body when—shall we say—he went to sleep. Really it was not sleep in the present sense. The entire world of the misty physical formations remained below, and a spiritual world arose. Possessing no sharp outlines, man lived within a spiritual world. Spiritual beings were his companions. In the first portion of the Atlantean epoch day and night alternated in such a way that when man plunged into his physical body he had only hazy, indistinct pictures of the physical world; but when at night he left the physical body he was able to live spiritually, although somewhat indistinctly, among spirits; he moved among spirits. And above all, man's entire life of feeling was also different in the Atlantean epoch. At that time, when he went out of his physical body and etheric body, he did not feel fatigue and the need for rest. Neither did he find rest. He had to enter into the spiritual world; that was then his sphere of activity. On the other hand, when the morning came, he felt the need for rest and sought out his resting-place, which was his own body. There he lay peacefully. He crept into his own body and rested during the day.

Thus in the first period of Atlantis it was entirely different from what it is now. During the Atlantean epoch, man gradually passed from the very opposite conditions into those of the later period. This came about more and more as the etheric body was driven into the physical body. This occurred during the last third of the Atlantean epoch. Before this event man felt himself as a waking being above in the spiritual world; but as such he did not say to himself 'I', he did not possess consciousness of self. When he withdrew from his physical and etheric bodies in order to go into the brilliance of the night, he felt himself to be a member of the spirituality which was above, he felt himself safely protected, so to speak, in his group-soul. It always became bright around him during the night; but he felt himself dependent. Just as our finger belongs to our ego, so man felt that he belonged to the group-souls which are seen spiritually as the four heads of the lion, eagle, bull and man, described in the Apocalypse of John. Man felt himself transposed into one such group-soul. And only

when, snail-like, he was in his bodily shell did he feel that he possessed something of his own. For the circumstance that man became an independent being resulted from his being able to envelop himself in his body. He had, however, to pay for this confinement in his body by the gradual obscuration of the spiritual world, until it completely withdrew. In its place the world which he saw below when he was in the physical body became brighter and clearer. In this way it gradually dawned upon him that he was an ego, that he had consciousness of self within him. He learned to say 'I' to himself.

If we wish to characterize what took place at that time we must imagine man creeping out of his 'snail-shell', as it were, into the spiritual world. There he was among spiritual, divine beings. There resounds to him from without the name of what he is. One group heard the word which in the original language was the word for that group; another group heard a different word. Man could not name himself from within; his name sounded into him from without. When he thus crept out of the 'snail-shell' of his body he knew what he was, because this knowledge was intoned into his soul. Now when in his body he learned to perceive the physical environment, he learned to feel himself as 'I', he learned to feel within himself the divine power which previously intoned into him, he learned to feel God within him. The god nearest to him, who pointed to his ego, he called Jahve. This god was the ego-leader, and man felt the power of this god arising within his ego.

External events were connected with this. When the ancient Atlantean thus descended into his physical body and looked out into space, he did not see an actual rainbow; in the place where the sun later emerged, he saw something like a circle formed of colour; the sun did not yet penetrate in power, but acted through the mist; though hindered and held back by the fog, its forces influenced the earth. It appeared very gradually. Thus all that we have described as the awakening of external consciousness was connected with the emergence of the sun from the mist. What was up above where the six other spirits had their abode, who together with Jahve had to guide the earth evolution, gradually emerged and shone down upon the earth in deeds.

What had taken place in man? When previously he rose out of his body, when it was night, so to speak, his soul and spirit entered into the inner astral brilliance for which the external sun is not necessary. This brilliance

surrounded him. It was the same light from mighty spiritual beings which later shone down physically from the sun. As he gradually enclosed himself more and more in his physical consciousness, the door of inner vision was closed. Darkness surrounded him when at night he left his physical and etheric bodies and entered the spiritual world. To the extent to which he confined himself, to the same extent arose the external light which represents the deeds of the spiritual beings of the sun; the light of the spiritual beings shone externally upon the earth. Man prepared himself to look upon the external light as something material. The light shone in his then darkened inner being, but the light was not then comprehended by his darkness.

This is a world-historical cosmic event. Man bought his consciousness of self at that time through spiritual darkening. In this way man grew away from the brilliance of the group-souls. But it was only the very first dawning of the individuality. It was a long, long time before he really grew possessed of it. The last portion of the Atlantean epoch passed away and the Flood came. The post-Atlantean epoch began. The ancient Indian culture passed away. True consciousness of self had not yet developed. Then came the Persian and Babylonian-Egyptian ages. Man gradually matured so as to develop consciousness of self within him. At length came the fourth age. At this stage something of tremendous importance took place for which all that had gone before was the preparation.

Imagine yourself now uplifted from the earth to a distant star and gifted with clairvoyant vision, looking down to the earth from that distant star. You would then see that this earth as physical body is not only a physical body, and that an etheric body and an astral body belongs to it, just as with man. The earth has all this too. You would see the earth surrounded by its aura and from that star you would be able to follow the development of the earth's aura for thousands of years. You would see this earth surrounded by all sorts of colours; in the centre the physical kernel and around it the aura floating in various forms and colours; and in this spiritual atmosphere of the earth you would see the most varied structures. You would see these colours and forms change in various ways in the course of millennia; but there would come a moment, a moment of great importance, when the whole aura assumes a different form and colour. Seen from outside, the earth then appears in a new light; and this takes place extremely quickly, so that one has to say: From this moment a fundamental transformation of

the earth has taken place; its aura has changed completely.—When is this moment? It is the moment when upon Golgotha the blood flowed from the wounds of the Redeemer. This moment is an extremely important one, the most important moment in the whole of the Earth's evolution. The moment when the blood flows from the wounds of the Redeemer is the same as that in which the aura of the earth shapes itself anew. An entirely new power enters in, the power which gives the most important impulse to the evolution of Earth, for which all that we have considered up to now was only the preparation.

To the chemist the blood of Golgotha is the same as any other blood; but in reality it is quite different. It signifies that the substance of the blood flows down to the earth, and that the spirit corresponding to it fills the aura of the earth with new impulses and new forces which have significance for the future evolution of mankind. From there the forces which change the earth stream forth, from there they stream through man. Only a small part of what flowed in at that moment has been realized up to now. Ever more and more man will learn to understand what the earth has become through that moment of Golgotha, and what man can develop towards in that consciousness which he has gained since Atlantis.

What, then, has man gained since Atlantis? Two things: ego-consciousness and the faculty of sight in the external world. What was previously open to him, the spiritual world, has been closed. Truly these earlier men saw what the later myths relate: Woden—Mercury, Jupiter—Zeus. They saw all these beings at night; they were then among them. The door to these spiritual beings has closed. In their place man has gained the world now surrounding him. The spirits have withdrawn from him; all that he was able to see at that time has disappeared. Formerly he saw the divine when he slipped out of the 'snail-shell' of his physical body. He had now to see the divine within the body if it was to appear before him. This means nothing else than that we must receive the divine in bodily visible shape because human consciousness has become adapted to physical vision, and for this reason the divine itself had to assume bodily physical form. Therefore the divine appeared on the earth in a fleshly body once in the evolution of time. It had to appear in this form because man had advanced to this stage of perception. It had to be presented in this way to his perception so that he could understand it. And all the appearances which had previously taken place at other stages of evolution had to be united in

that greatest event in the Earth's history, which will throw light on the whole future and which we shall now unveil from the Apocalypse; in that event which physically looks as if drops of blood stream down to the earth, but spiritually as if something rises up which changes the aura of the earth. The force which then flowed in will work together with the earth throughout the whole future. The earth-soul, the spirit of the whole earth, was then inoculated with something new. The Christ-principle united with the earth at that time and the earth has become the body of this Christ-principle. So that the statement is literally true: He who eats my bread treads me underfoot.—When man eats the bread of the earth he eats the body of the earth and this is the body of the Earth-Spirit which, as the Christ-Spirit, since the event on Golgotha, is united with the earth. And man walks upon the earth-body, he treads this body underfoot. All can be understood literally if only we are able first of all to comprehend the text in the right way.

To such a man as the writer of John's Gospel, all that he knew, all that he could grasp with spiritual vision, was a summons to understand the greatest event in the Earth's evolution. Of all that he was able to learn through spiritual vision he said: I must use it in order to understand Christ and his work—It was the intention of the writer of the Apocalypse to use all his occult knowledge in order to explain the event of Golgotha. Whatever he could learn from occult science was regarded by him as wisdom serving to help him understand this event which he has placed before us in such a wonderful way, and regarding which we shall see what it signified for him.

LECTURE SEVEN

Nuremberg, 24 June 1908

For the modern man there always seems something uncertain in the prophecy of future events. We have already seen that in connection with the seven seals we had to point out facts which are to come in the evolution of mankind, and as we unveil the Apocalypse of John, more and more we shall have to exercise this prophetic art. The question now is: What grounds are there for speaking at all of these things? We have already referred in part at the beginning of our lectures to what lies at the basis of this. We said that at a certain stage of initiation the initiate sees in the spiritual world what descends later and becomes a physical event. But in the last two lectures we have shown that there is another basis for the prophetic art. We showed how man has developed out of spiritual spheres to his present existence. Now the whole of the future is in a certain sense a repetition of the past; not that the things of the past will happen again in the same way, but past events repeat themselves in future times in a changed form.

In our last lectures we pointed out that in the ancient Atlantean epoch man had a kind of clairvoyance, and that, especially during his night condition, he consciously ascended into spiritual worlds; and we must clearly understand that the condition of a certain clairvoyance will be repeated in mankind. Between the Atlantean epoch and the one that will come after the War of All against All we have our epoch, which we have described. In a certain way what existed previously, what was in the Atlantean epoch, will be repeated after our epoch, but there will be a very great difference. In the Atlantean epoch man had a dreamy, hazy, clairvoyant consciousness, and when he ascended into the higher worlds his clear consciousness of self faded and he then felt himself within the group-soul. After the great War of All against All man will again see into the higher worlds in a certain way. He will again have the former hazy clairvoyance, but in addition he will possess what he has gradually acquired in the external physical world.

Between the Atlantean Flood and the great War of All against All man has had to renounce for a time the power to see into the spiritual world. He has had to content himself with seeing only what is around him in the physical world in so-called waking consciousness. This is now the normal condition. But in its place it has become possible for him fully to develop his consciousness of self, his individual ego, during this time, to feel himself within his skin as a separate ego-personality, so to speak. This he has won. Now he also retains this individuality when he again rises into the higher spiritual worlds, and this ascent will be possible for him after the great War of All against All. But this ascent would not be possible if he had not taken part in that great cosmic event in the middle of our epoch which runs its course in the physical world, as was shown in the last lecture. Man would have been obliged to sink down into a kind of abyss had he not been preserved from it by the entry of Christ into our world. We must keep in mind that man has descended completely into the physical world in this epoch of ours.



Let us represent the physical plane by this line; above it what is called the spiritual, the heavenly world, and below it what is called the abyss. Man really reaches the line separating the spiritual world from the abyss in the fourth age, which we have described. We described the ancient Indian age, when man was still, on the whole, in the spiritual sphere. Previously he was above in the spiritual world. In Atlantis he still had a dim clairvoyance. He now comes down and reaches the line during the period of the Roman Empire. In this Empire man became fully conscious as an external sense-being, as a personality. That was at the time when the Roman idea of justice came into the world, when every one's aim was to be a separate personality, an individual citizen. Man had then reached the line. At this point it was possible either to return or sink below it.

We have now, in fact, reached a point in human evolution—and all that I am saying is in accordance with the apocalyptic presentation—when in a

certain way mankind is confronted by the need for a decision. We have already shown that in our age an enormous amount of spiritual energy is used to provide for the lowest needs; we have shown how the telephone, telegraph, railway, steamboat and other things still to come have absorbed a tremendous amount of spiritual force; they are only used for the mere satisfaction of lower human needs. Man, however, has only a certain amount of spiritual force. Now consider the following: Man has used an enormous amount of spiritual force in order to invent and construct telephones, railways, steamboats and airships, in order to further external culture. This had to be so. It would have gone badly with mankind if this had not come about. This spiritual power has also been used for many other things. Only consider how all social connections have gradually been spun into an extremely fine intellectual web. What tremendous spiritual force has been expended so that one may now draw a cheque in America and cash it in Japan. An enormous amount of spiritual force has been absorbed in this activity. These forces had, so to speak, to descend below the line of the physical plane which separates the spiritual kingdom from the abyss. For in a certain way man has actually already descended into the abyss, and one who studies the age from the standpoint of Spiritual Science can see by the most mundane phenomena how this goes on from decade to decade, how a certain point is always reached where the personality can still keep a hold on itself. If at this point it allows itself to sink down, the personality is lost, it is not rescued and lifted into the spiritual worlds.

This may be illustrated by the most mundane things. I could prove it to you, for example, in the details of the development of the banking system in the second half of the nineteenth century. Perhaps it is only for future historians to show clearly that a fundamental change then came about which we may describe by saying that in banking affairs the personality was gradually shattered. I should have to draw your attention to the time when the four *Rothschilds*²⁸ went out into the world from Frankfurt, one to Vienna, another to Naples, the third to London, the fourth to Paris. The whole banking system was then brought into a personal sphere by the personal talent directed to it. The personality immersed itself in finance. Today you see banking affairs becoming impersonal. Capital is passing into the hands of joint stock companies; it is no longer managed by the individual personality. Capital is beginning to control itself. Purely

objective forces are working in capital, and there are already forces in this realm which draw the will of the personality to themselves, so that the personality has become powerless. Thus with seeing eyes one can penetrate into these mundane things and one can see everywhere how mankind, as regards the personality, has descended to the lowest depths.

Now the personality may save itself and ascend again. It can save itself, for example, by really learning to strengthen its inner soul-forces and depend upon itself and make itself independent of the objective forces of capital. But the personality may also throw itself into these forces, it may in a certain way sail into and plunge into the abyss by allowing itself to be ensnared by the forces active in capital.

The most important point of time, when the human personality descends to the earth and would have to turn back again, is the point of time of the appearance of Christ Jesus on the earth. He gave to the earth the power which made it possible for man to rise again; and he rises to the extent to which he has fellowship with Christ Jesus. To the extent that for a large part of mankind the understanding will dawn for what this event signified, so that for a large part of mankind this Christ-impulse becomes the innermost impulse of man's being, from which he works in life, to this extent will mankind ascend again. Men must learn to understand more and more what St. Paul said²⁹: It is not I who work; but Christ works in me.—

Therefore if the impulse which descended to the physical world in the fourth age enters into the hearts of men, if it becomes the impulse behind their activity, then the ascent takes place, and all the souls who find this union with the Christ-principle find the way upward. But all the souls who failed to find this union would have gradually to go down into the abyss. They would have gained the ego; they would have attained egoism, but would not be in a position to rise up again with this ego into the spiritual world. And the consequence for a man who makes no connection with the Christ-principle would be that he disconnects himself from the spiritual ascent; instead of ascending he would descend and harden himself more and more in his ego. Instead of finding in matter just the opportunity to develop the ego and then rise up again, he would only descend deeper and deeper into matter.

Yes, everything repeats itself. The possibility arose for man to enter our physical world. By surviving the Atlantean Flood it has become possible for him to create and develop his present human countenance. This is

really an image of the spiritual ego-divinity dwelling in man. Towards the end of the Atlantean epoch the etheric body united with the physical; its forces drew into the physical head and thereby man received his present human countenance, through which the spirit of God shines. Let us suppose that he were to deny that it was the spirit which has given him the human countenance; then he would not use the body as an opportunity to attain the ego-consciousness and again spiritualize himself; but he would grow together with the body and love it so much that he would only feel himself at home in it. He would remain united with the body and go down into the abyss. And because of not having used the power of the spirit, the external shape would again come to resemble the previous form. The man who descends into the abyss would become animal-like. Thus mankind would realize what we have already indicated. Those who use the life in the body for anything more than an opportunity to gain ego-consciousness will descend into the abyss and form the evil race. They have turned away from the impulse of Christ Jesus, and from the ugliness of their souls they will again create the animal form man possessed in former times. The evil race, with its savage impulses, will dwell in animal form in the abyss. And when up above those who have spiritualized themselves, who have received the Christ-principle, announce what they have to say regarding their union with the name Christ Jesus, here below in the abyss will sound forth names of blasphemy, the desire to escape what appears as spiritual transformation.

A person who thinks superficially might say at this point: Yes, but very many have lived who have experienced nothing of the Christ-impulse; why should not these have partaken in the impulse of Christ Jesus?—This is objected from the materialistic side: Why should salvation only come with Christ Jesus?—If persons who are not anthroposophists say it, then it is comprehensible; but if anthroposophists say it, then it is incomprehensible; for they ought to know that man returns again and again, and the souls which lived in earlier times will return in new bodies in the period after the event of Christ, so that there are none who could not participate in the event of Christ Jesus. Such an objection can only be made by one who does not believe in reincarnation.

Thus we see how the division takes place. There will come a time when those who have striven for spiritualization will be capable of living in the spiritual world, a time when what they have formerly acquired will be

made manifest, when they will bear the name of Christ on their forehead because they learned to look up to him. Now when the seal is opened man will have imaged in his outward figure what he bears inwardly in his heart. One who inwardly bears Christ in his soul will after the unsealing bear in his face the sign of Christ; his external form will be like Christ Jesus; but those who will remain in the cultures before the appearance of Christ Jesus will have to experience something else. These four cultures, the ancient Indian, Persian, Assyrian-Babylonian-Chaldean-Egyptian-Jewish and the Graeco-Latin were preparatory ages. The soul had to go through the bodies of these civilizations in order to prepare itself for the great event of the appearance of Christ Jesus on earth. During the period of preparation two forces held sway. The forces which brought men together are forces which have their material foundation in the blood. If men had simply been placed side by side in their present form, what was to develop in mankind would never have come about.

Prior to the Earth the ancient Moon was the bearer of our creation. This ancient Moon was the Cosmos of Wisdom; our Earth is the Cosmos of Love. It is the mission of our Earth to unite mankind in love. In the future, when the seventh trumpet has sounded and the Earth has dissolved, when it has lost its physical substantiality and is changed into an astral heavenly body, then love, the force of love mankind will have developed in all things earthly, will have flowed into the whole human race. For this power of love must flow in as the Earth mission of mankind—just as you now see the power of wisdom in your environment. We have often pointed to the miraculous wisdom found in the structure of even a little piece of thigh-bone! It does not consist of a compact mass, but of many delicate lattice-like structures which are so wonderfully put together that the greatest carrying capacity is attained with the expenditure of the smallest amount of matter, such as no engineer of the present day can achieve. And if we were to examine everything we should find that the wisdom man has gained in the course of his earthly evolution was already contained in the earth.

How often have we been told in the course of history lessons that man has made continual progress and that he has grown wiser and wiser! You will remember how the stages of increasing wisdom were presented; for example, you were shown that at the beginning of modern times man arrived at the point where he invented gunpowder, paper from rags, paper from wood-pulp, and so on. Your soul was delighted at man's ascent. By

means of his intellect man has learnt to make paper. One might suppose it was an original invention. But to one who contemplates the world in its totality this appears in a different light. Wasps could do this long before, for a wasps' nest is constructed of material which is exactly the same as paper. Thus thousands of years before in the nest of the wasp there already existed what man afterwards achieved through his subjective wisdom. It is not the single wasp that can make paper, but the group-soul, the ego which holds together the whole group of wasps. It possessed this wisdom long before man. And wherever you look, if you are not blind, you will find wisdom in everything.

Do not imagine that this wisdom had not to develop. The world was not always thus filled with wisdom. It was only during the Moon evolution that it gradually flowed into all that now surrounds us. During the Moon period what was all chaos was rearranged so as to acquire wisdom. If you could direct your gaze to the Moon evolution you would find everything chaotic but as yet with no wisdom. Only in the course of the Moon evolution was wisdom poured into the various beings and creations, so that it was there by the time the Earth came forth from the twilight. All things are then filled with wisdom. And as man today looks into his environment and sees wisdom burgeoning in everything, so will he, when he has reached Jupiter, see all the beings around him in a remarkable way. They will pour out something like the fragrance of blissful love. Love will stream forth from all things, and it is the mission of the Earth evolution to develop this love. Love will then flow through everything, just as wisdom now reigns in everything. And this love is poured into earthly evolution by man's gradually learning to develop love.

He was not able to have spiritual love immediately, love had first to be implanted in him at the lowest level. It had to have a material vehicle, namely the blood-relationship. The first schooling was to exercise love in the realm of blood-relationship; the separated human beings were brought together because what coursed through their veins was imbued with love. This was the preparatory school of love; it was, in fact, the great school of love. And the great impulse which spiritualizes this love, which does not merely allow it to remain where it works physically, but imparts it to the soul, is the Christ-impulse in the world.

Now, had only this one impulse of love in blood-brotherhood operated, mankind's evolution would have taken a strange course throughout the

whole of antiquity. The beings who were the guides of the ancient times, and above all Jahve, led men together in love, so that they united in blood-relationship; but if men had been united only through blood-relationship before the appearance of Christ Jesus, then individual human beings would never have been able to progress to personality. The individual would have been submerged in the tribe. As it was, the individual did very much lose himself in the whole. The consciousness that one is an individual human being only developed very gradually. In the Atlantean epoch there could be no question of a man feeling himself as an individual being, and this was also the case much later. People now do not understand how names were given in ancient times, otherwise they would discover how men then felt. Think of the people of the Old Testament; in pre-Christian times they experienced their ego, if they wished to feel it aright, by no means in their separate personality. Each one who thoroughly felt the impulse that streams from the Old Testament said: I and Father Abraham are one—For he felt that he was secure in this community which reached back to Abraham, whose blood flowed through all the generations down to the youngest. Hence he said: I feel that I am not a lost member when I sense that my blood is the same as that of my Father Abraham.—

And they tried to follow the community back still further. They felt secure in the group-soul. They pointed to Noah, to Adam. It is no longer known what these names signify. It is not known that in those ancient times the consciousness of man was quite different from what it is today. A person can only remember with difficulty what happened in his childhood, and memory certainly stops at birth. In the time of the patriarchs a man remembered not only what he himself had experienced but what his father, grandfather and great-grandfather had experienced. This was in his memory, just as with you is the remembrance of your childhood. He did not know that his own life began with his birth. Memory reached back for hundreds of years. No name was given to the separate consciousness, for there would have been no meaning in it. As a person remembered the experiences of his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, etc., a common name included the whole chain. The names Adam or Noah signify the remembrance which passed through the generations. As far as the memory of the experience of Noah extended, the chain was called Noah; this was an inner man, a spiritual being, who lived through several generations. It

would have been considered meaningless to give a name to the outer man. Thus the name Adam applied to a spiritual being.

The individual man was not yet aware of his ego. He would have merged with the community but for the impulses which continually attacked this mingling in the community, and whose object was to tear man away from the blood-ties and bring him to independence. In his astral body nestled certain spiritual beings who gave him the impulse not to allow his consciousness to become submerged. These were the luciferic beings. It was they who in pre-Christian times worked against this uniformity and it is to them that man owes his independence, his developing personality. It is extremely important to understand that we owe to Jahve the striving for unification and to the luciferic spirits the striving for separation.

In the early ages of Christianity there was a saying which ran: *Christus verus Luciferus*, that is, Christ is the true Light-bearer; for Lucifer means Light-bearer. Why is Christ called the true Light-bearer? Because through him has now become justified what previously was not justified. Previously there was a tearing asunder; men were not mature enough to be independent. Through the ego-impulse which they received through Christ Jesus they had progressed so far that in spite of the ego they could develop love for one another. Thus what Lucifer wished to give to mankind in anticipation, so to speak, when mankind was still not sufficiently mature, was brought at length by the true Light-bearer, Christ Jesus. He brought the impulse for independence, but he also brought the spiritual love which unites those who are not related by blood. Through him came the epoch when mankind matured to the point which Lucifer previously wished to bring about. This saying, *Christus verus Luciferus*, was later no longer understood. He alone who rightly understands it learns to know the first teachings of Christianity.

We have therefore to comprehend this impulse in this way; we have to see how man was prepared for the standpoint he had to attain. Thus the Indian, Persian, Egyptian, Graeco-Latin periods were times of preparation pointing to the great Christ-event. But it is possible for man to harden himself, as it were. Let us imagine a person living at the time of Christ Jesus, and let us imagine that he could consciously decide what he wished to do. If Christ Jesus were to come he could say: Oh, what was there previously is sufficient for me, I wish to know nothing about him, I will have no fellowship with Christ Jesus—He would have in his soul the

forces, the impulses, which could be acquired in the time before Christ Jesus, which could be gained through the Indian, Persian, Egyptian and Graeco-Latin cultures. But in cosmic evolution a man ought only to have such impulses until a new one arrives. If he stands still, then he remains behind. So we must not misunderstand historical development; we must not say that the same principle works in all cultures, for it is not for nothing that one is built up on another.

Let us suppose someone wished to sleep through the Christian development. He would then live into the future until after the great War of All against All, but he would have nothing of the great love-principle of Christ which brings the egos together, which makes communities of individuals. He would have everything which leads the egos into the abyss. He would have the separating, splintering forces. This brings us to a consideration which may give rise to the question: Why does the unveiling of the first four seals provide such a comfortless picture?—Because here come forth those who wish to remain in these four preparatory cultures in which is contained the old form of Lucifer that drives men asunder. Hence in the unveiling of the seals we are shown, too, how they received the form which they have acquired. They have slept through the event of Christ Jesus and are re-born in the forms which can be given them without the influence of the Christ-principle. Hence there appears again what shows nothing but intelligence, the mere intellect; the horse appears four consecutive times! The old form of man appears which he obtained by receiving into himself the horse nature. This form appears at the opening of the first four seals.

And when the fifth seal is opened what is then brought to our notice? Those who in the preceding period have learned to understand the event of Christ Jesus! These are clothed in white garments, they have been passed by, figuratively they have been slain, they are those who are preserved for the spiritualization of the world. Thus it is the union with the Christ-principle which brings it about that men have these white garments and appear when the fifth seal is opened. Here we see a clear indication that the time when Christ appears is an important epoch for mankind; it is the epoch which brings it to pass that after the War of All against All the four ages again appear when those who have remained behind are tormented by the materiality which has proceeded with evolution and to which they have chained themselves; they are tormented by all the evils and torments of

coarsened, hardened materiality. Everything which is now described in the breaking of the seals represents nothing else than the descent into the abyss. While in the fifth period we are only briefly directed to those who are chosen, we are shown for the rest all those who remain in materiality, who go down into the abyss, who assume the forms which existed previously because they did not progress, because they have not acquired the power to transform these shapes.

You may form a picture of it; imagine that your human forms were today made of indiarubber; and within this rubber human body is your inner soul power which gives this rubber body its human form. Imagine that we take out the soul-force, then the rubber body would collapse. Men would receive animal forms. The moment you drew the soul out of this human body of rubber, man would manifest the animal form. What man has gained for himself is like something which he produces today by his own power. If you could observe what he formerly produced in the astral body you would see its likeness to the animal. It is really an inner force such as this which gives the rubber man his present form. Imagine that this power is removed, imagine man not fertilized by the Christ power; he springs back into the animal form. Thus it will happen to those who fall back. They will afterwards form a world beneath the present world, so to speak, a world of the abyss, where man will again have assumed animal shape.

Thus we learn to understand the direction evolution will indeed take. What is now being prepared will come out again bit by bit in the future, just as what was laid down in the Atlantean epoch has come out bit by bit in our epoch. I have said that in the last third of the Atlantean epoch a small colony was formed from which our cultures have been derived, and from which the two following ones still to come will also originate. It will be somewhat different in the next epoch which will succeed all these cultures. There will not be a colony limited to one place, but from the general body of mankind will everywhere be recruited those who are mature enough to form the good, the noble, the beautiful side of the next civilization, after the War of All against All. This again is a step forward compared with the earlier Atlantean epoch when the colony developed in one small place, while with us there is the possibility that from all races of the world will be recruited those who really understand the call of the Earth mission, who raise up the living Christ within themselves, who

develop the principle of brotherly love over the whole Earth; and indeed, in the true sense, not in the sense of the Christian confessions, but in the sense of true esoteric Christianity which can proceed from every culture. Those who understand this Christ-principle will be there in the period following the great War of All against All. After our present purely intellectual culture, which is now developing in the direction of the abyss of intellect—and you will find that this is the case in every field of life—there will come a time when man will be the slave of intelligence by which his personality will be submerged. Today there is only one way of preserving the personality, and that is to spiritualize it. Those who develop the spiritual life will belong to the small band of the sealed from all nations and races who will appear in white garments after the War of All against All.

We are now beginning to comprehend the spiritual world from our immediately present intellectual civilization. It is the aim of true Anthroposophy to comprehend the spiritual world from out of the present intellectual standards and to gather together those who can understand the call to spiritualize the world. These will not form a separate colony but will be gathered from every nation and will gradually pass into the sixth age, that is to say, not yet beyond the great War, but to start with into the sixth age, for necessities still exist which are connected with old race ties. In our epoch, races and cultures are still intermingled. The true idea of race has lost its meaning but it still plays a certain part. It is quite impossible at present for every mission to be carried out equally by every people. Certain nations are predestined to carry out a particular mission.

The nations which today are the vehicles of Western culture were chosen to lead the fifth age to its zenith; they were the nations who were to develop the intellect. Hence wherever this Western culture extends we have predominantly the culture of the intellect, which is still not yet finished. This intelligence will spread still further; people will exercise still more of their spiritual forces in order to satisfy their bodily needs; to slay one another they will employ much greater spiritual forces before the great War of All against All. Many discoveries will be made in order to be able the better to carry on war, an endless amount of intelligence will be exercised in order to satisfy the lower impulses. But in the midst of it something is being prepared, with which certain nations of the East, the Northern part of the East, are gifted. Certain nations are preparing to

emerge from a certain dullness and bring in a spiritual impulse with mighty force, an impulse which will be the opposite pole to intelligence. Before the sixth age, represented by the community of Philadelphia, we shall experience something like a mighty marriage of peoples, a marriage between intelligence and intellect and spirituality. At the present time we are only experiencing the dawn of this marriage and no one should mistake what is here said for a song of praise to our age; for one does not sing songs of praise to the sun when there are only the first signs of dawn. But we find remarkable phenomena when we compare East and West, when we look into the depths and foundations of the different nations.

Do not let us look upon this as a desire to take sides. These lectures, which are intended to be objective, are far, far removed from any party spirit. But you may compare objectively what is attained as science and philosophy in the European West with what appeared in the East, let us say in Tolstoi³⁰. One does not need to be a follower of Tolstoi, but one thing is true; in a book such as Tolstoi's *On Life* you may read one page, if you understand how to read it, and compare it with whole libraries in Western Europe. And you may then say the following: In Western Europe one makes spiritual culture with the intellect; one chisels out certain details and puts them together to form something that is supposed to make the world comprehensible, and the achievements of Western European civilization in this respect will never be surpassed. But if you understand such a book as Tolstoi's *On Life*, you will often find condensed into ten lines what in these Western European libraries it takes thirty volumes to say. Tolstoi says something with elemental force, and in a few lines of his there is the same amount of energy as is assembled in thirty such volumes. Here one must be able to judge what comes forth from the depths of the spirit, what has a spiritual foundation and what has not. Just as overripe cultures contain something that is drying up and withering, so do rising cultures contain within them fresh life and new energy. Tolstoi is a premature flower of such a culture, one that came far too soon to be fully developed. Hence he has all the faults of an untimely birth. His grotesque and unfounded presentations of many Western European things, all that he brings forward in the way of foolish judgment, show that great personalities have the faults of their virtues and that great cleverness has the folly of its wisdom.

This is only mentioned as a symptom of the future age when the spirituality of the East will unite with the intellectuality of the West. From

this union will proceed the age of Philadelphia. All those will participate in this marriage who take into themselves the impulse of Christ Jesus and they will form the great brotherhood which will survive the great War, which will experience enmity and persecution, but will provide the foundation for the good race. After this great War has brought out the animal nature in those who have remained in the old forms, the good race will arise, and this race will carry over into the future what is to be the spiritually elevated culture of that future epoch. We shall also have the experience that in our epoch, between the great Atlantean Flood and the great War of All against All, in the age represented by the community at Philadelphia, a colony is formed, the members of which will not migrate but will be everywhere; so that everywhere there will be some who are working in the sense of the community of Philadelphia, in the sense of the binding together of mankind, in the sense of the Christian principle.

LECTURE EIGHT

Nuremberg 25 June 1908

We have repeatedly said that our seven cultural ages will end with the War of All against All; now this War must really be pictured quite differently from the way we have been accustomed to think of wars. We must bear in mind the foundation, the real cause of this War. Its foundation or cause is the increase of egoism, of self-seeking and selfishness on the part of man. And we have now progressed so far in our considerations that we have seen what a sharp two-edged sword this ego of man is. Those who do not fully realize that this ego is a two-edged sword will scarcely be able to grasp the entire meaning of the evolution of mankind and the world. On the one hand this ego is the cause that man hardens within himself, and that he desires to draw into the service of his ego his inner capacities and all the outer objects at his disposal. This ego is the cause of man's directing all his wishes to the satisfaction of this ego as such. Its striving to draw to itself as its own possession a part of the earth which belongs to all, to drive away all the other egos from its realm, to fight them, to be at war with them, is one side of the ego. But on the other hand we must not forget that it is the ego that at the same time gives man his independence and his inner freedom, which in the truest sense of the word exalts him. His dignity is founded in this ego, it is the basis of the divine in man.

This conception of the ego presents difficulties to many people. It has become clear to us that this ego of man has developed from a group-soul nature, from a kind of all-inclusive universal ego out of which it has been differentiated. It would be wrong if man were to crave to go down again with his ego into some sort of universal consciousness, into some sort of common consciousness. Everything which causes a man to strive to lose his ego and dissolve it into a universal consciousness is the result of weakness. He alone understands the ego who knows that after he has gained it in the course of cosmic evolution it cannot be lost; and above all man must strive for the strength (if he understands the mission of the world) to make this ego ever more inward, ever more divine. True

anthroposophists possess nothing of the empty talk which continually emphasizes the dissolution of the ego in a universal self, the melting into some sort of primeval gruel. True Anthroposophy can only put forward as the final goal: the community of free and independent egos, of egos which have become individualized. It is just this that is the mission of the Earth, which is expressed in love, that the egos learn to confront one another freely. No love is perfect if it proceeds from coercion, from people being chained together. Only when each ego is so free and independent that it need not love, is its love an entirely free gift. It is the divine plan to make this ego so independent that as an individual being in all freedom it can offer love even to God. It would amount to man being led by strings of dependence if he could in any way be forced to love, even if only in the slightest degree.

Thus the ego will be the pledge for the highest goal of man. But at the same time, if it does not discover love, if it hardens within itself, it is the tempter that plunges him into the abyss. Then it becomes what separates men from one another, what brings them to the great War of All against All, not only to the War of nation against nation (for the conception of a nation will then no longer have the significance it possesses today) but to the War of each single person against every other person in every branch of life; to the war of class against class, of caste against caste, and sex against sex. Thus in every field of life the ego will become the bone of contention; and hence we may say that it can lead on the one hand to the highest and on the other hand to the lowest. For this reason it is a sharp two-edged sword. And he who brought full ego-consciousness to man, Christ Jesus, is, as we have seen, symbolically and correctly represented in the Apocalypse as one who has the sharp two-edged sword in his mouth.

We have represented it as a high achievement of man that just through Christianity he has been able to ascend to this concept of the free ego. Christ Jesus brought the ego in all its fullness. Hence this ego must be expressed by the sharp two-edged sword which you already know from one of our occult seals. And the fact that this sharp two-edged sword proceeds from the mouth of the Son of Man is also comprehensible, for when man has learnt to utter 'I' with full consciousness it is in his power to rise to the highest or sink to the lowest. The sharp two-edged sword is one of the most important symbols met with in the Apocalypse. (See the first occult seal picture.)

Now if we understand what was said at the close of our last lecture, that after our present cultural age will follow the one that is characterized in the letters to the churches as the community of Philadelphia, we must particularly notice that from the sixth age will be taken those human souls who have to pass over into the following epoch. For, after the War of All against All—as we have already said—there will be expressed in man's features all that is in our age being prepared in men's souls. The so-called seventh age will be of very little importance. We are now living in the fifth age of culture; then follows the sixth, from which will proceed a number of people full of understanding for the spiritual world, filled with the spirit of brotherly love, which results from spiritual knowledge. The ripest fruit of our present culture will appear in the sixth age. And what will follow will be what is lukewarm, neither warm nor cold; the seventh age is something like an overripe fruit, which will outlast the War of All against All, but contain no principle of progress.

This was the case also when our culture originated. Let us think of the time before the Atlantean Flood. We have said that it was in the last third of the Atlantean epoch—which men experienced on the land now covered by the Atlantic Ocean—when a small group was formed in the neighbourhood of the present Ireland, which had reached the highest stage of Atlantean civilization, and this group then migrated to the East, whence all later cultures have proceeded. Let us keep this clearly in mind, let us think of this portion of the earth which now forms the ocean West of Ireland, let us think of a migration of people starting from there and going towards the East and from it a number of tribes proceeding, which then populate Europe. All that is contained in the population of Europe originated in this way. The most gifted portion of the Atlanteans migrated towards central Asia; from there proceeded the various cultures up to our own, as we have described. So we see that our present culture originated in a small group of Atlanteans.

Atlantis, however, had seven consecutive stages just as our own epoch has seven stages which we know as the ancient Indian, ancient Persian, Assyrian-Babylonian-Chaldean-Egyptian-Jewish, the Graeco-Latin, our own and two further ones. It was in the fifth stage when this migration began; so that the specially chosen population of Atlantis which lies at the foundation of our culture is taken from the fifth Atlantean race, for in Atlantis we may speak of races. A sixth and a seventh followed. These

were, so to speak, the lukewarm races. They also survived the great Flood but there was no living, burgeoning force in them. They were related to the fifth Atlantean culture somewhat as the bark which is lignified and hardened is related to the sappy stem. Thus these two races which followed the actual root-race were incapable of developing, they were overripe, so to speak.

You may still see stragglers of these old overripe races today, especially in the Chinese people. This Chinese people is characterized by the fact that it did not identify itself with what was manifested in the fifth race, the root-race. It was when the etheric body entered into the physical body that man received the first germs which enabled him to say 'I'. They missed the opportunity of that period; they did, however, thereby develop the high civilization which is known today but which is not capable of development. The fifth Atlantean race sent out the bearers of culture who created new civilizations capable of growing and becoming ever more perfect. Indeed, everything has been growing, from the ancient Indian culture to our own. The sixth and seventh races of Atlantis allowed themselves to become hardened and therefore became stationary. As we have said, the Chinese civilization is a remnant of that. The old Chinese possessed a wonderful Atlantean heritage, but they could not progress beyond this zenith. Nothing remains uninfluenced from outside. You may examine ancient Chinese literature; it has been influenced from every direction, but its fundamental tendency bears the Atlantean character. This self-completeness, this capacity of making discoveries and going no further, never taking them beyond a certain stage—all this proceeds from the character of Atlantis.

Just as it happened at that time with the fifth race, that it provided men who were capable of development, and with the sixth and seventh, that they experienced a descent, so will it also be in our epoch. We are now looking with great longing towards the sixth cultural age, to what must be described as developing out of the spiritual marriage between West and East. The sixth cultural age will be the foundation for the new cultures which will arise after the great War of All against All; just as our cultures arose after the Atlantean epoch. On the other hand, the seventh age of culture will be characterized by the lukewarm. This seventh age will continue into the new epoch, just as the sixth and seventh races of the Atlantean epoch continued into our epoch as races hardened and stiffening.

After the War of All against All, there will be two streams in mankind: on the one hand the stream of Philadelphia will survive with the principle of progress, of inner freedom, of brotherly love, a small band drawn from every tribe and nation; and on the other hand the great mass of all those who will be lukewarm, the remains of those who are now becoming lukewarm, the stream of Laodicea. After the great War of All against All, gradually the evil stream will be led over to good by the good race, by the good stream. This will be one of the principal tasks after the great War of All against All; to rescue what can be rescued from those who after the great War will only have the impulse to fight one another and allow the ego to express itself in the most external egoism. Such things are always provided for in advance in the spiritual guidance of mankind.

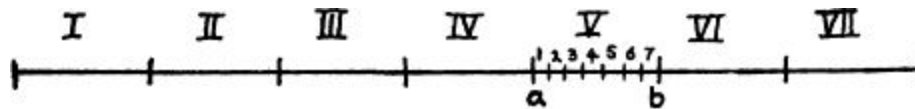
Do not consider it unduly severe in the plan of creation, as something which should be disputed, that mankind will be divided into those who will stand on the right and those who will stand on the left; consider it rather as something that is wise in the highest degree in the plan of creation. Consider that through the evil separating from the good, the good will receive its greatest strengthening. For after the great War of All against All, the good will have to make every possible effort to rescue the evil during the period in which this will still be possible. This will not merely be a work of education such as exists today, but occult forces will cooperate. For in this next great epoch men will understand how to set occult forces in motion. The good will have the task of working upon their brothers of the evil movement. Everything is prepared beforehand in the hidden occult movements, but the deepest of all occult cosmic currents is the least understood. The movement which is preparing for this says the following to its pupils: Men speak of good and evil, but they do not know that it is necessary in the great plan that evil, too, should come to a peak, in order that those who have to overcome it should, in the very overcoming of evil, so use their force that a still greater good results from it.—The most capable must be chosen and prepared to live beyond the period of the great War of All against All when men will confront those who bear in their countenances the sign of evil; they must be so prepared that as much good force as possible will flow into mankind. It will still be possible for those bodies which are to a certain extent soft to be transformed after the War of All against All by the converted souls, by the souls who will still be led to the good in this last period. In this way much will be accomplished.

The good would not be so great a good if it were not to grow through the conquest of evil. Love would not be so intense if it had not to become love so great as to be able even to overcome the wickedness in the countenances of evil men. This is already being prepared for and the pupils are told: Therefore you must not think that evil has no part in the plan of creation. It is there in order that through it may come the great good.—

Those who are being prepared in their souls by such teachings, so that in the future they will be able to accomplish this great task of education, are the pupils of the spiritual stream called the Manichean School. The Manichean teaching is generally misunderstood. When you hear anything or read something about it, you find merely phrases. You may read that the Manichees believed that from the very beginning of the world there have been two principles: good and evil. This is not so; the teaching of the Manichees is what we have just explained. By the name ‘Manicheism’ should be understood this teaching and its development in the future, and the pupils who are so led that they can accomplish such a task in future incarnations. *Manes* is that exalted individuality who is repeatedly incarnated on the earth, who is the guiding spirit of those whose task it is to transform evil. When we speak of the great leaders of mankind³¹ we must also think of this individuality who has set himself this task. Although at the present day this principle of Manes has had to step very much into the background because there is little understanding for spiritual work, this wonderful and lofty Manichean principle will win more and more pupils the nearer we approach the understanding of spiritual life.

Thus you see how present-day mankind will pass into the new epoch beyond the War of All against All, just as that root-race of the Atlanteans lived over into our epoch and founded our cultures. After the great War of All against All mankind will develop in seven consecutive stages. We have already seen how what is said concerning the opening of the seven seals in the Apocalypse of John gives us the character of the seven consecutive cultures after the great War. Then when these cultures—which can only be seen by the initiates in the astral world and in its symbolism—have run their course, a new period will begin for our earth development in which again new forms will appear. And this new period, which will follow the one just described, is symbolized in the Apocalypse of John by the sounding of the seven trumpets. Just as the epoch after the great War of All against All is characterized by the seven seals, because the seer can only

see it today from the astral world, so by the sounding of the trumpets is characterized the stage of culture which follows that, because man can only perceive it from the true spiritual world where the tones of the spheres sound forth. In the astral world man perceives the world in pictures, in symbols; in devachan he perceives it in inspiring music; and in this devachan is contained the climax, as it were, of what is revealed concerning what follows the great War of All against All.



Thus if we represent it in a diagram, we have our seven ages of culture in the space between *a* and *b*, so that we have the ancient Indian culture as the first, the ancient Persian as the second, the Assyrian-Babylonian-Chaldean-Egyptian-Jewish as the third, the Graeco-Latin as the fourth, and our own as the fifth stage of the post-Atlantean epoch. The figure IV would be the Atlantean epoch, *a* the great Flood by which this comes to an end, and *b* the great War of All against All. Then follows an epoch of seven stages (VI) which is represented by the seven seals, and after this another (VII) also containing seven stages, represented by the seven trumpets. And then we reach the boundary of our physical earth development.

Now the Atlantean civilization (IV), which preceded our own (V), was also preceded by others; for our own, which follows the Atlantean, is the fifth stage on our earth. Four stages of civilization preceded it. But we can scarcely call the first a stage of civilization. Everything was still delicately etheric and spiritual, in such a condition that if it had developed further in this way it would not have become visible at all to sense organs such as ours. The first stage developed when the sun was still bound up with our earth. There were then quite different conditions, one could not speak of anything which looked like the objects now surrounding us. Then followed a stage characterized by the sun separating. Then one characterized by the moon leaving the earth; this was the third stage, which we call the ancient Lemurian. At this point present man appeared on our earth in his very first form, concerning which I have pointed out that there were such grotesque bodily forms that it would shock you if you were to hear them described. After the Lemurian followed the Atlantean, and finally our own.

So you see that we have on our earth seven evolutionary epochs, seven epochs of development. The first two were absolutely unlike our epoch; the third partly ran its course in a region lying between the present Africa, Asia and Australia, in ancient Lemuria. In the very last Lemurian race there was again a small band of the most advanced. These were able to emigrate, and from them developed the seven races of the Atlanteans. The fifth of the Atlantean races founded our cultures, of which the sixth will found the future civilization after the great War of All against All. And the very last of those cultures will have to found the one which is indicated by the seven trumpets.

After that, what will happen? Our earth will then have reached the goal of its physical evolution. All the objects and all the beings upon it will then have been transformed. For if we have had to say that already in the sixth epoch men will show good and evil in their faces, we shall have to say all the more of the seventh that the form of man and the forms of all the other beings will be an expression of good and evil to a much higher degree than in the sixth epoch. All matter will bear the stamp of the spirit. There will be absolutely nothing in the seventh epoch that can be hidden in any way. Even those belonging to the sixth epoch will be unable to hide anything from him who has the necessary vision. An evil man will express his evil, a good man will express the good that is within him; but in the seventh epoch it will be quite impossible even by speech to hide what is in the soul. Thought will no longer remain dumb so that it can be hidden, for when the soul thinks, its thought will ring forth outwardly. It will then be just as thought is to the initiate today. To him thought now rings out in devachan. But this devachan will have descended into the physical world, just as the astral world will have descended into the physical world in the sixth epoch. Even now the sixth epoch can be found in the astral world and the seventh in the heavenly world. The sixth epoch is the descended astral world, that is to say the images, the expressions, the manifestations of it. The seventh epoch will be the descended heavenly world, the expression of it. And then the earth will have reached the goal of its physical evolution.

The earth, together with all its beings, will then change into an astral heavenly body. Physical substance as such will disappear. The part which until then will have been able to spiritualize itself, will pass over into the spirit, into astral substance. Imagine all the beings of the earth who up to

that time will have been able to express what is good, noble, intellectual and beautiful in their external material form; who will bear an impression of Christ Jesus in their countenances, who in their words will show an expression of Christ Jesus, who will ring out as resounding thoughts—all these will have the power to dissolve what they have within them as physical matter, as warm water dissolves salt. Everything physical will pass over into an astral cosmic globe. But those who up to that time have not progressed so far as to be a material and corporeal expression of what is noble, beautiful, intellectual and good, will not have the power to dissolve matter; for them matter will remain. They will become hardened in matter; they will retain material form. At this point in the Earth's evolution there will be an ascent into the spirit of forms which will live in the astral and which will separate from themselves another material sphere, a sphere which will contain beings unfit for the ascent because they are unable to dissolve the material part.

In this way our Earth will advance towards its future. Through the souls gradually refining matter from within, the substance of the earth will become more and more refined until it receives the power to dissolve. Then will come the time when the insoluble part will be ejected as a separate globe. In the course of seven ages what has hardened itself in matter will be driven out, and the power which drives it out will be the opposite force to the one which will have forced the good beings upward. What, then, will lead to the dissolution of matter? The power of love gained through the Christ-principle. Beings become capable of dissolving matter through taking love into their souls. The more the soul is warmed by love the more powerfully will it be able to work on matter; it will spiritualize, astralize, the whole earth and transform it into an astral globe. But just as love dissolves matter, as warm water dissolves salt, so will the opposite of love press down—again throughout seven stages—everything which has not become capable of fulfilling the Earth mission.

The contrary of divine love is called divine wrath, that is the technical expression for it. Just as in the course of the fourth age of culture this love was imprinted in mankind, just as it will become warmer and warmer through the last stages in our epoch, the sixth and seventh, so on the other hand there is growing what hardens matter around itself, divine wrath. This effect of the divine wrath, this expulsion of matter, is indicated in the Apocalypse of John by the outpouring of the seven vials of divine wrath.

Imagine what the whole condition will be: The substance of the earth will become finer and finer, the substantial part of man will also become more and more spiritual, and the coarsest parts will only be visible in the finer part like the skins or shells sloughed off, for example, by reptiles or snails. These harder parts will thus become more and more attached to the substance which is growing finer. In the last epoch, the epoch of the sounding of the trumpets, you would with spiritual vision see how men consist of delicate, spiritualized bodies; and how those who have hardened the material principle in themselves have preserved in themselves what today are the most important constituents of matter; and how this will fall as husks into the material globe which will be left after the epoch indicated by the sounding of the trumpets.

This is prophetically described in the Apocalypse of John, and it is important to develop a feeling in our souls about this knowledge of what is coming, so that it may fire our will. For what will man have made of himself when the sixth and seventh epochs are over? What will he have made of his body? If we observe the human body today we find that it is not yet the expression of what the soul experiences within. Man's outer body will thus become an expression of the good by his receiving the highest message, the highest teaching there is on this earth; and this highest teaching is the message of Christ Jesus on the earth; the highest that can be given to us is the message of Christ Jesus. We must take it up thoroughly, not merely with our understanding; we must take it into our innermost being, just as one takes nourishment into the physical body. And as man develops further he will take up the joyful message into his inner being more and more. It is just this reception of the message of love which he will have to regard as the result of the Earth's mission. The power of love, the whole power of love, is contained in the Gospels, in the 'book', and the seer can say nothing else than: In the spirit I see a time before me when what is in the Gospel will no longer be outside in a book but when it will be devoured by man himself.—

Our Earth evolution depends upon two things. Our Earth was preceded by what we call the Cosmos of Wisdom, and that was preceded by what we call the Cosmos of Strength, of Power (certainly the word does not convey much, but we must use it because it has become customary). Wisdom and strength have been received as a heritage from previous stages of evolution, from the ancient Moon and the ancient Sun. We shall see that

during our Earth evolution this is also expressed by our naming the first half after the representative of the Sun forces, Mars, for we only need note at this point that within our Earth evolution we have in Mars what implanted iron in the earth; in Mars we see the bringer of strength. And in what rules the second half of the Earth evolution we have the representative of the ancient Moon evolution, Mercury, which embodies in the earth the heritage received from the Moon, namely wisdom. Thus Earth evolution consists of two parts, Mars and Mercury. It has received as a heritage two mighty forces. What it has inherited from the Cosmos of Strength is expressed in Mars, and what it has inherited from the Cosmos of Wisdom is expressed in Mercury. The mission of the Earth itself is to add love to these. Love is to be gloriously manifested as the result of Earth evolution. This is a very profound thought expressed by the writer of the Apocalypse. It is the profound thought linked to the whole of the Earth evolution. (See the fourth occult seal picture.)

Let us once more go back to the first portion of the Atlantean epoch, to the time of which we said that the air was still saturated with water. Man was still organized for a water existence. Only in the middle of Atlantis had he progressed so far that he forsook the water and trod upon solid ground. Up to the middle of the Earth's evolution we must regard water as the vehicle of man's evolution. It is only comparatively late that the solid earth became the field of his evolution. It is only half the truth if we speak of the whole of Atlantis as consisting of dry land. In many respects it was not covered, let us say, by the ocean, but by something between air and water, air saturated with water. And this water-air was the element in which man lived. Only later did he become capable of living in clear air and standing on solid ground. That was, comparatively speaking, not long ago; so that if we survey the earth's evolution, we may say, expressing it symbolically: On the one hand we have earth and on the other water—that is the earlier period. From the water rises one of the forces up to the first half of evolution, and from the earth rises the other force. Up to the middle of the fourth period we speak of the Mars forces, of the forces given by water, so to speak, and we speak of the Mercury forces in the later time when the solid earth gives the supporting forces. This fits quite accurately into the conception that man is supported in his entire Earth mission by two pillars³², the two pillars you saw symbolically represented in the congress hall in Munich. They represent two parts of the Earth's mission,

the two heritages man has received from earlier periods. And above them is symbolized what is to be attained through the Earth itself, namely love, which is there gloriously revealing itself, which is supported by these heritages.

Thus the writer of the Apocalypse really describes it just as it presents itself to one who ascends into spiritual realms. Therefore, when we observe what lies beyond the Earth and what confronts us when earthly substance dissolves into the spiritual, this is symbolically indicated by what we see in the fourth occult seal picture. Of course it has to appear reversed, because it -represents what belongs to the future. We see the two forces which the Earth has received as heritage from the Cosmos of Wisdom and the Cosmos of Strength, and we see all that appears as the fulfilment of the Earth's mission, as the force of love which man develops. The whole appears to us as the personification of the man of the future. The man of the future here confronts us symbolically, supported by these forces, permeated by this power. The message of love, the book before him, is a book which not only influences him from without but which he has to devour. Here we behold before us the mighty picture which appears at this stage: And I saw another mighty angel (that is a being who is presented thus, because he is already above the present man) descend from the spiritual spheres (that is how it is seen by the seer) clothed with a cloud, and his countenance was as it were the sun and his feet as pillars of fire (these are the two forces of which we have spoken, which the Earth has received as a heritage). And he had in his hand a little book open; and his right foot was set upon the sea and his left upon the earth . . . And I said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey. And I took the little book from the hand of the angel and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey.—

Here we have the feeling arising in the seer when he directs his gaze to the point when the Earth passes from the physically material into the astrally spiritual, when the Earth mission is attained. And when the seer sees this he learns what is really connected with this message of love, which entered in as an impulse in the fourth age, he learns even in his present life, as the Apocalyptist learnt, what bliss is and the bliss that may lie before mankind. But he learns it in his present body; for if a being wished to live with man, however high he might be, he would be obliged

to incarnate in the flesh. And in many respects the present body, just because it offers the spirit the possibility of rising high, gives also the possibility of suffering. While, therefore, the soul is able to ascend—the soul of the seer described by the Apocalyptist—into spiritual regions, in order to receive the Gospel of Love, and in spirit is able to feel the bliss sweet as honey, yet the seer lives in a present-day body, and in accordance with this he must say that the ascent produces in the present body the antithesis of that bliss in many respects. He expresses this by saying that although the little book is at first sweet as honey, it gives him severe pains in the belly when he has swallowed it. But this is only a small reflection of ‘being crucified in the body’. The higher the spirit rises, the more difficult it is for it to dwell in the body, and this is the symbolical expression for these pains: ‘being crucified in the body’.

Thus we have briefly sketched what will happen in our Earth evolution, what lies in front of man in his Earthly evolution. We have arrived at the point when man is changed into an astral being; when the best parts of the Earth disappear as physical earth and pass over into the spiritual; when only something like an isolated portion will through the divine wrath fall into the abyss. And we shall see that even then the last stage, at which salvation would no longer be possible, has not yet been reached, although what is in the abyss is pictured by the most frightful symbols, by the seven-headed and ten-horned beast and by the two-horned beast.

LECTURE NINE

Nuremberg, 26 June 1908

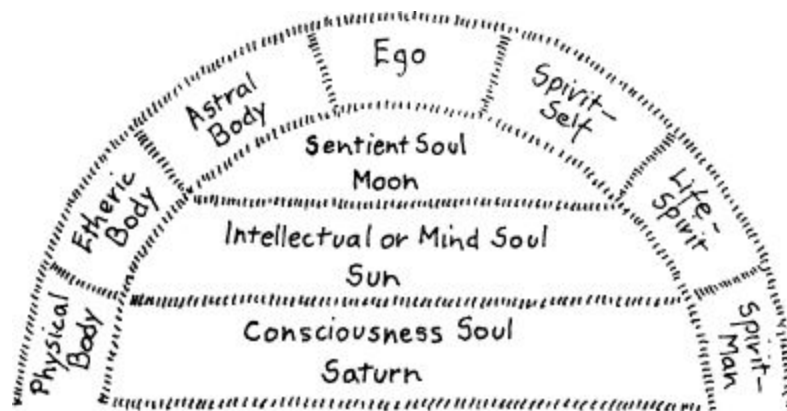
In our description of the evolution of man we yesterday reached the point at which, after the epoch characterized by the sounding of the seven trumpets, the earth with all its beings passes into another condition, when the physical dissolves, so to speak, and changes into something spiritual, but first something astral. An astral earth arises and into it pass all the beings who are ripe for it, that is who have become capable themselves of overcoming their material part and using it in the service of the spiritual. On the other hand, those who are unable to spiritualize the bodily, material part, who cling to the material, are thrown out and form a sort of secondary earth, the study of which is very instructive for gaining knowledge of the future destiny of mankind. But to this end it is necessary that we clearly understand what has become, during this astralizing of our earth, of those who have reached the necessary degree of maturity, who have taken the Christ-principle into themselves and allowed it to become active. We shall now occupy ourselves with what can develop out of man.

We shall best understand this if we have the patience once again to consider what man has become and what possibilities of development lie within him for the future. At present man consists of four principles. The first is the so-called physical body; this is the principle man has in common with all the present creations of the mineral kingdom; this part of man one can see with the eyes and grasp with the hands; it is the lowest principle of the human being, which alone remains as the corpse at death. But this physical body would fall to pieces were it not permeated by what we call the etheric body or life body. Man no longer has this etheric body in common with the mineral kingdom, he has it in common with the beings of the earthly plant kingdom. In every man the fighter against death is the etheric body which between birth and death holds together the parts of the physical body that continually have the tendency to disintegrate. What is the physical body of man, in reality? It is what it becomes a short while after death has destroyed the form: ashes, a little heap of ashes, only

artificially arranged in the life body so that the whole man makes the impression he now does upon those who look at him. The second principle, then, is the ether or life body. The third principle, which man has in common with the animals, is the so-called astral body, the vehicle of instincts, desires, passions, thoughts, ideas, and so on, all that is usually called the soul in man. Finally we have the fourth principle of man, the one which makes him the crown of earthly creation, which makes him stand out above all the other beings, and enables him to develop as 'I', as an individual self-conscious being in earthly existence.

In the future the evolution of man will unfold in such a manner that he will gradually work from his ego upon the lower principles, so that the ego becomes their ruler. When the ego has thoroughly worked upon the astral body and taken possession of it, so that in this astral body there are no more unconscious and unguarded impulses, instincts and passions, then the ego will have developed what we call spirit-self or Manas. Spirit-self is none other than the astral body, only the astral body is the third principle before it is transformed by the ego. When the ego transforms the etheric body also, life-spirit or Buddhi arises; and when in the remotest future the ego transforms the physical body so that this is completely spiritualized by the ego (this is the most difficult work, because the physical body is the densest), then the physical body develops into the highest principle of man, namely Atma or spirit-man.

Thus, if we conceive of man in his sevenfold nature, we have the physical body, the etheric or life body, the astral body and the ego. Further we have what man will develop in the future: spirit-self or Manas, life-spirit or Buddhi, and spirit-man or Atma. That is the sevenfold being of man. However,



he will only develop these higher principles in the far-distant future. It is not yet in man's power while on the earth to work so far upon himself as to bring all these higher spiritual parts to development.

If we consider sevenfold man in this way we shall, however, still not fully comprehend the man we see before us today. It is indeed true that if we survey man as a whole we may speak of these seven principles, but if we wish to understand present-day man we must be more exact.

You will remember that the physical body was developed on Saturn, the etheric body on the Sun, the astral body on the Moon, and that the ego is to be developed on the Earth. It has already developed to a certain degree. We must now observe this Earthly evolution of man somewhat more closely. The greater portion of mankind will only have gained the power to work quite consciously in the spirit-self, in the transformed astral body, at the close of the Earth evolution. On the other hand, during our earthly evolution man had to pass through a kind of preparation which made it possible for him to work half-consciously and half-unconsciously, as it were, on his three lower principles.

This half-conscious and half-unconscious work began in the Lemurian epoch, to which we have already referred. At that time the ego began to work in a very dim consciousness, and at first, in fact, on the astral body. If therefore you follow the earth development from the Lemurian epoch into the first portion of the Atlantean, you will find the ego worked at first in a very dim consciousness, half unconsciously only on his astral body. What then appeared on the earth as the product of the transformation of the astral body, we call sentient soul. Then during the Atlantean epoch, when the air was filled with dense volumes of water-vapour, the ego worked in dim consciousness on the etheric body and produced what we call intellectual soul or mind soul; and from the time when, from the country in the neighbourhood of the present Ireland, the great impulse came which drove the peoples from the West towards the East, and led beyond the great Atlantean Flood to our new culture, from the beginning of the last third of the Atlantean epoch, the ego worked unconsciously on the physical body. It worked into it what one calls the consciousness soul, what gave man the foundation to work out of the group-soul nature a more or less self-conscious ego which first received the great impulse towards complete individuality with the appearance of Christ Jesus. Then only did man really become capable of what one may call working more or less consciously on

the astral body. Really only since the advent of the Christ-impulse on earth have we begun to work consciously on our astral body. So that if we speak of man today we have to say that he has developed physical body, etheric body, astral body, then sentient soul (the astral body which was formerly transformed in dim consciousness), intellectual soul (the etheric body which was dimly transformed in the Atlantean epoch), and the consciousness soul (the physical body which was dimly transformed in the later portion of the Atlantean epoch), so that he gradually matured to where he could develop spirit-self (Manas) as far as it can be observed in man today.

All men now possess the rudiments of Manas, but one has more, another less. Many will still have to go through many incarnations before they have developed Manas far enough to become aware of what they are working upon within their human being. But when the earth has reached its goal, when the seventh trumpet begins to sound, the following will be observed: what exists of the physical body will be dissolved like salt in warm water. Man's spirit-self will be developed to a high degree, so that man will repeat again and again the words of Paul: Not I, but Christ in me does everything.—Thus man will live. This will enable him to dissolve the physical nature and make the ennobled etheric into a being which can live in the astralized earth. Thus man, a new being, will live over into this spiritualized earth.

We might say that the important stage of passing over into the earth which has become spiritualized is wonderfully expressed in the Bible where it says that everything which man now accomplishes within himself in the physical body during the earth period is like a sowing whose fruit will appear when the earth has become spiritual: And that which thou sowest is not the body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body . . . (That is, the body which is the expression of the soul, of the individuality) There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial, but the glory of the celestial body is one, and the glory of the terrestrial body is another. . . (The earthly bodies will be dissolved, the celestial will appear as the luminous expression of what the soul is) It is sown corruptible and will rise incorruptible ... (The incorruptible body will then be resurrected) It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body—(I Corinthians XV, 37.) Paul calls the etheric or

life body, spiritual body, after the physical has dissolved and the etheric passes into the astral earth. Paul here sees beforehand the incorruptible spiritual body, as he calls it.

And now let us consider what it is that man will contribute as the expression of his own Christ-capacity. It is the same that hovered before Paul in spirit, and that he calls 'the last Adam', while he calls the first man who entered into existence in a physically visible body 'the first Adam'. At the end of the Lemurian epoch we already find various animals below, but man is not yet visible to external eyes; he is still etheric. He condenses, he absorbs mineral constituents and appears in his first form; the physical man gradually appears, just as water condenses into ice. Physical evolution then proceeds so far that what is earthly can dissolve and eventually disappears. Hence the man who has the etheric body appears as the 'last Adam'. The 'first Adam' has the capacity of seeing the earth in the physical body through the physical senses; the 'last Adam', who assumes a spiritual body, is an expression of the inner Christ-capacity. Hence Christ is also called by Paul the 'last Adam'. This comprises the whole of human evolution; in spirit we see what man will become in the future, whereas before we saw how he descends to the earth.

Now to understand the following we must look a little more deeply into the mysteries of man's becoming. If you could observe man before his body became physical, that is to say when he was still invisible to physical eyes, when he first descended from the etheric, so to speak, by becoming first an airy, watery structure, then a cartilaginous structure—if you could follow him thus you would see that our earth was also quite different. In the time before the descent of man there was really no mineral kingdom. The earth only possessed the heritage of the Moon. The lowest kingdom was the plant kingdom, and the earth was much softer. The distribution of the watery and gaseous substances was quite different. If you had looked at the earth before man had descended from the surrounding atmosphere to the solid ground it would not have appeared to you as the abstract product described in modern geology, etc.; one might say that our earth as a whole was at that time much more like an organism. It was permeated with all kinds of ordered currents, and was more like a living being than it is now. And man, who existed in that ancient time more as a spiritual etheric being, was not born as he is today, but he was, so to say, brought forth out of mother earth herself. It was mother earth herself that produced man, that

still spiritually etheric being. Before man separated from the whole earth, he was a being who was really bound up with the whole earth. Imagine a body which is soft, and in it hardened parts appear; this will give you a picture of how men were at that time born from mother earth. They were connected with the earth by all kinds of currents, and remained connected with it.

Hence man had an entirely different life; for example, the circulation of the blood, which is now confined within the limits of the skin, extended everywhere into the surrounding earth—it existed in the form of natural forces. If we wished to draw a picture of what it was like at that time we should have to say: There arose within the earth—perceptible not to physical eyes, but to spiritual vision—a part which was different and could be distinguished from the rest of the environment; but the forces in it were connected by innumerable threads with the rest of the whole earth. That was the beginning of a physical man.—



There was a time when man was connected in this way by threads with the rest of the earth. As we have said, we are now touching upon an important and earnest mystery, the last traces of which may be seen in the fact that when man is born at the present time, the connection with the maternal organism made by the umbilical cord is severed. This connection with the organism of the mother is the last remains of the connection man had with mother earth. And just as today man is a son of man, born from man, he was once a son of earth, born of the earth, when the earth was still a living being. He became independent through the umbilical cord—by which he was connected with the whole earth—being severed, so to speak; he thereby became a being born of his own kind.

We must clearly understand that the paths of the blood now existing in man are nothing other than continuations of currents which in the ancient

condition of the earth permeated the whole earth. It is the same with the nerves. All the nerves extended into mother earth. These are now sundered, as it were, from what streamed through the whole earth as nerves. And the same goes for the other parts of the human being. Man is born out of mother earth. What is now enclosed within the skin has been drawn into him from the whole earth. The being of man is taken from the earth, the forces of the whole earth are in him. Before he became a son of man, he was a son of earth. The name Adam really means son of earth. All these ancient names point to important secrets. And when we are aware of this we shall understand that before the visible man appeared on the earth, it already contained within it all the forces of this visible man. Before man became a human being the earth was the bearer of all human forces. Thus the earth is the mother of mankind. However little you can imagine that man could ever grow out of the present stony earth, he did indeed spring forth from the earth, when it was still a living being. What we have just briefly indicated took place in the Lemurian epoch.

If we were to ask ourselves whether the earth was not indeed exceedingly important for man, we would have to say: Yes it was, for in its original form it contained all that man later took into himself. In one part the heart was prepared, in another the brain; in our earth every nerve fibre was prepared. And just as our inner being was prepared in the earth, in the same way, in what we shall have developed as our new body when the Earth has reached its goal, will we carry within us the form which the future planet, the future embodiment of our Earth must assume. Today man works upon his soul; in this way he makes his body more and more like the soul, and when the Earth has arrived at the end of its mission his body will have become an outward image of the soul which has taken Christ into itself. Such a man will survive and implant in the next embodiment of our Earth the forces he has thus developed. Jupiter will have an appearance such as men are able to bring about by constructing it out of their own bodies. This Jupiter will, to begin with, receive its form from what man has made for himself. Imagine that all the bodies that have formed themselves in this way are united in a single cosmic sphere; that will be Jupiter. In your soul you have the germs of the future form of Jupiter, and of the forces it will contain. And out of Jupiter will be born Jupiter beings. Thus man is now preparing for the birth of the Jupiter bodies.

What, therefore, must man do in order to give a worthy form to the future embodiment of our Earth? He must take care that the work he can now do consciously is done in the Christ-like way, so that the etheric body which will be an image of this work will enter worthily into the spiritualized Earth. All the parts of this body will be just as man has made them. He will bring into this spiritual Earth what he has made of his physical body, and this will be the foundation for his future evolution. Just as your present soul develops in your present body, which you have inherited from the Moon, so your future soul will develop in what you yourselves make out of your own body. Hence the body, the envelope of the soul, which clothes the ego, which is inhabited by the ego, is described as the temple of the ego within, the temple of the divinity dwelling in man, the temple of God. When, therefore, you form this body, you are building a future temple, that is to say, the new incarnation of the Earth. You build up Jupiter in the proper measure by shaping the human body in the right way. What, therefore, must appear when the Earth has reached its goal? A temple of the soul harmonious in all its measurements. Hence the initiate is commissioned to examine this temple which man will then have built. When this temple of God is measured it will be made manifest whether the soul has done what is right: And there was given me a reed like unto a rod, and the angel said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But leave out the outer court.—(Revelation XI, 1.) This means, all that was there as a preparation must be thrown out of the temple. Man had first to have a physical body and etheric body before he could work in them. These bodies are the outer court, and must fall away, they must be thrown out. That alone which man has made does he keep. That is the temple in which are to live the new beings in the time of Jupiter existence.

We shall live, then, in an Earth which has become spiritual. We see how the pattern of this Jupiter time is already being prepared. We see foreshadowed how men bring with them the fruits of their Earth existence. And now we must clearly understand that all that was there before reappears in this spiritual condition of the Earth, in a higher state of evolution. Most prominent are the bearers of the spiritual currents upon which the Earth is founded, and from which it has proceeded. The bearers of these currents appear in living form. In the Christian tradition, *Elias* and *Moses* are seen as the personal representatives of what we found in

yesterday's lecture in the two pillars. In Christian esotericism Elias and Moses are looked upon as those who give the teachings of the two pillars. Elias was the one who brought to man the knowledge and message of the one pillar, the pillar of strength, Moses the one who brought the message of the pillar of wisdom. Moses means wisdom or truth; and Elias means the directing force, that which points the direction, that which gives the impulse. Thus we see these two appear in the spiritualized world at the stage of evolution they will then have reached. In the Transfiguration of Christian tradition, Christ appeared between Moses and Elias, and this entire process appears at the end of the Earth evolution in such a way that the sun, the spiritual sun of love, the revelation of the Earth mission of love, appears supported by Sun-Mars and Moon-Mercury, by Elias and Moses. Just as yesterday we saw the two pillars which at first appear before the initiate as the symbols of strength and wisdom, and above the sun of love, so we may now picture the evolution of the earth a stage further, and the one pillar will appear in its living nature, in its personal form, as Elias, and the other as Moses, and what is above, as the veritable Christ-principle.

If we now turn our attention away from the earth itself and what is upon it, and consider it in connection with the whole space of heaven, we shall find we have arrived at a very important matter at the time of which we are now speaking. Earth and sun comprised one body. The earth developed out of the sun, and the moon split off. We have said that this had to take place to obtain the right speed of evolution. But now, when man has passed through these stages of development, after he has spiritualized himself, he is ready to unite again with the forces upon the sun, he can proceed at the same tempo as the sun. An important cosmic event now takes place; the earth reunites with the sun. While that of which we have spoken is taking place, the earth unites with the sun. We said that the sun-spirits descended to the earth at the event of Golgotha, that this Christ-principle will be the means of bringing evolution to the point we have described. The earth will then be ready to unite with the sun; and what was necessary in order that evolution should not proceed too quickly, namely the moon, will be overcome, for man will no longer need it. The forces of the moon will be overcome. At this stage man can unite with the sun; he will live in the spiritualized earth and at the same time be united with the force of the sun; and he will be the conqueror of the moon. This is seen in spirit vision as

represented by the symbolical figure of the fifth occult seal; the woman who bears the sun within her and has the moon beneath her feet. Thus we have arrived at the moment when man is spiritualized, when he reunites with the forces of the sun, when earth and sun form one body and the moon forces are overcome. (See the fifth occult seal picture.)

Now we must remember that only the most advanced beings, who have been impregnated by the principle of Christ, have passed through this development. They have reached thus far; but those who have hardened in matter have fallen away and formed, so to speak, a kind of secondary planet of hardened, flesh-like matter. Now remember what man looked like to astral vision before he descended to the earth as a physical being. We pointed out that he appeared in the four types of his group-soul, in the form of the lion, the eagle, the bull and the man. These four types of the group-soul meet us, so to speak, before man descends into the physical, before he is individualized. These four typical forms which man had before he entered into the physical body are invisible in the present physical human being. They are in the soul-force, pressed, as it were, into the human form like indiarubber. It is, in fact, the case that when man loses control over himself, when his soul becomes silent either by going to sleep, or otherwise falling into a more or less unconscious condition, then one still sees today how the corresponding animal type comes out. But, on the whole, man has overcome this animal type by having descended to the physical plane. When did he receive the power to overcome in the astral world the animal type?

Now you will remember that we spoke of the seven ages of the Atlantean evolution. These seven ages comprise the first four and the last three. In the first four man was completely group-soul. Then in the fifth age the first impulse for the ego-soul originated. Therefore we have four stages of development in Atlantis during which man first progresses as group-soul, and each of the first four Atlantean races corresponds to one of the typical animal forms—lion, eagle, calf or bull, and man. This passes over into the human stage in the fifth age. These typical forms are then lost. Now imagine that in the present epoch man permeates himself with the Christ-principle and thereby conquers his animal nature more and more; but if he does not permeate himself with the Christ-principle, he does not overcome the animal nature. The four typical heads, lion, eagle, bull and man remain, so to speak, as something which assumes its form

again as soon as it has the opportunity, and in addition come three others, those of the last three races of the Atlantean epoch, when man had already begun to be human. These three also remain if man does not work in his soul so that this animal nature disappears. How then will a man appear on the spiritualized earth who during our epoch has not taken into himself the Christ-principle? He will appear in materiality; he will reappear in the shapes from which he has come. He has had these animal forms and has passed through three others as well. He has left unused what could have overcome the animal nature. The animal nature springs forth again, in seven forms. As once in Atlantis there emerged the four heads, the animal-man, so out of the transformed earth, the astralized earth, seven such typical heads will again emerge, and the drama that took place at that time will be reenacted. The germ of the spiritual man was there, but he could not yet develop an individual form; he developed the four animal heads. The embryo man of that epoch is also represented by the woman who brings forth man. The man of the future is also represented by the woman who gives birth to the spiritual man. But what has remained in the flesh is represented on the secondary earth by the animal with seven heads. Just as there were four heads in the period before man had the possibility of overcoming the animal nature, so those who have remained in the animal nature will appear as one entity, as the beast with the seven heads.

Thus in the future, after the earth has united with the sun, while the spiritualized earth is above, there actually appears below all that has not taken into itself the spiritual principle. The animal heads reappear which were there formerly, except that now they are out of their time. They are now the adversary; previously they were in the right period, the period of preparation. Thus we see that as at that time there arose from the physical, there now arises from the astral sea—the sun is also astralized—the monster with the seven heads, the seven-headed beast. Please note that all that was deposited in man by the etheric body is called in the mystery language—which the Apocalyptist also uses—a head, because when seen clair-voyantly it produces a typical form of head, such as that of a lion. The etheric forces have to work upon it. If we follow the Atlantean evolution we find that the etheric body was still outside the head. Whatever in man is due to the etheric is called in the language of the Apocalyptic mysteries ‘head’. This, therefore, refers to what is seen by clairvoyant vision chiefly as a head. But what is brought about physically in man through some part

of the etheric body is called a 'horn'. Thus in the language of the mysteries a horn is a very mysterious thing. For example, what has been brought about physically in man through his having passed through that race of the Atlantean epoch in which the lion was the typical group-soul, is called a horn. Thus the physical part which comes from some member of the etheric body is called a horn. A horn is the organ which is the external physical expression for something etheric.

I will now speak concretely to you. All the physical organs of man are really densified etheric organs, they have proceeded from the condensed etheric body. Let us consider the human heart; today it is a physical organ, but it has condensed from an etheric organ. This present human heart received its rudiments when man went through the group-soul nature designated as the lion. Thus the heart is the 'horn' of the lion head, for when the etheric body had progressed so far that man appeared with the group-soul symbolized by the lion's head, the rudimentary foundations were formed for what later developed into the human heart. From this germ of the lion-man originated the present human physical heart. While, therefore, we trace back the origin of the etheric body to the changing of one head into another, to the addition of one head to another, we understand the human physical body as the addition of one horn to another. The human etheric body actually consists of 'heads', the human physical body of 'horns'. That is the language of the mysteries. All the organs of man have developed out of the etheric body, they are, therefore, a collection of horns.

We have now to reflect upon all that we have heard; for this is something of which even the Apocalyptist says: Here is wisdom.—We shall only understand this wisdom, which the writer of the Apocalypse has put into the appearance of the seven-headed beast with ten horns, if we carefully ponder over what 'horn' really is in relation to 'head' in the language of the mysteries. We shall see that the beings who have kept these seven heads, because they have remained behind in evolution, have, in fact, acquired in the abyss a physical body which consists of ten hardened members of the physical body.

LECTURE TEN

Nuremberg, 27 June 1908

We have seen that in the Apocalypse of John we have a description of what takes place in initiation, or rather, the experience of one undergoing a Christian initiation. When in the final lectures we shall have seen passing before our souls a review of the entire content of the Apocalypse, we shall still have to answer the question: What, really, is this document from an historical point of view? Why does such a document exist? But now, as we have reached the important point revealed in our last lecture, when our earth passes into a spiritual condition, though first of all into an astral condition, when certain remarkable beings appear in what has condensed in matter and split away from the normal progress of our Earth evolution, it will be useful before we proceed further to make a general survey of certain things contained in the outline of our anthroposophical world conception. For you have seen that in all we have had to consider, certain numerical concepts play a role, and now we are about to form a conception of what the seven-headed and ten-horned beast is, and what the two-horned beast is.

To begin with, we must find our bearings with regard to the outline of the evolution of the world. This runs its course in absolute conformity with certain numerical relations. The layman will be tempted to say—when he hears that the number seven and other numbers play such a great role in our studies: Oh yes, these anthroposophists are dishing up those old superstitions connected with the number seven, twelve and so on—And when our contemporaries hear of something which proceeds regularly according to the number seven, they begin to speak of superstition, although they themselves are really living in exactly the same superstition with respect to something of which they do have some knowledge; for example, that the rainbow consists of seven colours, the musical scale of seven tones, since the eighth is only a repetition of the first. And in many other realms one speaks of the number seven—and rightly so. In our study of the great cosmic relationships we speak of the number seven in no other

sense than the physicist does when he speaks of the seven colours or in music of the seven tones. For us the number seven is simply the result of occult experience. Just as the scientist observes and counts the seven colours, so does the spiritual investigator count seven consecutive conditions in the world's evolution. And because the wisdom of the world always knew about these things and expressed them, they passed over into common consciousness; and the number seven was found to be of a particular significance. Exactly because the number seven was founded in cosmic relationships, it passed over into common belief, and of course, also into superstition.

If we remember what has been said concerning the secret of the seven trumpets, the seven seals, the seven letters, and what has been said concerning the seven consecutive ages of the Atlantean epoch, we see that in the evolution of the world there are really consecutive periods which are repeated in conformity with the number seven. We shall now give an outline of cosmic evolution, showing that this number governs all its parts.

We have heard that the Earth before it was Earth was Moon, before it was Moon it was Sun Planet, and before it was Sun it was Saturn. After the Earth condition it will pass over into the Jupiter condition, and then into the Venus condition, and lastly into the Vulcan condition, so that we have seven consecutive planetary embodiments of our Earth: Saturn, Sun, Moon, Earth, Jupiter, Venus, and Vulcan. Now these are the greatest divisions in our whole evolution which with spiritual vision we are able to survey to a certain extent. We have described the three preceding conditions of the Earth.

We shall now try to understand the purpose of this whole evolution and why the Earth passes through these seven conditions. These seven conditions coincide with the development of human consciousness. Each of these conditions, Saturn, Sun, Moon, Earth, Jupiter, Venus and Vulcan, characterizes a definite condition of man's consciousness. Let us turn our attention back to the ancient Saturn period. We know that the various parts of which man is now constituted did not exist at that time, but only the very first beginnings of his physical body. Obviously these first rudiments could not develop such a consciousness as man has today. Other beings had a human consciousness, but at that time the present man had a consciousness such as the minerals now have on the physical plane. We call this a deep trance-consciousness. The first germ of man had this

consciousness upon Saturn. This Saturn evolution was gone through in order that man might gradually rise to higher states of consciousness. That was the first stage of consciousness, the deep trance-consciousness.

Of course it must not be imagined that the degree of consciousness remained the same throughout the whole of the Saturn period, but on the whole the consciousness of man upon Saturn may be characterized as a deep trance-consciousness. It is dimmer even than the consciousness which man has today in dreamless sleep, for that was then the consciousness he passed through at the second stage, during the Sun evolution. This is the consciousness now possessed by the plants around us in the physical world.

Then came the Moon stage of evolution. Man then possessed a consciousness which can be understood more easily because in dream-consciousness man has at least a last remnant of the Moon-consciousness. Today this dream-consciousness is an intermediate condition between dreamless sleep and the ordinary, waking, clear day-consciousness. Thus the third stage of consciousness was reached on the Moon, and it may be compared with the present dream-filled sleep, but it was much more vivid and real. Dream-filled sleep yields a consciousness which consists of odds and ends of ideas and pictures and is but slightly related to the real external world. The Moon-consciousness, which was a consciousness of dream-pictures, had very significant relations with the outer world. It corresponded exactly to what was present in the soul-spiritual environment. There was a repetition of this during the Atlantean epoch. We call it the dream picture-consciousness; it might also be called the somnambulic consciousness.

The fourth state of consciousness is reached and passed through on our Earth; it is what we call the clear day-consciousness or object-consciousness.

During the Jupiter period man will rise to a still higher degree of consciousness of which most people today have no inkling, when all that we have described has taken place and all that is yet to be added from the Apocalypse of John which is still to be described. Then, when man is saved, so to speak, when he has risen from the abyss or escaped from decadence, when he has risen into the astralized and spiritual earth, this will be the foundation for his attainment upon Jupiter of the consciousness which we may call the conscious picture-consciousness. If this is to be

described it can only be done from the experiences of the initiates. For initiation is indeed nothing but the acquisition of the capacity to attain at an earlier stage of evolution what normal mankind will gain at a later stage. In the conscious picture-consciousness man is just as conscious of himself as he is today from morning to evening, but he perceives not only the external objects; in his soul's field of vision he has pictures, pictures which are by no means dim, but rather are incorporated in the clear consciousness of day. Thus the clear day-consciousness plus the Moon-consciousness gives the Jupiter-consciousness. Man keeps what he now has and in addition gains the capacity of perceiving the element of soul and spirit.

Today the initiate not only sees man as he is physically, but shining around him he perceives all kinds of spiritual forms which are the expression of his desires, instincts and thoughts; in a word, his aura. It glows and sparkles around man's form like delicate flames, partly like a cloud of light. All this can be seen in man's astral body by the initiate, just as the outline of the physical body is seen by the ordinary physical eyes; all this is a picture of what takes place in the soul. The initiate experiences a consciousness which may be described as Moon-consciousness plus Earth-consciousness.

Then upon Venus comes a sixth condition of consciousness which may be described as the Inspired consciousness, the consciousness of Inspiration. It is called the consciousness of Inspiration because at this stage of consciousness the initiate perceives not only the feelings, urges, passions, etc., of the soul, but also its whole inner character as a uniform sound. He begins to perceive what pervades the world of—shall we say—colour and form structures as the music of the spheres, so that each single being seems like a musical form within what had previously been perceived as an astral picture.

The seventh condition of consciousness, which will exist on Vulcan, we may call the Intuitive consciousness. Intuition is not the triviality ordinarily understood by the word today when one imagines one is able to divine something through a vague feeling—that is a misuse of the word. In the schools of the initiates, Intuition is applied to the highest stage of consciousness we can imagine, when the soul identifies itself with the spiritual beings and lives within them. Although the soul remains quite individual, it rests within all the objects and beings of its field of vision.

The seven stages of the Earth's whole evolution thus present to us seven consecutive conditions of consciousness. Now each of these must in its turn also be attained in seven stages, and we call these seven stages, which must be passed through every time, conditions of life. So that we distinguish seven conditions of consciousness, and in each of these seven conditions of life. It is difficult in our language to find words to express these seven conditions of life. If we merely take our Earth into account, we may describe the conditions of life by speaking of the seven kingdoms, for the conditions of life on Earth coincide with the seven kingdoms. Here we may describe the first condition of life as the first elementary kingdom, the second as the second, the third as the third elementary kingdom, the fourth as the mineral kingdom, the fifth as the plant kingdom, the sixth as the animal kingdom, and the seventh as the human kingdom. Now we might say that in each condition of consciousness seven such conditions of life, or seven kingdoms, are passed through. But if we were similarly to describe the seven conditions of life on Saturn as the first, second and third elementary kingdoms, as mineral, plant, animal and human kingdoms, this would only give rise to false conceptions, for the expressions for these kingdoms are coined in accordance with our earthly experiences. And in those primeval times the kingdoms were formed quite differently from what they now are on the earth. We can only say that analogous to these kingdoms there were seven kingdoms on Saturn and seven on the Sun. The seven kingdoms of the Moon were more like the present kingdoms; and as far as the seven conditions of life on the Earth are concerned, these have become the seven kingdoms of the Earth. And on the Earth we can, indeed, describe these more easily, although it is extremely difficult to give an idea of the three elementary kingdoms. People think they have a true conception of the mineral, plant, animal and human kingdoms, though this is not really the case.

Perhaps you will succeed in forming some kind of idea of the three elementary kingdoms if you consider the following. Imagine parts of the mineral kingdom, stones, metals, and so on becoming finer and finer, so that you see less and less of them; they dissolve, so to speak, into finer and finer substance. Suppose it all evaporates into an extremely delicate, transparent, invisible substance. If you continually refined these substances you would at length produce something which is no longer a mineral kingdom but the third elementary kingdom. Then we should rise to the

second and the first elementary kingdom. It is difficult for our present qualities of perception to form ideas about these kingdoms which are secreted and condensed into our world. It is as if these elementary kingdoms had condensed and disappeared, so to speak, into our world. They precede our mineral kingdom. We have seen when this mineral kingdom itself was formed. In earlier periods of the Earth's evolution the mineral kingdom existed in the condition of the elementary kingdoms.

Now the other four kingdoms. We see the mineral kingdom around us, also the plant, animal and human kingdoms. But we must clearly understand that these designations are really not quite correct in the spiritual scientific sense. The layman describes the present minerals as belonging to the mineral kingdom, the plants as belonging to the plant kingdom, the animals as belonging to the animal kingdom and man to the human kingdom. From the lay point of view this is correct, and for all the trivial things of life it suffices, but in the occult sense it is incorrect. For at the present time man is perfected alone in the mineral kingdom. Only in future periods of evolution will he rise to the plant, animal and human kingdoms. As man has an ego-consciousness at the present time we may certainly call him human, but we must not yet say that he is incarnated in the human kingdom in the sense of Spiritual Science. To this end something else is necessary of which we must now speak.

What can man comprehend today? That is the point. He can today understand only the mineral kingdom. As soon as he comes to the plant kingdom he no longer understands it. The mineral kingdom he can understand. From the forces of the mineral kingdom he can construct houses, machines, and so on. When he comes to learn in the same way to observe what the forces are in a plant which make it grow tall, only this will lift him with his consciousness into the plant kingdom. And by learning to comprehend how an animal can feel—at the present time he has only an external view of it—he becomes a member of the animal kingdom. And when he understands not only his own ego but that of another, when inwardly he fully understands another man, then only does he belong to the human kingdom.

You will best understand that man can today comprehend only the mineral kingdom if you make the following observation. Imagine a great number of learned men say that plants and animals are nothing more than complicated minerals. And these learned men are expecting a time when

they will so combine material substances that these will become plants and animals. They are under the illusion that one can understand the plants as mineral beings, because they have no idea that there is anything else besides the mineral kingdom. Indeed, many say: You anthroposophists dream that there is an etheric body, something which extends beyond the merely mineral; but you will dream no more when we succeed in making a living being in our laboratory from carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, hydrogen, etc. just as we now produce sulphuric acid from the separate substances.—It is believed that a living being can be produced; it is believed that purely materialistic science will one day be able to do this. It is believed that anthroposophists are foolish enough to doubt that the time will come when plants will actually be produced in the retort.

This time will come. But students of Spiritual Science have always known that this time will come; they know that the time will come when man will take planthood into his own being, just as he now has the mineral kingdom within him. And just as he builds houses of minerals, just as he now uses the forces of the mineral kingdom, so will he in the future, out of the familiar forces of the plant kingdom, produce plant forms and still higher things in the laboratory, without resorting to seeds, without having to call to his aid forces of nature unfamiliar to him. But if this possibility of producing a living organism in the laboratory were to come prematurely, from the point of view of true Spiritual Science this is what would be called black magic. Man must first become ripe for each succeeding step of evolution.

There is an occult saying which runs: Man will only produce living organisms in the experimental laboratory, 21s he now produces mineral products, when the laboratory table has become the altar and the mixing of the chemical substances a sacramental act—This is a saying which has always been found in occult circles. Truly, as long as a person enters the laboratory in the belief that he can work with unholy feelings the same as with holy ones, so long will he never be able, with the will of those who guide evolution in the right way, to produce anything living in the laboratory. This will only be possible when it is realized that a mineral product may indeed be produced, even if a scoundrel is standing at the laboratory table, but that a living thing can never be produced under these circumstances. For into the living being flows—when it is put together—something which is in the man himself. If the man were a villain, what was

villainous would flow across and the being produced would be an expression of villainy. Only when it is realized that man as a whole being works with his whole inner being in what he produces, will the world be ready to produce something that is alive, plants, animals and human beings, in free activity. Man will then have risen into the plant kingdom when he understands the plant nature as he now understands the mineral. He will have risen to the animal kingdom when he understands feelings in such a way that he can make a sensitive being through his own spirit-power, just as he now makes an external object. And he will have ascended to the human kingdom when he can form man anew in free activity.

Thus man is now living in the mineral kingdom; and he is fundamentally the only being which has developed fully in the mineral kingdom, whilst the beings in the other kingdoms stand in many respects at much lower stages than the one designated in Spiritual Science as the mineral kingdom. Thus the plants show as a kind of preparatory stage what man will experience when he himself shall one day be in the plant kingdom. But the plants are not really in the plant kingdom; they are, at the most prototypes; not archetypes, but pointers to a future kingdom in which man will be, when he inwardly passes through the plant nature, just as he is now passing through the mineral nature.

This plant kingdom in which man will be, will be distinguished by other things. Its nature may be characterized by a moral statement which is, indeed, often repeated intellectually but by no means comprehended. Today man lives in such a way that the individual, even if he does not acknowledge it, is convinced that it is possible for a person to be happy although his neighbour may be unhappy. It is certainly quite possible today for one person to feel happy in spite of others being unhappy. Even if it be acknowledged on an intellectual level that the highest moral principle is one which makes all men happy, in practice people are convinced that the happiness of one is quite possible without others being just as happy as he. When man is in the plant kingdom he will have reached a stage of evolution morally, at which it will be impossible to feel happy as an individual if others of his kind are unhappy: The happiness of the individual is inseparably connected with the happiness of all.—This statement will rule when man is taken up into the plant kingdom. No man could then feel happy in any way if his happiness were greater than that of others.

Thus you see there is very little possibility of perceiving such subtle ideas as we must have in Spiritual Science if we wish to understand everything. But you also see that man still has long vistas of evolution in front of him. All this he must attain, and very little of it exists as yet.

Thus we speak of seven kingdoms through which man himself passes. Upon Jupiter there will be again seven kingdoms which will still be somewhat similar to the seven Earth kingdoms, but they will nevertheless be quite different from these. Upon Venus there will again be seven, and again upon Vulcan. Here we can by no means call them kingdoms any longer, the idea 'kingdom' is no longer suitable. If we bear all this in mind we must say that we have to start with seven stages of development of consciousness, the Saturn, Sun, Moon, Earth, Jupiter, Venus and Vulcan stages, and in each condition of consciousness seven conditions of life, through which every single being which goes through the degrees of consciousness must pass. Each condition of life must again pass through seven stages of form, in such a way that you have to consider your present physical condition of form to be in the very middle. Before something becomes physical it is astral; before it is astral, it is at a certain spiritual stage which is called lower devachan; and before anything descends to this stage it is in a higher stage of devachan. Here we have three conditions of form. The first may be designated as formless. The next condition of form we designate as the stage of lower devachan. Then we come to the astral condition. When the astral condenses it becomes physical. Then the physical dissolves again and returns to a more perfect astral; this passes to a more perfect lower devachanic form, and this to a higher devachanic form. The physical condition of form is in the middle.

Each kingdom passes through seven conditions of form. You must distinguish between physical and mineral, for they are not the same. As today the physical coincides with the mineral in appearance, the two may easily be confused. The mineral kingdom passes through all the conditions of form; it can be laid down as mineral kingdom up in the higher region of devachan. It then descends into the lower spiritual region and is still the mineral kingdom, then into the astral—here it is astrally prepared—and then it condenses to the physical. Thus in each kingdom we have seven conditions of form (see pull-out diagram at end of book).

Each condition of consciousness can only run its course in seven conditions of life; each condition of life in seven conditions of form. That

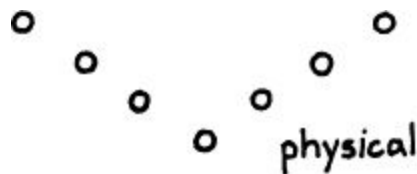
is $7 \times 7 \times 7$ conditions. In fact, an entire evolution such as that of the Earth passes through $7 \times 7 \times 7$ conditions of form. Our Earth was once Saturn; this went through 7 conditions of life and each condition of life through 7 conditions of form. Therefore you have 49 conditions of form upon Saturn, 49 upon the Sun, 49 upon the Moon etc.; $7 \times 49 = 343$ conditions of form. Man passed through 343 conditions of form in the course of his evolution. When Saturn was at the very outset of its evolution he began in the highest spiritual realm to which we can attain, as a structure in the highest part of devachan. That was the first condition of form; it was entirely mineral. Man descended as such a being down to the physical and reascended to higher devachan. And here begins the great difficulty, for you would now have to say, if you wished to use the expression named: Man passes into the next kingdom.—But these expressions do not apply to Saturn. Upon Saturn man passes in this way through forty-nine conditions. The curious thing is that you may now ask: Man had to pass through conditions of life on Saturn, but he only acquired an etheric body on the Sun; how, then, can one say that he goes through conditions of life?—They were not yet as they were later when he had a life body, they were vicarious. This is brought about through the activity of higher beings. Man has no independent life upon Saturn, but higher beings permeate him with their etheric body, with their astral body, ego, and so on.

In any case you must understand that upon Saturn man has passed through 49 conditions, upon the Sun 49 conditions, and 49 upon the Moon. Upon the Earth, of these 49 conditions he has only passed through the first three conditions of life and is now in the fourth—in the mineral kingdom. In the first condition of life he was in the first elementary kingdom and there passed through seven conditions of form; in the second condition of life he was in the second elementary kingdom and passed through seven conditions of form; he was in the third elementary kingdom and passed through the seven conditions of form. He is now in the fourth elementary kingdom, which is the same as the mineral kingdom, and he is approximately in the middle of this, somewhat beyond the middle.

From all that we have outlined you will have seen that the whole Earth passes through 343 conditions. I beg you to picture it in this way: Saturn originates and passes through 49 conditions; it is at first a fiery mass, a body of heat, and goes through various conditions, but it is always the same sphere that passes through these 49 conditions. In the same way, the

Sun is always one and the same sphere which passes through the 49 conditions. But there are intermediate conditions. It is as if between the several embodiments of the Earth there were a kind of spiritual interval. It is the same with a planet as with man; the planets also pass through spiritual intervals, which lie between these conditions.

If you clearly understand that in the course of our evolution we have seven conditions of consciousness, you will also perceive how this is connected with what is described in various theosophical books. They are cosmic systems. You will there read that our Earth developed out of an ancient planetary system which is described as Moon. One would then have to go further back from the Moon to the Sun, and from the Sun to Saturn. Each of these conditions is divided into the seven conditions of life—usually called ‘rounds’; rounds are the same as conditions of life. And those now called conditions of form were formerly called ‘globes’. The latter expression is extremely misleading, for it leads to the idea that these seven globes are side by side.



These conditions, from the most remote form, which was almost formless, down through the physical and up again to the formless, are not seven globes existing side by side, but seven successive conditions. The same globe that is now physical was first of all spiritual, then it became denser and denser. It is the same globe simply condensed. Then a portion of it became astral, then a portion physical; it is always the same globe. It dissolves again like salt in warm water, it again becomes astral. Thus we have ascended to this astral stage where, in the Apocalypse, the vials of wrath are described; there the earth becomes astral again.

Thus you see how the number seven governs the whole of evolution. In the last few days we have given a skeleton outline of this, as it were, in the form of pictures, sometimes truly grotesque pictures, and in any case, such as deviate very much from what can be seen today in the physical world. If you conceive of it in this way it is approximately as if you were to erect the scaffolding for a house, the most external part that is intended to be

used by the masons. It has as yet nothing to do with the actual subject; they are only thoughts about the subject, so to speak. We must rise from this purely intellectual scheme, which assists us indeed to understand, to the living structure, by using the pictures which are to be seen in the astral for the various conditions; then only have we what is called occult wisdom. As long as you build up a scaffolding you remain in the thought realm customary to you in the physical world. The whole scheme we have sketched is only physical thought. This is related to the full reality not even like the inner framework of a house to the complete building, but only like the outer scaffolding upon which the builders stand. This has to be taken down again when the building is completed. In the same way the scaffolding of thought has to be taken down again if one wishes to have the truth before one as it really is. If one considers this abstraction as the reality, then one is not by any means speaking of true occultism but only of the concept which the man of the present day can form regarding the spiritual facts. The way in which spiritual facts are presented abstractly at the present time may be seen in such a scheme which in itself is unfruitful. I had to put it before you because we also need such a scheme, but fundamentally it is of no use to one who wishes to progress upon the truly occult path. If you describe the whole world, up to the highest spiritual facts, by means of such schemes, this only has meaning for your present incarnation. In the next you would have to learn it all over again. This can only be thought by using the brain; it is only adapted for the brain. But as the brain disintegrates at death, the whole schematic presentation then falls to pieces. On the other hand, if you comprehend—at first in Imaginative pictures—what really happens, what we have described as the consecutive pictures of the seals seen by spiritual vision, that is something which is not bound up with your physical brain, and which you retain after death because it does not originate from physical thinking, but from facts seen clairvoyantly. Therefore one must take care not to mistake for real occult wisdom what is striven for after the pattern of physical comprehension, which wants to standardize the higher worlds. This is a description by means of the ordinary physical intellect. Of course, the physical intellect must play a part; on this account it is useful to present such a scheme, and we may now carry it a step further.

We have seen that we pass through 343 conditions. Now, the subject grows even more complicated when we learn that the matter does not end

here, but that man must also pass through various conditions within each condition of form. Three conditions of form have preceded the present physical condition of form and three others will follow it. But now the physical again passes through seven conditions, and these are the seven of which we have spoken in previous lectures; the first when the sun is still united with the earth, the second when it separates, the third when the moon withdraws, the fourth that of Atlantean mankind. Atlantean man lives in the fourth epoch of the development of the physical condition of form. Thus within each condition of form you have again seven so-called race conditions, although the expression 'race' only applies to the middle of our conditions. We are now living in the fifth condition, the post-Atlantean epoch, between the great Atlantean Flood and the great War of All against All. This is the period in which we are living. The sixth will follow this and then the seventh. The sixth epoch is indicated in the Apocalypse of John by the seven seals, and the seventh by the seven trumpets. Then it passes over into the astral. That is a new condition of form which again will have seven conditions. And still our scheme is not at an end. Each condition as it runs its course between such events as the great Atlantean Flood and the great War of All against All must again be divided into seven conditions. As regards the fifth epoch, there are the Indian age of culture, the Persian age of culture, the Chaldean-Babylonian-Assyrian-Egyptian-Jewish age, the Graeco-Latin age, our own age, then the sixth, which is indicated in the Apocalypse by the community of Philadelphia, and the seventh age of culture which will follow that.

Thus if we imagine the whole of evolution consisting of many, many such small conditions—which nevertheless are long enough—we have $7 \times 7 \times 7 \times 7$ stages of development such as the ancient Indian or the ancient Persian. Man passes through so many different conditions of this nature between Saturn and Vulcan.

$$7 \times 7 \times 7 = 343$$

$$7 \times 343 = 2401$$

$$7 \times 2401 = 16807$$

Thus you see how the number 7 governs development in the successive periods throughout the whole of evolution. Just as the tones in music

progress from octave to octave, so does the whole of evolution take place in octaves of development.

Let us now recall that we have seven of these conditions out of the 16807 in our epoch between the great Atlantean Flood and the great War of All against All, and that previously we had seven more in the Atlantean epoch. But we also remember that man went through four of these seven ages of the Atlantean epoch under quite different conditions from the last three. We now know the kind of condition we have to enumerate. Four of the conditions out of the total number man went through during the Atlantean epoch in such a way that he felt himself as a group-soul, as we have described, as eagle, lion, bull and man. He gradually developed these four group-souls during these four fundamental races of the Atlantean epoch. Now because races always continue, just as, for instance, the Indian has continued, although later ones have developed (they pass into one another), for this reason the four heads indicating the group-souls at the beginning of the fifth age of Atlantean civilization also remained and we have this four-headed beast.

Now when man began to harden himself from the etheric into the physical, he developed four different parts of the body in accordance with his fourfold group-soul. And through the former group-soul consciousness changing into the individual consciousness, man had within him, at the beginning of the fifth age of Atlantis, a conjunction of the earlier fourfoldness. He bears within him the four heads which are summed up in his head which gradually arises. It is composed of the four group-heads as it develops in the course of the fifth period. Man has four parts of the physical body corresponding to the four heads. These are the four 'horns'. So that you may imagine that because man was etheric, he had four heads, four animal heads, only the last is already man-animal, for that is what is meant. He was four-headed, and each force-system corresponding to one of these heads formed physical organs. We saw in our last lecture that there was a force-system which formed the heart, namely the one connected with the lion head. The various organs of man are like condensations of the corresponding members of the etheric body.

This is the view of the writer of the Apocalypse. He says: That which is physical is a densification of the etheric—Just as you would think: This skin thickens to form a callosity,—so the Apocalypticist thinks: Man exists etherically and this condenses and becomes physical.—And because man

is fourfold, consisting of four group-souls, four such condensations are formed. These constitute his physical body. This is the reason why one described as 'horn' what in the physical body corresponds to the etheric body. Horn is a callous thickening. Man is described, as far as he had developed in the fourth age of the Atlantean epoch, as an animal with four heads and four horns.

He then evolves further towards the individual human being. This begins in the neighbourhood of the present Ireland. Man passes through the last three ages in such a way that he possesses the germ of the ego-being. He no longer develops an animal body outwardly, but has risen to become human. He matures his human nature more and more until he absorbs the Christ-principle. If we regard present-day man, we see that he was not always as he appears today. In order for him to become what he now is, he had to pass through four animal group-souls, he had to be incarnated in bodies corresponding to the present lion form, the bull form, the eagle form and the human form. He then rose higher and became more and more human, and the form of the earlier group-soul disappeared. It is no longer there, man has assumed human shape.

We must now understand an important event which then took place when man assumed human form, for without this understanding one cannot comprehend the Apocalypse of John; it was an event of the greatest importance. Up to this event when man passed into human soul-nature, something was totally hidden from his vision which later was revealed. Man had a kind of dim, hazy consciousness. When he awoke in the morning he saw everything surrounded by misty formations, so to speak; and when he went to sleep he was in the spiritual world. This appeared to him in pictures; for such is the nature of the spiritual world. I shall now describe something which took place before man passed over physically into the human condition, before he passed from the group-soul nature to full ego-consciousness.

What he lived through here upon earth consisted only of a number of experiences. He then went to sleep and during his sleep was in a dim consciousness in a spiritual world where he lived among gods and spirits, of which an echo remains in the myths and legends. There he experienced mighty pictures; for example, the picture in which he encountered two other beings who threw stones behind them, and out of these stones other beings like themselves grew out of the earth. These were experiences

which man had throughout the fourth age of the Atlantean epoch. To express it plainly, we must say that the reproduction of man took place in sleeping-consciousness, not in waking-consciousness. When man was outside his physical body and in the spiritual world, he set in motion, as it were, while he was in this state of consciousness in which everything appeared to him in pictures, whatever had to take place for reproduction; the whole act of reproduction was veiled in a spiritual element and appeared to him in the picture of throwing stones behind him. The act of reproduction was enveloped in spiritual consciousness; it lay behind the day-consciousness. Man had no knowledge of sex. In the day-consciousness he did not see himself as existing in two sexes, his soul was untouched by any thought of sex. Not that it did not exist; it did exist, but it rested in the obscurity of a spiritual consciousness; during the day-consciousness man knew nothing of it.

With the acquisition of the first germ of ego-consciousness man first became aware of sex. That is the moment presented to us in the Bible when Adam and Eve become aware that there is such a thing as sex. This important event took place at this stage in the earth's evolution. If with spiritual vision you look back to the time which preceded that time, you see only that part of man which is the instrument of the spirit. All the rest was invisible. Only the upper part of man could be seen. From the point of time we have mentioned, the whole man began to be seen. It is now comprehensible why men began to cover themselves up. Previously they saw nothing which required covering. In this way man gradually emerged into the external world.

If we regard the outer human form as the condensed part of the etheric, we have in the fourth Atlantean age the four horns in addition to the four group-soul heads. Now, however, in the last three ages of Atlantis something twofold begins to develop physically. At each stage where a group-soul head was to develop, a double physical, male and female, was formed. In the first four stages you find man formed with four heads, the condensed etheric with four horns. We now have three more heads which are invisible because the external human form absorbs them. These three are only perceptible to clairvoyant vision, three etheric heads, the principal human heads, and in between them two others which are like shadows beside each, like double shadows. Thus when the Atlantean Flood burst, we have seven race or group-soul heads, of which the last three always

appear in such a way that they have their physical part in a double form, as male and female. From this you see that at the end of the Atlantean epoch the entire group-soul nature of man—although the later portion remains invisible—has seven heads and ten horns. The horns of the first four heads are not separated into male and female, but only the last three.

Man has the seven heads and ten horns within him. He must now work upon these through the reception of the Christ-principle so that they shall be destroyed, so to speak. For each time a man dies the seven-headed and ten-horned nature can clearly be seen in his astral body. This is merely held together like a piece of indiarubber which has been correspondingly formed. Now suppose a person hardened himself during our epoch against the Christ-principle and were to come to the time of the great War of All against All without having had the Christ-experience, suppose he were to come to this time and had thrust the Christ away from him, then when the earth passes over into the astral, whatever was there and which he ought to have changed, would spring forth, it would spring forth in its old form. The beast with the seven heads and ten horns would appear, whereas in those who have received the Christ-principle, sexuality will again be overcome. The hardened ones will keep the six-horned sexuality and will appear in their totality as the beast with the seven heads and ten horns of which the rudiments were laid down in the Atlantean epoch. They can be transformed through the reception of the Christ-impulse, but if Christ is rejected they will remain and will reappear in the period indicated by the pouring out of the vials of wrath and the earth splitting, as it were, into two parts, one in which the Christ-men appear with white garments as the elect, already in the epoch of the seals; and the other part in which men appear in the form of the beast with seven heads and ten horns. Then appears also another beast with two horns, symbolized by the number 666.

LECTURE ELEVEN

Nuremberg, 29 June 1908

We have followed the evolution of our Earth so far that we have seen how, after various important events which are characterized for us by the opening of the seven seals and the sounding of the seven trumpets, in the future the Earth with all its beings will pass into a kind of spiritual condition, with the exception of those who refuse to receive the Christ-principle; this refusal we have to understand as a malevolent and unintelligent spiritual opposition energetically exercised. Of course, when the Earth has taken on its astral, its spiritual form, these beings too will be unable to exist in a dense material form—shall we say—in earthly substance; in the period following after the sounding of the trumpets, the period characterized by the outpouring of the vials of wrath, they will also pass over into astral forms. But the lower nature they will have acquired through not having accepted the Christ-principle will be expressed in the astral by their having essentially the animal form we have characterized, with the seven heads and ten horns.

Now from all that has been said you will be able to gather what the relation is between what we call ‘heads’ and what we call ‘horns’; but in connection with this the question will still arise in your soul: Why is it that just certain organs which appear in the physical body are called ‘horns’? Why does one designate as horns the physical organs and their vestiges in the astral when the earth shall have become astral?—It can be easily understood that those who have not taken up the principle of Christ must fall back again into the condition in which man was before he could partake of the Christ-principle. Man was formerly a non-individual being with a group-soul; and we have seen that during the first four ages of the Atlantean epoch he was furnished with the group-souls which are correctly symbolized by the lion, bull, eagle and man-like heads, the last being conceived of as an animal-head. Thus we must imagine that when man reappears in the spiritualized earth and has failed to take in the Christ-principle during our epoch, he will then again appear in the old form,

because he has contributed nothing towards the higher development of his previous group-soul nature; and not only in this form but with three heads more, which were added during the subsequent ages. Before the great Flood of Atlantis three further ages followed after the first four. In these three ages those who later received the Christ-principle also had in a certain way the possibility of taking up three further group-soul heads; but they have transformed them, they have raised the animal nature in man to a higher stage. They appear in a spiritualized form when the earth is spiritualized. The others, who have rejected the Christ-impulse, will appear with seven heads, because there were before the Flood seven ages during which the animal nature was developed. And because in the last three Atlantean ages bi-sexuality reigned in contradistinction to the first four, each head, so to speak, appears with two possibilities towards the animal nature, with male and female possibilities, so that in these three later ages each head appears with two horns; that is man with ten horns altogether.

Someone might now say: I quite understand that those who do not work upon themselves so as to strip off the form which they have and lift it up to the human, will reappear in the animal form; but I do not understand why horns are spoken of; it is quite comprehensible when heads are spoken of, but why horns?—I will now explain why one not only speaks of horns, but must speak of them. The expression is not merely to be understood symbolically, it is reality. Those who fail to take up the Christ-principle into themselves will actually appear in astral form also; but because they have so shaped their instincts that they have held fast, so to speak, to the animal group-soul, the corresponding instincts appear in the astral body which men will then have, in the form of hornlike protuberances. It is an actual form.

I will explain by means of a single organ how it comes about that the man who does not receive the Christ-principle will actually appear with horns when the earth has become spiritualized. Take the organ of the human larynx and the windpipe. You are continually breathing air in and out through this windpipe. This is an activity which man exercises. In a person who spiritualizes himself, this activity is in the service of the spiritual; but in one who does not incline towards the Christ-principle it takes on the character of the old forces belonging to the seven heads. Suppose we illustrate it in this way:



The air continually passes in through the larynx from outside. But you know that the astral body of man surrounds him. The stream of air which passes in will always be in connection with the astral. Now when the earth is spiritualized it can be seen whether the breathing of a man was the servant of the Christ-principle. If it was the servant of the Christ-principle it loses the form adapted to the present body. Man himself has the power to transform everything which is astral into a higher spiritualized form. If he does not take up the Christ-principle he is unable to draw out of this fleshly form what is suited to it, and the consequence is that after the fleshly form has fallen away and disappeared, after the physical larynx has gone, this form of the astral body remains, which continuously pokes its way into the larynx with the breath. The form remains in the shape of a horn. Wherever the external astral forces go in and out of man they remain adapted to the preceding animal form when man passes over into the astral form, that is, he then appears with true astral horns; these are actual astral shapes. They correspond exactly to the penetration of the astral substantiality during earth life. These pictures do not present random symbols, they present the true form of what will one day appear. This must be clearly understood.

Let us now determine our present position in evolution in accordance with what we have already considered, in accordance with that somewhat uncongenial scheme with many numbers. We now clearly understand that the 49 great transformations of Saturn are over, the 7 conditions of life belonging to Saturn (which in theosophical books are also called rounds), each with its 7 conditions of form (globes); and that, further, the 49 corresponding Sun-conditions and the 49 Moon-conditions are also over. Man has so far passed through these 147 conditions in his evolution. Added to these now come the conditions which man has already passed through during our Earth evolution. The first 3 conditions of life, which are also called the first 3 rounds, are behind us, and we are now living in the fourth condition of life, in the fourth round. Now as each of these

rounds includes its 7 conditions of form, we have completed 3×7 conditions during the first three rounds; therefore to the 147 we must add another 21. We have not yet completed the fourth condition of life, but part of it is behind us; we have finished the first 3 conditions of form, the almost formless spiritual conditions of arupa, rupa and the astral conditions, and are now in the physical. So to the 147 plus 21 we must add 3 more. Thus we have completed 171 conditions of form out of the 343 of the seven planets.

You must particularly bear in mind that we are now in the 172nd condition of form, which is the physical earth. During this 172nd condition all that we have described has taken place. When this condition began, the earth was united with sun and moon. During this condition the sun and moon withdrew, and after these events man appeared as he now is upon the physical earth. Then began the Atlantean epoch, of which we have spoken. We have also said that we must again divide this condition of form, which is the 172nd, into 7 epochs. The first lies in the far distant past. When it began the sun was still united with the earth. Somewhat figuratively we have grown accustomed to calling this epoch the Polarian race of mankind. It is difficult to form any idea of this epoch. Then during the withdrawal of the sun comes the race of the Hyperboreans; then, during the exit of the moon, a third, the so-called Lemurian race of mankind. The fourth epoch within the 172nd condition of form is the Atlantean race. The fifth is the one in which we are living. Following the fourth was the great Atlantean Flood. After our own will follow the epoch expressed in the Apocalypse of John by the seven seals; and then comes the one typified by the seven trumpets.

Now we know that each of these 7 epochs is again divided into 7 ages. Our own epoch, the fifth within the 172nd condition of form, is divided into the ancient Indian age of culture, the ancient Persian, the Assyrian-Babylonian-Chaldean-Egyptian-Jewish, the Graeco-Latin, our own, a sixth and then a seventh age of culture. Then follows the great War of All against All. The succeeding epoch is again divided into 7 parts, expressed by the seven seals; and the epoch expressed by the seven trumpets is again divided into 7 parts.

If you now consider that 171 conditions of form will be added to those that have already passed, you will have 342. One more added to this gives 343; but we are living in this one, it stands in the middle. Someone might

now say: It is really a very wonderful thing that we have the good fortune to be living exactly in the middle of evolution.—This must indeed seem a curious fact to those who do not reflect further upon it, that we are living in the middle of evolution! But to one who understands the whole matter it is by no means strange. It is no more wonderful than if someone, standing in an open field in level country where he sees equally far behind and in front, finds himself in the middle of a field of vision. If he goes some distance further, he again sees equally far behind and in front. There would be entirely different conditions in evolution if we were to take our stand at another point. We are always in the middle. Man can always see equally far behind him and before him, even with the highest spiritual vision. Something else might perhaps strike one. Someone might say: How is it that you do not say that we are exactly in the middle in other respects?—For here is something that does not quite fall in line. We are in the 172nd condition of form. The exact middle would be in the fourth epoch of this, but we are now in the fifth, that is, somewhat beyond the middle. This does not exactly agree with the statement that we are actually in the middle. Underlying this there is a remarkable fact; you may understand it by a comparison. If you comprehend this clearly, you will see that it is an important fact. It is really the case that in regard to the great main conditions we are in the middle; but in regard to the conditions which concern us immediately, we stand somewhat beyond the middle. Why is this?

Imagine you are travelling through very level country in a special railway carriage from which you can have a clear view in every direction. Suppose you are able to do this for some length of time. You have a perfectly clear view, and if at any one point in your journey you could rapidly make a sketch of the whole of the surroundings, this picture would be absolutely circular. There is only one case in which this would not be so. Imagine you are sitting in the rapidly moving train and you note the picture you see before you. At this moment you fall asleep and travel for a time while sleeping. During this time you are unaware of the way in which the picture is changing. You awake. Imagine that at this moment the picture you saw on going to sleep quickly arises again. It does not now agree. The reason is that you have been asleep for a certain length of time. Your picture does not now coincide with the view which is equal in every direction, for there is in addition the part you have slept through.

Let us now ask: Is it perhaps the case that man has slept from the middle of his evolution up to our age? It might be explicable to us that the picture would have to agree up to that point. Now, as we have come beyond the middle, it would be possible, if we have slept, that the picture may have shifted a little. Has man been asleep?—In the occult sense mankind has been asleep since the middle of the Atlantean epoch, because that was the time when the whole human race, as such, lost the ancient dim clairvoyance. From the spiritual point of view man sinks as if into a state of sleep. He begins to turn his attention to the sense world, and thus, from the point of view of the spiritual world, passes into a state of sleep; and only when he has regained the higher vision will he have a free view, so to speak, in every direction. There will then no longer be this shift of evolution, there will be the same distance behind and in front. Since the middle of the Atlantean epoch man has, in fact, been asleep, by reason of his being unable as a normal human being to participate in the sight of the spiritual worlds. If we leave initiates out of account—somnambulists also, if you will—we have to say that man does not see; for seeing means really to look into the world. As regards the spiritual world mankind is asleep, and will continue to sleep for a time. Since the Atlantean epoch the statement of John's Gospel holds good: The light shone into the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not.—

Thus in this division there is hidden an important truth, the truth that mankind is living in a dark age, the age of darkness, and the Christ-principle has come in this age in order that mankind might be led forth into the age of light. For this reason it was correct to put the present position of evolution not in the middle, but beyond the middle, because in Atlantis begins the dark age which will continue into the sixth epoch, when the elect appear in white garments, when they appear as the first of those who are again able, under ordinary normal conditions, to have the spiritual world around them. The age of darkness will have passed away. Then appears the age of which it must be said: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness comprehends the light—For this reason the black age is also called the time when man directs his gaze only to the physically material world and under normal circumstances does not see the spiritual world behind it.

We shall now connect this with what has already been said regarding evolution. When evolution has progressed beyond the seventh epoch,

beyond the epoch indicated by the sounding of the trumpets, the earth then spiritualizes itself and passes over first into the astral, then into the lower devachanic and finally into the higher devachanic condition. It returns again to the same conditions by condensing more and more from the finest spiritual; and the condition comes which is usually described in theosophical textbooks as the fifth round, which again will have 7 conditions of form, and in the middle will again pass through a development of what might be characterized as 7 successive race conditions.

Now let us, even if it be somewhat difficult, look a little more deeply into the coming conditions of our Earth evolution. Let us turn our gaze to a quite definite point in our future evolution, just as we have been considering the present point. Let us start with our present, namely the 172nd condition. Prior to this 172nd condition the Earth had already completed three sub-conditions; the 172nd condition is the earth itself. Three have already been completed and it is now in the fourth of these conditions. We are at the moment considering only the conditions of form. We reckon that we are in the fourth condition of life or fourth round. Granted this is so, we say: In this fourth condition of life or round we have already passed through three conditions of form and are now in the fourth. —Now we ask further, how many of the subconditions have we passed through?—The first, second, third and fourth. The last was the Atlantean epoch. This is now completed. We have passed through four conditions and are now in the fifth, the post-Atlantean. Of this fifth epoch we have again passed through four sub-conditions, namely the ancient Indian, the ancient Persian, the Egyptian and the Graeco-Latin, and are now in the fifth age. So that we can say: Before our immediate present stage of evolution we have completed 3, 4, 4 conditions. These 3, 4, 4 conditions which we have completed are described in Apocalyptic language as the *number of evolution*. When, therefore, it is asked: What is the number of evolution, our evolution?—the answer is: 344 (spoken three, four, four). This is not read according to the system of ten, but according to the system of seven. 3 conditions (out of the seven) have been gone through, and 4 conditions (out of the next smaller seven) have been gone through, and 4 conditions (out of again the next smaller seven). That is what is really meant by 344. One must not simply read it off like other numbers, but it contains, written side by side, the number of conditions passed through.

Now let us think of the following: When the Earth is spiritualized and has developed to its next conditions, then more and more stages will have been gone through. And the time must come, when 6 conditions of the first kind, 6 of the second and 6 of the third will have been passed through. Just as we now have 344 as the number of evolution, in the future when 6 conditions of life, 6 fundamental races, and 6 sub-races have been gone through, the number 666 (six, six, six) will apply, read in the manner described, which is the method used by the writer of the Apocalypse. Thus a time will come when the number 666 is the number of evolution. This will only be in a very distant future, but this future is already being prepared at the present time. Three great main conditions have been completed and we are now living in the fourth. But when the time indicated by the seven seals has passed, when we have reached the great War of All against All, we shall have gone through 6 of the middle kind. When the first trumpet sounds we shall have passed through 6 such main races, and when the first six trumpets are over, we shall have experienced 66. Up to then mankind will have had the opportunity to prepare for the terrible time which will follow much later, when not only 66 but 666 will be reached.

All that lies in the future is already being prepared now. The time that will come after the War of All against All, the time when the seventh trumpet sounds, will see men who, through having excluded themselves from the Christ-principle, will have attained a high degree of evil, of the tendency to sink into the abyss. By then these men will have seen to it that when the point of time 666 comes they will be able to descend very deeply into evil, into the abyss. Men will have taken into themselves, already in the period after the great War of All against All, when the seventh trumpet sounds, the germs of this descent into the abyss in the far-distant future. It will, indeed, for a long time be possible for those who have taken these germs into themselves to turn round and be converted, to turn back in their development in order even then to receive the Christ-principle. But the first predisposition will have been formed, and those who retain this tendency will no longer be able—when that distant future has come which is indicated not by 466 but by 666—to change this tendency into good. They will succumb to the frightful fate of which we have still to speak.

Thus we see that with this number 6, whether it is single, double or treble, there is connected something bad for human evolution. We are now

living in the fifth main period and the fifth sub-period. After the great War we shall pass into the sixth epoch; but before the great War there comes, immediately after our fifth age, the sixth age, described as the community of Philadelphia. We know that we are now living in the age in which materialism has spread abroad in mankind. We have seen how up through the centuries man has become more and more materialistic; but this materialism is such that reversal is possible at any time. The materialist still has the opportunity to turn back. It is, however, necessary that at the present time a spiritual conception of the world should gain ground, a conception which leads a small group of people to this occult, spiritual view of the world. This group will comprise those who will lay the first foundation of the great bond of brotherhood in the sixth age, which will follow ours, and is, therefore, not very far distant, whose beginning lies in a period which can be counted in millenia, and these will bring about the very first division in mankind. Those who persist obstinately in materialism, and also the others who will be inclined to accept a spiritual conception, who in the small group develop a bond of brotherhood, both these will appear in the sixth age. This single 6 can already be fateful to many, but not finally binding, for a turning back will still be possible. But mankind will continue beyond the great War of All against All. Five epochs will have passed away; the number 6 will appear again. Afterwards the allurements and temptations will come again to further develop the materialistic tendencies and to carry them over into the epoch of the sounding of the trumpets, and when 6 great periods and 6 smaller periods have passed away, after 66, there will already be very considerable tendencies in mankind which will not be so easy to put right as they are at the present time.

Thus we see that actually the world of bad tendencies works within mankind more and more and that the good men separate from the evil increasingly clearly and definitely, in accordance with the description of the writer of the Apocalypse. The last great separation will be when the number 6 will be fulfilled not only for the shorter periods but for the longer ones. This will be the case when our Earth has completed its six kingdoms of life or six rounds, and within the seventh round again six conditions of form. When the Earth has completed this, the tendencies of mankind to evil will have developed to a frightful form. Nothing but evil

will then appear, with frightful devastating power, in those who have remained evil.

How often, therefore, within our Earth, does mankind have the opportunity to succumb to the enticement of evil? First of all in the age after the present one, before the great War. Then man has a second and a third opportunity as well. This descent into evil is gradual. In the period when the earth has first passed over into a spiritual condition, we have to deal first of all with two possibilities. When the earth reunites with the sun, those who have received the Christ-principle will then be ripe to rise into the forces of the earth which unite with the sun; those who have received the possibility of evil will be excluded. These are, as it were, in such a position that they thrust the sun away from themselves, they thrust away what would enable them to unite with the forces of the sun. They are opponents of the union with the sun. For this reason the Apocalypse rightly designated the power, the Being, who leads men so to spiritualize themselves that they can unite with the sun as the Christ, and—as we shall hear—as the Lamb. One describes the Christ-Being as the genius of the sun who unites himself with the earth and becomes also the genius of the earth. He has already begun to be this since the event of Golgotha.

But there is also an opposing principle to the Lamb, there is also a Sun-Demon, the so-called Demon of the Sun, that which works in the evil forces of man, thrusting back the force of the Lamb, and it works in such a way that a certain part of the human race is thrust out of the evolution which leads to the sun. These are the opposing forces of the sun, they are in opposition to the sun; at the same time they are the forces which have the tendency to be entirely thrown out of our evolution when the 666 conditions of development have passed away; they will then be finally cast into the abyss. So that we may say: At the time when the earth is united with the sun there will be excluded, not only what is symbolized by the beast with seven heads and ten horns, but also what is furnished with forces which are in opposition to the sun. All this is destined to disappear into the abyss when the 666 is fulfilled.

Now this 666 has always been written down in a very mysterious way^{[33](#)}; we shall see later on that there is every reason to wrap in mystery the facts with which we are now dealing. And for this reason it was written 666. In the mysteries from which the writer of the Apocalypse received his initiation, they wrote 400 200 6 60. This is written in such a way that the

uninitiated cannot recognize it. This 666 was hidden; it was to remain a secret through having 400 200 6 60; by transposing everything an illusion is produced. Now in the kind of writing used by the initiates there is a certain principle which consists in letters being expressed by corresponding numbers. Several of the remarkable people, who in the course of the nineteenth century wished to unravel the mystery of the number 666, hit on this principle of expressing letters by numbers, but they came upon it in such a way that one can say: they heard sounds indeed, but not in unison. For they acquired in an unclear way what I have now explained and what has always been taught esoterically. They found out that when one sets letters of the Hebrew alphabet in place of these numbers the result is ‘Nero’; thus they concluded that 666 signifies Nero.

This is not the case. 666 must first be written: 400 200 660, and then one can arrive at the meaning. Then one must write 400 as ת, 200 as ר, 6 as ו, and 60 as ס. These four letters express the four numbers 400 200 6 60. In a wonderful way they have been drawn into this mystery, wonderful through the ingenuity of those who have drawn them in because at the same time the sounds of these four letters had a special occult significance. What must the number 666 actually mean if it is to express what we have explained? It must mean the principle which leads man to complete hardening in external physical life, so that he thrusts from himself just what would enable him to strip off the lower principles and to rise to the higher. What man has obtained as physical body, etheric body, astral body and lower ego, before it rises higher—these four principles are at the same time expressed by these four letters, by Samech the physical body, Vau the etheric body, Resh the astral body and Tau the lower ego. Thus we see that what is hardened in these four principles before they begin their divine evolution is expressed by the four letters. The writer of the Apocalypse can truly say: Here is wisdom!—For wisdom is contained in it: Let him who hath understanding consider the number 666!—

And now we will read it. We read it of course backwards, from right to left³⁴.

400	200	6	60
ת	ר	ו	ס
Tau	Resh	Vau	Samech

We have then to supply the vowels and it reads: Sorath, Sorath is the name of the Sun-Demon, the adversary of the Lamb. Every such spiritual being was described not only by name but also by a certain symbolical sign. For Sorath, the Sun-Demon, there was this sign:



a thick stroke bent back upon itself and terminating in two curved points.

Now we must understand the writer of the Apocalypse rightly. At the very beginning he makes a remarkable statement, which is usually wrongly translated. The beginning of the Apocalypse runs: This is the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him to show unto his servants things which must in short come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John—‘Signified it.’ By this we must understand that he gives the important, the real content of the mystery in signs. He has put what 666 expresses in signs. What he describes is the sign, and he describes it thus: And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb—(Revelation XIII, 11.) These are nothing other than the two strokes at the upper part of the sign, and in order to conceal this he simply calls the two strokes here ‘horns’. It was always the case in the use of the mystery language that one used a word in more than one sense so as to make it impossible for the uninitiated to understand without special effort. What he describes here is the symbol of the Sun-Demon: It has two horns like a lamb.—In the mystery language this is expressed by the word ‘Sorath’, and this, if we convert the several letters into their numbers, is expressed by the four numbers 400 200 6 and 60. This is a very veiled way of expressing 666.

Thus we see that the writer of the Apocalypse is referring to the adversary of the Lamb. When the earth passes over into the spiritual, the forms of men appear below in such a way that they receive their old animal form. The beast with the seven heads and ten horns appears. But there also appears their seducer, the adversary of Christ, who has the great power to prevent their returning to the sun. Man himself cannot be the adversary of Christ, he can only let slip the opportunity to take the Christ-

principle into himself, through what dwells in him as false power; but there is such an adversary, the Sun-Demon. He appears as soon as there is something that can become his prey. Before the prey is there, before the men are there with the seven heads and ten horns, there is nothing to lead astray, the tempter has nothing to seek there; but when men appear with such inclinations, then comes the tempter, and he appears as the second beast and seduces them!

Thus at the moment when the earth passes over into the astral condition there appears that in man which existed in him when the earth was still clothed with a covering of water. The man-animal appears. From the water one sees the beast with seven heads and ten horns raise itself. Through this man-animal having left the earth unused, Sorath, the adversary of the sun, the tempter, can now arise out of the earth, through this he can approach man and tear him down with all his might into the abyss. Thus from this time on we see a being clinging to man, which has a fearful power. What, then, does this being do in order to lead man into the most horrible things one can think of? For man to be led into mere immorality, such as is already known to normal man, this monster which appears as the Sun-Demon is not needed. Only when what in a good sense distinguishes the beings who bring salvation to mankind, only when spiritual eminence is turned to its opposite, only when spiritual power is placed in the service of the lower ego-principle, can it bring mankind to the point when the beast represented with two horns gains power over man. The misuse of spiritual forces is connected with that seductive power of the beast with the two horns. And we call this abuse of spiritual power black magic, in contradistinction to its right use, which we call white magic.

Thus through the split in mankind there is prepared the power to attain greater and greater spiritual conditions on the one hand, and thereby to obtain the use of the spiritual forces, and arrive at white magic; while on the other hand abuse of spiritual forces is a preparation for the most fearful kind of power of the two-horned beast, black magic. Mankind will finally be divided into beings who practise white magic and those who practise black magic. Thus in the mystery of 666 or Sorath is hidden the secret of black magic; and the tempter to black magic, that most fearful crime in Earth evolution, with which no other crimes can be compared, this seducer is represented by the writer of the Apocalypse as the two-horned beast. Thus there appears on our horizon, so to speak, the division of mankind in

the far distant future; the chosen of Christ, who finally will be the white magicians, and the adversaries, the terrible wizards, the black magicians, who cannot escape from matter and whom the writer of the Apocalypse describes as those who commit prostitution with matter. Hence this whole practice of black magic, the marriage which takes place between man and the hardening in matter, is presented to him in his spiritual vision as the great Babylon, the community made up of all those who carry on black magic; in the frightful marriage, or rather the concubinage, between man and the forces of deteriorated matter.

And thus in the far future we see two powers confronting each other; on the one hand those who swell the population of the great Babylon, and on the other hand those who rise above matter, who as man unite with the principle represented as the Lamb. We see how on the one hand the blackest ones segregate themselves in Babylon, led by all the forces opposing the sun, by Sorath the two-horned beast, and we see those who have developed from the elect, who unite with Christ, or the Lamb, who appears to them; the marriage of the Lamb on the one hand, and that of Babylon, the perishing Babylon, on the other. We see Babylon descend into the abyss, and the elect, who have celebrated the marriage with the Lamb, rise to the exercise of the forces of white magic. And as they not only recognize the spiritual forces but also understand how to operate them magically, they are able to prepare what they possess in the Earth for the next planetary incarnation, Jupiter. They sketch the great outlines, so to speak, which Jupiter is to have. We see the preparatory forms, which are to survive as the forms of the next Earth incarnation, as Jupiter, come forth by the power of the white magicians: we see the New Jerusalem arising out of white magic.

But what is described as Sorath—666—must first be expelled. What has succumbed to the principle of the two-horned beast, and hence has hardened itself into the beast with the seven heads and ten horns, is driven forth. The power by which the Sun-Genius overcomes those who are expelled, which drives them down into the abyss, is called the countenance of the Sun-Genius and the countenance of the Sun-Genius is Michael, who, as the representative, so to speak, of the Sun-Genius, overcomes the beast with the two horns, the seducer, which is also called the great dragon. This is represented to the seer in the picture of Michael who has the key to the abyss and the chain in his hand, who stands by the side of God and holds

the opposing forces in shackles. Thus is characterized in Christian-Rosicrucian esotericism the casting out of those who belong to 666, and the overcoming of the dragon, the seducer. Thus before our gaze today there appears what the writer of the Apocalypse has enveloped in mystery, what one must first discover by removing the veil, and of which he says: Here is wisdom. Let him who hath understanding count the number of the beast (that is the two-horned beast); for this number is 666—(Revelation XIII, 18.)

Those who have connected this with Nero have made a poor response to this challenge of the writer of the Apocalypse. For you see from what cosmic depths the wisdom must be drawn which leads to the explanation of the number 666. Although today you may have had to make efforts to rise to a characterization of this moment, you must not forget that understanding the deepest mysteries calls for effort. And the Apocalyptist has veiled these deepest mysteries of cosmic evolution. He has veiled them because it is good for man that the most important mysteries should be expressed in signs. For apart from all the rest, through the powers exercised to decipher the signs is gained much of what at the same time lifts us up to the good powers themselves. Let us not be cast down because we have to wend our way through a scheme of numbers. If you had had to grasp what was given secretly in the ancient schools in such numbers, before anything else was given, you would have had to go through very much more. There the pupils were obliged to be silent for a long time and quietly listen when nothing but numbers, 777, 666, and so on, were explained again and again, at first in their formal meaning. And only when they had grasped this meaning were they allowed to know their actual significance.

LECTURE TWELVE

Nuremberg, 30 June 1908

A certain unease concerning the destiny of mankind in the future could come over one who enters with feelings into the thoughts which occupied us at the close of our last lecture. A picture of this future of mankind had to be brought before you yesterday which on the one hand was great and powerful, filling one with bliss, showing the future condition of the man who has understood the mission of our present age upon the Earth, who has received the Christ-Spirit and has thereby been able to keep pace with the necessary spiritualization of our Earth, a glorious blessed picture of those men who are called in exoteric Christianity the ‘redeemed’ or not quite appropriately the ‘elect’. But the opposite picture had also to be put before you, the picture of the abyss in which is found a mankind which was not in a position to receive the Christ-Spirit, which remained imprisoned in matter, which excluded itself, so to speak, from the spiritualizing process leading into the future, which has fallen away from the spiritualized earth, and, in a certain sense apart from it, is advancing towards a frightful fate. When the beast with the seven heads and ten horns glowers at us from the abyss, led astray by the other frightful being, the two-horned beast, this picture gives rise to fear and horror, and many might ask: Is it not hard and unwise on the part of Providence to lead a number of men to such a frightful fate, and in a way, to condemn them to the abyss of evil?—

And the question might arise: Would it not have been more fitting for a wise Providence to have averted this frightful fate from the very beginning?—

In answer to these questions, we might, to begin with, say something abstract, theoretical—and it already signifies a great deal for one who can grasp this theoretical statement in his feeling: It is extremely wise of Providence to take care that a number of men should be faced with this terrible fate as a possibility.—For if it were impossible for man to sink into the abyss of evil, then what on the one hand we call love and on the other

freedom would also be unattainable for him. To the occultist freedom is inseparably connected with the concept of love. Love would be impossible for man and freedom would be impossible for man without the possibility of sailing down into the abyss. A man unable, of his own free decision, to choose good or evil, would be a being only led on a leading-string to a good which must be attained of necessity and who had no power to choose the good of his own fully purified will, by the love which springs from freedom. If it were impossible for man to follow in the trail of the monster with the two horns, it would also be impossible for him to follow God out of his own individual love. It was in accordance with a wise Providence that the possibility of freedom was given to a mankind which has been developing through our planetary system, and this possibility of freedom could be given on no other condition than that man himself has to make the free choice between good and evil.

But this is only an empty theory, you might say, and man rises but slowly to the point where he not only says this in words and accepts it in moments of speculation as a kind of explanation, but also experiences it in his feeling. Seldom does man now rise to the thought: I thank you, O wise Providence, that you have made it possible for me to bring you a love which is not forced but springs up free in my own breast; that you do not force me to love you, but that you have given me the choice of following you.—Nevertheless, man has to rise to this feeling if he wishes really to feel this theoretical explanation.

We can, however, offer additional comfort, or, rather, another quieting assurance, from a clairvoyant observation of the world. Yesterday we said that only those who are already today entangled in some way in the prongs of the two-horned beast, which leads men to the practice of black magic, have an almost inexorable leaning towards the abyss. And even for such as already now fall into the arts of black magic it will still be possible to turn back in the future. Those who do not come at all into any contact with black magic arts (and this for the time being is the case with most people) may have some tendency in the period following the War of All against All towards final evil, but the possibility in the future of turning back again and following the good will be far greater than the compulsion unconditionally to follow evil.

From these lectures it may be seen that for those who today turn to a spiritual conception of the world, in order to live beyond the great War into

the sixth epoch (which is represented by the opening of the seals), there is the possibility to receive the Christ-principle. They will be able to receive the spiritual elements which are laid down in the age signified by the community at Philadelphia, and subsequently they will manifest a strong tendency towards becoming spiritual. Those who turn today to a spiritual view receive a powerful disposition to enter upon the upward path. One must not fail to recognize how important it is that even at the present time a number of persons should not turn a deaf ear to the so-called anthroposophical world conception, which is bringing to mankind in a fully conscious manner the first germs of spiritual life, whereas formerly this took place unconsciously. That is the important thing, that this portion of mankind should take in the first conscious tendencies towards the upward movement.

Through a group of people dedicating themselves today to the foundation of a great brotherhood which will live over into the epoch of the seven seals, help will be provided for those others, who today still turn a deaf ear to the teachings of Spiritual Science. For the present, we have still to go through many incarnations of the present souls before the great War of All against All, and again up to the decisive point after the great War. And afterwards in the epoch of the seals we also have to go through many changes, and men will often have the opportunity to open their hearts to the spiritual world-conception, which is today flowing through the anthroposophical movement. There will be many, many opportunities, and you must not imagine that future opportunities will only be such as they are today. The way in which we are able to make the spiritual view of the world known to others is still very feeble. Even if a man were now to speak in such a way that his voice were to sound forth directly like the fire of the spirit, that would be feeble as compared with the possibilities which will exist in later and more developed bodies in order to direct our fellow men to this spiritual movement. When mankind as a whole will have developed higher and higher in future ages, there will be very different means through which the spiritual conception of the world will be able to penetrate into men's hearts, and the most fiery word today is small and weak compared with what will work in the future to give all souls the possibility of the spiritual conception of the world—all the souls now living in bodies in which no heart beats for this spiritual conception of the world.

We are at the beginning of the spiritual movement, and it will grow. It will require much obduracy and much hardness to close the heart and mind to the powerful impressions of the future. The souls now living in bodies which have the heart to hear and feel Anthroposophy are now preparing themselves to live in bodies in the future in which power will be given them to serve their fellow men, who up to that time had been unable to feel this heartbeat within them. We are only preparing for the preparers, as yet nothing more. The spiritual movement is today but a very small flame; in the future it will develop into a mighty spiritual fire.

When we bring this other picture before our souls, when we let it enter right into our feelings, then there will live in us a very different feeling and a very different possibility of knowledge concerning this fact. Today it is what we call black magic into which men can, in a certain way, fall consciously or unconsciously. Those who now live out their lives and remain quite untouched by the spiritual conception of the world, who live in their comfortable everyday torpor and say: What does it matter to me what these dreaming anthroposophists say?—these have the least possibility of entering into the circles of black magic. In their case they are now only neglecting the opportunity to help their fellow men in the future in their efforts to attain the spiritual life. For themselves they have not yet lost much. But those who today are beginning in an unlawful way to take up the spiritual life, are really taking up into themselves in the very first beginnings the germs of something one might call black magic. There are very few individuals today who have already fallen into black magic in the frightful sense in which this horrible art of mankind must really be spoken of.

You will best understand that this really is so if I give you but a slight indication of the way in which black magic is systematically cultivated; then you will see that you may search high and low among all your acquaintances and you will find no one of whom you could believe that he was already inclining to such arts. All the rest is fundamentally only the purest dilettantism which may be easily got rid of in future ages. It is bad enough that in our day things are sometimes praised with the intention to defraud people—things which in a certain sense are also the beginning of the art of black magic. It is also bad that certain ideas are percolating, which—although they do not at all belong to the black art—nevertheless mislead people; these are the ideas which rule the world today in certain

circles and which can flourish amidst materialistic thought, but which although not without danger, will not be irreparable in the next epochs. Only when a man begins to practise the ABC of black magic is he on the dangerous path to the abyss. The ABC consists in the pupil of a black magician being taught to destroy life quite consciously, and in doing so to cause as much pain as possible and to feel a certain satisfaction in it. When the purpose is to stab or cut into a living being with the intention of feeling pleasure in that being's pain, that is the ABC of the black arts. We cannot touch upon the further stages, but you will find it horrible enough when you are told that the beginner in black magic has to cut and stab into living flesh, not as the vivisector cuts—this is already bad enough, but the principle of vivisection finds its overthrow in the vivisector himself, because in kamaloka he will himself have to feel the pain he has caused his victims, and for this reason will leave vivisection alone in the future. But he who systematically cuts into flesh, and feels satisfaction in it, begins to follow the precipitous path of black magic. And this opens the way for him to draw closer and closer to the being described as the two-horned beast.

This seductive being is of quite a different nature from man. It originates from other world periods; it has acquired the tendencies of other world periods and will feel deep satisfaction when it meets with beings such as those evil ones who have refused to take up inwardly the good which can flow from the Earth. This being has been unable to receive anything from the Earth; it has seen Earth evolution come but has said: I have not progressed with the Earth in such a way that I can gain anything from Earthly existence—This being could only have got something from the Earth by being able to gain the rulership at a certain moment, namely when the Christ-principle descended to the earth. If the Christ-principle had been strangled in the germ, if Christ had been overcome by the adversary, it would have been possible for the whole Earth to succumb to the Sorath-principle. This, however, did not take place, and so this being has to be content with the refuse of mankind who have not inclined towards the Christ-principle, who have remained embedded in matter; they in the future will form his cohorts.

Now in order to understand these cohorts more clearly we must consider two ideas which in a certain sense may serve as a key to certain chapters of the Apocalypse. We must study the ideas of the 'first death' and the 'second death'. What is the first death and what is the second death of

man, or of mankind? We must form a clear picture of the ideas which the writer of the Apocalypse connected with these words. To this end we must once more recall to mind the elementary truths concerning human existence.

Consider a human being of the present day, one just like each of you. He lives in such a way that from morning when he awakes until evening when he falls asleep he consists of four principles: the physical body, etheric body, astral body and the ego. We also know that during his earthly existence man works from his ego upon the lower principles of his being, and that during the Earth existence he must succeed in bringing the astral body under the control of the ego. We know that the Earth will be followed by its next incarnation, Jupiter. When man has reached Jupiter he will appear as a different being. The Jupiter-man will have thoroughly worked from his ego upon his astral body. And when today we say: The Earth-man who stands before us in the waking condition has developed physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego,—we must say of the Jupiter-man: He will have developed physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego, but he will have changed his astral body into spirit-self.—He will live at a higher stage of consciousness, a stage which may be characterized as follows: The ancient dim picture-consciousness of the Moon, which existed also in the first epochs of the Earth-consciousness, will again be there with its pictures as clairvoyant consciousness, but it will be furnished with the human ego, so that with this Jupiter-consciousness man will reflect as logically as he does now with his day-consciousness on earth.

The Jupiter-man therefore will possess clairvoyant vision of a low degree. Part of the soul-world will lie open to him; he will perceive the pleasure and pain of those around him in pictures which will arise in his Imaginative consciousness. He will therefore live under entirely different moral conditions. Now imagine that as a Jupiter-man you have a human soul before you. The pain and pleasure of this soul will arise in pictures before you. The pictures of the pain of the soul will torment you, and if you do not remove the other's pain it will be impossible for you to combine the pain of the other soul with your own well-being. The pictures of sorrow and suffering would torment the Jupiter-man with his higher consciousness if he were to do nothing to alleviate this sorrow and thus at the same time remove his own distressing pictures which are nothing but

the expression of the sorrow around him! It will not be possible for one to feel pleasure or pain without others also feeling it.

Thus we see that man gains an entirely new state of consciousness in addition to his present ego-consciousness. If we wish to understand the importance of this in evolution we must once more turn our attention to man when asleep. During this condition the physical body and etheric body lie in bed, and his ego and astral body are outside. During the night (if we speak somewhat inexactly) he callously abandons his physical and etheric bodies. But through being able to liberate himself during the night from his physical and etheric bodies, through being able to live at night in a spiritual world, it is possible for man just during this earthly existence to work transformingly from his ego upon his astral body. How does he do this?

To describe this clearly we may say: Let us take man in his waking state.—Let us suppose that in addition to his professional work and duties he devotes a short time to higher considerations in order to make his own, for instance, the great impulses which flow from the Gospel of St. John, from the words: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God—Let us suppose that he allows to rise within him the great pictures brought before him in John's Gospel, so that he is always filled by the thought: At the beginning of our era a Being lived in Palestine whom I wish to follow; I will so order my life that everything may be approved by this Being; and I will consider myself as a man who has taken this personality as his ideal.—But we need not intolerantly think that the Gospel of St. John alone may be taken. It is possible in many other ways to immerse oneself in something which can fill the soul with such pictures; and although in a certain way we must describe John's Gospel as the greatest that has arisen within mankind, exercising the most powerful effect, we may, however, say that others who devote themselves to the Vedanta wisdom or immerse themselves in the Bhagavad Gita or in the Dhammapada, will also have sufficient opportunities in following incarnations to come to the Christ-principle just through what they have thus acquired. Let us suppose that during the day a man fills his soul with pictures and ideas such as these, then his astral body is laid hold of by these thoughts, feelings and pictures, and they form forces in his astral body and produce various effects in it. Then when man withdraws from his physical and etheric bodies at night, these effects remain in the astral body,

and he who during the day has been able to immerse himself in the pictures and feelings of John's Gospel has created something in his astral body which during the night appears in it as a powerful effect. In this way man works today during the waking consciousness upon his astral body.

Only the initiate can become conscious of these effects today, but men are gradually developing towards this consciousness. Those who reach the goal of Earth evolution will then have an astral body completely permeated by the spiritual content which the ego has implanted into it. They will have this consciousness as a result, as a fruit of Earth evolution, and will carry it over into the Jupiter evolution. We might say that when the Earth period has thus come to an end man will have gained capacities which are symbolically represented by the building of the New Jerusalem. Man will then already look into the picture-world of Jupiter; the spirit-self will then be fully developed in him. That is the goal of the Earth evolution. What, then, is man to gain in the course of Earthly evolution? What is the first goal? The transformation of the astral body. This astral body which today is always free of the physical and etheric bodies at night will appear in the future as a transformed portion of the human being. Man brings into it what he gains on the Earth; but this would not be sufficient for the Earth evolution. Imagine that man were to come out of the physical body and etheric body every night and were to fill his astral body with what he had acquired during the day, but that the physical and etheric bodies were untouched by it. Man would then still not reach his Earthly goal. Something else must take place; it must be possible for man during his Earthly evolution to imprint ever and again at least in the etheric body, what he has taken into himself. It is necessary for this etheric body also to receive effects from what man develops in his astral body.

Man cannot yet of himself work into this etheric body. Upon Jupiter, when he has transformed his astral body, he will be able to work into this etheric body also, but today he cannot do this; he still needs helpers, so to speak. Upon Jupiter he will be capable of beginning the real work on the etheric body. Upon Venus he will work on the physical body; this is the part most difficult to overcome. Today he still has to leave both the physical and etheric bodies every night and emerge from them. But in order that the etheric body may receive its effects, so that man shall gradually learn to work into it, he needs a helper. And the helper who makes this possible is none other than Christ, while we designate the Being

who helps man to work into the physical body as the Father. But man cannot work into his physical body before the helper has come who makes it possible to work into his etheric body: No man cometh to the Father, but by me—No one acquires the capacity of working into the physical body who has not gone through the Christ-principle. Thus, when he has reached the goal of Earthly evolution, man will have the capacity—through being able to transform his astral body by his own power—to work down into the etheric body also. This he owes to the living presence of the Christ-principle on the Earth. Had Christ not united himself with the Earth as a living being, had he not come into the aura of the Earth, then what is developed in the astral body would not be communicated to the etheric body. From this we see that one who shuts himself up by turning away from the Christ-principle deprives himself of the possibility of working into his etheric body in the way that is necessary during Earthly evolution.

Thus we shall be able to characterize in another way the two kinds of man whom we find at the end of the Earth's evolution. We have those who have received the Christ-principle and thus transformed their astral body, and who have gained the help of Christ to transform the etheric body also. And we have the others who did not come to the Christ-principle; who also were unable to change anything in the etheric body, for they could not find the helper, Christ.

Now let us look at this future of mankind. The earth spiritualizes itself, that is, man must lose completely something which he now in his physical existence considers as belonging to him. We can form an idea of what will then happen to man if we consider the ordinary course of his life after death. He loses the physical body after death. It is to this physical body that he owes the desires and inclinations linked to ordinary life; and we have described what man experiences after death. Let us take a person who is fond of some particularly dainty food. During life he can enjoy this, but not after death. The desire, however, does not cease, for this is seated, not in the physical body but in the astral body, and as the physical instrument is absent it is impossible to gratify this desire. Such persons look down from kamaloka to the physical world which they have left; they see there all that could give them satisfaction, but they cannot enjoy it because they have no physical instrument for the purpose. Through this they experience a burning thirst. Thus it is with all desires that remain in man after death and are related to the physical world, because they can only be satisfied

through physical instruments. This is the case every time after death; each time man sees his physical body fall away, and as something remains in him from this physical body it still urges him to the ordinary world of the physical plane, and until he has weaned himself from this in the spiritual world he lives in the fire of desires.

Now imagine the last earthly incarnation before the spiritualization of the earth, the laying aside of the last physical body. Those who are now living on the earth will have progressed so far through the Christ-impulse that, in a certain way, it will not be very difficult for them to lay aside the very last physical body; they will, however, be obliged to leave something, for all that can give pleasure from the objects of this earth will have disappeared once and for all from the spiritual earth. Think of the last death possible in our Earth evolution, think of the laying aside of the last physical body. It is this last death of the incarnations which in the Apocalypse is called the 'first death', and those who have received the Christ-principle see this physical body as a sort of husk which falls away. The etheric body has now become important to them for, with the help of Christ, it has become so organized that it is for the time being adapted to the astral body and no longer desires and longs for what is below in the physical world. Only with all that has been brought into the etheric body through the help of Christ do men continue to live on in the spiritualized earth. They have created a harmony between their astral body and their ether body. The Christ-principle has created this harmony.

On the other hand there are those who have not received the Christ-principle. These do not possess this harmony. They too must lose the physical body, for there is no such thing at first in the spiritual earth. Everything physical must first be dissolved. It remains as desires for the physical, as the unpurified spirituality, as the spiritual hardened in matter. An etheric body remains which the Christ has not helped to be adapted to the astral body, but which is suited to the physical body. They are the souls who will feel hot fires of desire for physical sensuality; in the etheric body they will feel unappeasable, burning desire by reason of what they have had in the physical life and which they must now do without. Thus, in the next period, after the physical has melted away, we have men who live in an etheric body which harmonizes with the astral body, and we have others whose etheric body lives in discord because they desire what has fallen away with the physical body.

Then in the course of further evolution there comes a condition where the spiritualizing of the earth has proceeded so far that there can no longer be even an etheric body. Those whose etheric body completely harmonizes with the astral body lay aside this etheric body without pain, for they remain in their astral body which is filled with the Christ-being. They feel the laying aside of the etheric body as a necessity in evolution, for they feel within them the capacity to build it up again for themselves because they have received Christ. Those, however, who in this etheric body desire what belongs to the past can also not retain this etheric body when all becomes astral. It will be taken from them, it will be torn out of them, and they now feel this as a second dying, as the 'second death'. This second death passes unnoticed over those who have made their etheric body harmonize with the astral body through the reception of the Christ-principle. The second death has no power over them. But the others feel the second death when they have to pass over into the future astral form. The condition of mankind will then be such that those who have reached the goal of evolution will have entirely permeated their astral body with Christ. They will be ready to pass over to Jupiter. Upon our Earth they have made the plan of the Jupiter evolution. This is the plan which is called the New Jerusalem. They live in a 'new heaven' and a 'new earth', that is Jupiter.

This new Jupiter will be accompanied by a satellite, composed of those who are excluded from the life in the spiritual, who have experienced the second death and are, therefore, unable to attain the Jupiter consciousness. Thus we have those men who have pressed forward to the Jupiter consciousness, who have attained Manas; and those beings who have thrust away the forces which would have given them this consciousness. They are those who only upon Jupiter have attained to the ego-consciousness of the Earth, who exist there, so to speak, as man now exists on the earth with his four members. But such a man can develop himself only on the Earth, the Earth alone has the environment, the ground, the air, the clouds, the plants, the minerals which are necessary to man if he wishes to gain what may be gained within the four members. Jupiter will be quite differently formed, it will be a 'new earth'; soil, air, water, and every being will be different. It will be impossible for beings who have only gained the Earth consciousness to live a normal life; they will be backward beings.

But now comes something that will once again comfort us. Even on this Jupiter there is still a last possibility, through the strong powers which the more advanced will have, to move those fallen beings to turn back and even to convert a number. Only with the Venus incarnation will come the last decision, the unalterable decision. When we reflect upon all this, the thought we recently considered will be seen in a new light. It will no longer call forth anxiety and disquietude, but only the determination: I will do everything necessary to fulfil the Earth mission.—

When we consider all this in the right way in our souls, a mighty picture of the future of mankind opens up before us and we get some idea of all that was in the illuminated soul of the writer of the Apocalypse who wrote down what we, in a faltering way, can discover from a study of it. Every word of the writer, indeed every turn of expression, is significant. We must only try to understand it clearly. Thus, according to our last lecture, in 666 we are referred to the beast with the two horns, and then a remarkable statement is made: Here is Wisdom! Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man—An apparent contradiction, but one of the many contradictions which are to be found in every occult work and exposition. You must be sure of one thing; that an exposition which runs so smoothly that the ordinary human intellect can find no contradiction in it is certainly not based on an occult foundation. Nothing in world evolution is so shallow and trivial as what the human intellect, the ordinary intelligence perceives as free from contradiction. One must penetrate more deeply into the substrata of human contemplation and then the contradiction will disappear. One who observes how a plant grows from root to fruit, how the green leaf changes into the petals, these into the stamens, and so on, may say: Here we have contradictory forms, the flower-leaf contradicts the stem-leaf.—But one who looks more deeply will see the unity, the deeper unity in the contradiction. So it is with what the intellect can see in the world. It is precisely in the deepest wisdom that it sees contradictions. Hence it must not disturb us when here in the Apocalypse we meet with an apparent contradiction: Let him that hath understanding ponder over the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man.—

We must once more consider by what means it may be possible for a man to be led astray by the two-horned beast. We have pointed out that since the middle of the Atlantean epoch man has slept through the higher

spiritual development, so to speak. This sleep still exists at the present time. But it was necessary. If it had not entered in, then what we call understanding, intellect, would never have been developed. Man did not possess this before our epoch, he acted from other impulses. His pictures drove him to action, without reflection. He has lost this ancient gift of clairvoyant vision and in its place he has developed intellect and has descended into matter. This has drawn a veil over the spiritual world, but at the same time the intellect has been acquired. This may be a great hindrance to spiritual development. At the very last it will be nothing else but this misguided understanding, this misguided intelligence, which can prevent man from coming to the Christ-principle; and if those who at last succumb to the two-horned beast could look back upon what has dealt them the worst blow they would say: The tendency to descend into the abyss only came later, but what darkened the Christ-principle for me was my intellect.—Oh, let him who has this intellect reflect upon the number of the beast! For only through man having become human, that is to say, through his being gifted with this ego-intellect, can he succumb to the beast 666. For the number of the beast is at the same time the number of a man. And only one possessing intellect can perceive that this is so. It is the number of that man who has let himself be misled by his intellect. Deep truths such as these are concealed in these things.

Thus you see that the writer of the Apocalypse gives you a great deal when you reflect upon the various intimations we have given. He gives much of what we today call anthroposophical truths. He gives what he promises. He leads man to the vision of what is to come; to the vision of the beings and powers which guide the world. He leads us to the spirit given us in the first occult seal picture, and to the form presented in the last occult seal picture. Here we see how the regular form of the New Jerusalem is revealed to him spiritually. This is what is clairvoyant in it. The regularity of the New Jerusalem is indicated in the last chapter by its description as a cube (Verse 16). To describe all that is in this last seal picture would take us too far. (See the seventh occult seal picture.)

It is now necessary to point out for what purpose the Apocalypse was written. I should indeed have to say a great deal if I were to describe this in detail, but you can at least take away with you one hint, one which we find at a definite point in the Apocalypse. The writer of the Apocalypse says: A time will come when that high degree of consciousness will actually have

developed, when man will see the beings who direct the world, and beings represented by the Lamb, by the appearance of the Son of Man with the flaming sword—We are referred to this in tones which contain within them that assurance of which we have spoken. The writer of the Apocalypse, who is a great seer, knows that in ancient times men were gifted with a dim clairvoyance. We have described this and have seen how at that time men were the companions, so to speak, of beings in the spiritual world, and themselves saw the spiritual world. But who lost this gift of seership? Who? We must now put this forward as an important question. We have seen that fundamentally it was lost by those men who were led to the physical plane, the physical life, when the second half of the Atlantean epoch began. Man looked upon the solid formation of our earth, upon the clearly outlined objects of our earth. The ancient clairvoyance disappeared; he became conscious of his self, but the spiritual world was closed to him. The formations, which in ancient times filled the air like an ocean of mist, disappeared; the air became clear, the ground free. Man stepped out on to the free earth. This took place comparatively late; it coincided with the attainment of the present intellect, the present self-consciousness of man.

Now let us remember what we said about this earth as well as about the great event of Golgotha. If someone had observed the earth at that time from a distance with clairvoyant vision at the moment when the blood flowed from the wounds of the Redeemer, he would have perceived that its whole astral aura changed. The earth was then permeated by the Christ-force. Through this event the earth will be able to reunite with the sun. This power will grow. This is the power which preserves our etheric body from the second death. Christ becomes more and more the Earth-Spirit, and the true Christian understands the words: He who eats my bread treads me underfoot.—He considers the body of the earth to be the body of Christ. The earth as a planetary body is the body of Christ; of course at present this is only at its beginning. Christ has still to become the Earth-Spirit; he will unite himself fully with the earth, and when the earth later unites with the sun, the great Earth-Spirit, Christ, will be the Sun-Spirit.

The body of the earth will be the body of Christ; and men must work upon this body. They began this when they stepped out upon the earth; they have worked upon this earth with their forces. In all traditions one can find something which is little noticed because it is little understood. Thus, for example, in the Persian tradition we find that since the time men lost

clairvoyant consciousness they have become beings who have pierced the earth. While they live in the phase in which they pierce the earth—that is, while they work upon the earth—during this time when they pierce the body of Christ they do not see with clairvoyant consciousness the guiding powers and, above all, they do not see the Christ face to face. But the writer of the Apocalypse refers to the time when not only the ancient clairvoyants will see the spiritual, but when mankind will again have come to the stage where it is possible to see the Christ-Being himself. All will see him, including those who have pierced him, those who had to pass through a portion of their evolution in cultivating the earth, in the piercing of the earth, they will see the Christ. For these sayings are such that they lead those who gradually learn to unveil them deep into the imaginative world of the mysteries, of the Apocalyptic language.

What, then, did the Apocalyptist wish to write, what did he wish to represent? This question will be answered if we briefly refer to the origin of the Apocalypse. Where do we first find what is written down in the Apocalypse? If you could go back to the mysteries of ancient Greece, to the Orphic and Eleusinian Mysteries, if you could go back to the mysteries of ancient Egypt, Chaldea, Persia and India, you would find the Apocalypse everywhere. It existed, it was there. It was not written down, but lived from one generation of priests to another, through the generations of initiators, where memory was so vivid that one could master such abundant material. Memory even in much later times was far better than ours. We need only remember the singers of the Iliad, how they went about and sang their songs from memory. It is only comparatively recently that memory has deteriorated so much. In the mysteries these truths were not written down, but they lived from generation to generation of the initiators.

Why was the Apocalypse written? Its purpose was to serve as an instruction for those who brought the pupils into initiation. At that time the one who was to be initiated was led out of the physical body and remained as if dead. But when he had been led out, the initiator enabled him to see in his etheric body what later through the Christ-impulse could be seen clairvoyantly in the physical body. Thus the ancient initiates were the prophets who could point to Christ; and they did so. They were able to do this, because Christ is shown in this Apocalypse as due to appear in the future. The Mystery of Golgotha had never yet taken place where a person

in the physical body could live through the whole drama of initiation historically.

Where then could the possibility of this event of Golgotha be comprehended? At a certain stage the initiates had comprehended it outside their body. What took place on Golgotha had taken place in another consciousness. There might have been thousands there, and yet the event of Golgotha could have passed by them unnoticed. What would it have been to them? The death of an ordinary condemned person! It was only possible to understand what took place on Golgotha where the contents of the mysteries were known. The initiators could say: You understand the one whom we have shown you during the three and a half days, whom the prophets have announced to you, if you use the means which the mysteries can give you.—

The Apocalypstist had received the oral tradition of the mysteries. He said: If I am permeated with what can be experienced in the mysteries, Christ appears to me.—Thus the Apocalypse was nothing new; but its application to the unique event of Golgotha was something new. The essential thing was that for those who had ears to hear it was possible, with the help of what is in the Apocalypse of John, to penetrate gradually to a true understanding of the event of Golgotha. This was the intention of the writer of the Apocalypse. He received the Apocalypse from the ancient mysteries; it is an ancient sacred book of mankind and has only been presented externally to mankind by the disciple whom the Lord loved and to whom he bequeathed the task of announcing his true form. He is to remain until Christ comes; so that those who have an illuminated consciousness will be able to understand him. He is the great teacher of the true event of Golgotha. He has given to man the means by which he can really understand the event of Golgotha.

At the beginning of the Apocalypse the writer says (I have tried to translate the first few words in such a way that they convey the true meaning): This is the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto his servant, to show in brief what must needs come to pass. This is put in symbols and sent through his angel to his servant John, who wrote these things.—He wishes to describe it ‘in brief’; what does this mean? It means in other words: If I were to describe in detail all that will take place from now up to the goal of Earth evolution, I should have to write a very great deal, but I will show it to you in a short sketch.—This the translators who

could not penetrate into the spirit of the Apocalypse have translated as ‘to show what must shortly come to pass’. They thought that what is described in the Apocalypse was to happen in the near future. But it ought to read: I will briefly describe what will take place.—The original text has a phrase which fully admits of the true interpretation I have tried to give in the introduction to *Seals and Columns*^{[35](#), [36](#)}.

We have said much in these lectures concerning this ancient sacred document of the human race, much concerning the secrets which the Lord imparted to mankind through the disciple whom he loved. You may have learnt from this that the Apocalypse is a profound book full of wisdom, and have perhaps sometimes during these considerations been troubled because much in it is so difficult to understand. Now I should like to say one thing at the close of our studies: All that I have been able to say to you corresponds exactly to the intentions of the writer of the Apocalypse, and was always taught in this way in the schools which have kept to the intention of the writer of the Apocalypse. But it is by no means all that could be said and one can go much deeper into the truths, into the foundations of the Apocalypse. And if we were to penetrate fully into all the depths, what I have been able to say to you would seem only like a first superficial presentation. It cannot be done in any other way, we can at first give only a superficial presentation. One must go through this. One has to begin with the elementary things, and then, when one has gone a little further, greater depths will be found. For below the surface there is a very great deal of which we have been only able to unveil a very little. If you go further along the path which in a certain way you have begun by turning your attention to the exposition of the Apocalypse of John, you will gradually penetrate into the depths of spiritual life. You will come into depths which cannot possibly be expressed today, because they could not be brought into consciousness, because no one has yet ears to hear. The ears must first be prepared to hear, by such explanations as have now been given. Then they will gradually be there, ears able to hear the Word which flows at such profound depths through the Apocalypse. If you have been able to receive a little of what could be imparted, you must be aware that only the most superficial things could be given, and of these only a few observations. May it give you the impulse to penetrate more and more deeply into what can only be surmised through these lectures. If I were to say only what can be said about the surface, I should have to lecture still

for many, many weeks. These lectures could only be a stimulus for further study, and those who feel the impulse to penetrate more deeply into the Apocalypse will have received them in the right way.

NOTES

[1](#) (P.9) Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831).

[2](#) (p.9) Hegel said, literally: ‘The most profound thought is united with the figure of Christ, the external and historical figure of Christ. And this is what is so great in the Christian religion: that with all its profundity it is nevertheless easily grasped externally with consciousness while at the same time challenging us to penetrate more deeply. It is thus right for every level of education and also satisfies the highest demands.’ In *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte* (Lectures on the Philosophy of World History).

[3](#) (p.15) Georg Friedrich Daumer (1800-1875): *Kaspar Hauser. Sein Wesen, seine Unschuld, seine Erduldungen und sein Ursprung* (Caspar Hauser. His Being, His Innocence, His Sufferings and His Origin), Regensburg 1873, i.a.

[4](#) (p.15) This probably refers to Jakob Wassermann and his novel *Caspar Hauser, the Enigma of a Century* (Kaspar Hauser oder Die Trägheit des Herzens) 1907/1908. Regarding the novel's description of the peculiar constellation in the heavens during the funeral of Caspar Hauser see Karl Heyer: *Kaspar Hauser und das Schicksal Mitteleuropas im 19. Jahrhundert, Beiträge zur Geschichte des Abendlandes, Volume IX, 1958* (Caspar Hauser and the Destiny of Middle Europe in the Nineteenth Century).

[5](#) (p.18) Goethe's words literally: ‘The eye owes its existence to light. From undifferentiated animal auxiliary organs, light calls forth an organ after its own image, and thus the eye develops by means of light and for the light so that the inner light may come forth to meet the outer.’ *Theory of Colours* (Entwurf einer Farbenlehre), 1810, Introduction.

[6](#) (p.20) Goethe's *Faust*, Part II, Final Chorus.

[7](#) (p.21) Exodus, Chapter III.

[8](#) (p.22) Gospel of St. John, Chapter VIII, Verse 58.

[9](#) (p.24) This refers to the second principle of The Theosophical Society.

[10](#) (p.25) Compare with the First Epistle General of John, Chapter I, Verses 1-8: ‘That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have

handled, of the Word of Life;—For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;—That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.’

[11](#) (p.25) Acts, Chapter I, Verse 8.

[12](#) (p.25) Gospel of St. John, Chapter V, Verse 46: ‘For had ye believed Moses, you would have believed me: for he wrote of me.’

[13](#) (p.29) In March and April 1908 Rudolf Steiner gave a total of twenty lectures in Lund, Malmö, Stockholm, Uppsala, Kristiania (Oslo), Gothenberg and Copenhagen. No records of these lectures have survived.

[14](#) (p.29) The priestly caste of old Scandinavia was called the ‘Drotten’.

[15](#) (P.29) In the fourth century A.D. the Gothic bishop Wulfila (Greek: Ulfilas) translated the Bible into Gothic. This most venerable of all Germanic manuscripts is written in letters of silver and gold on purple parchment. Only fragments have survived. In the sixteenth century it was discovered in the Abbey of Werden on the Ruhr. It found its way to Prague and then to Sweden whence it was carried off to Holland where it was furnished with a costly silver casing (hence the name *Codex Argenteus*). Today it is in the Library of Uppsala University.

[16](#) (p.32) Joachim of Floris (died 1202), Abbot of Floris or Fiore. In his work *Evangelium aeternum* he interpreted the Biblical prophecies. Subsequently he came to be regarded as the Prophet of Italy.

[17](#) (P.34) Revelation, Chapter XIII, Verse 18.

[18](#) (P.35) Patmos. Revelation, Chapter I, Verse 10.

[19](#) (P.35) Revelation, Chapter I, Verse 10.

[20](#) (p.50) See Illustration 2 and Note 36.

[21](#) (p.51) See also Rudolf Steiner: *Cosmic Memory. Atlantis and Lemuria*, Rudolf Steiner Publications, New York, 1971. (Aus der Akasha-Ghronik, Gesamtausgabe Basel 1955) and *Occult Science. An Outline*, Rudolf Steiner Press, 1962/63 (Geheimwissenschaft im Umriss).

[22](#) (p.54) See Illustration 1. In earlier German editions there was a footnote here: ‘Christian initiation had this as a symbol for ancient initiation. We are now presenting these things from the standpoint of Christianity. Christianity had to absorb these things, but it then mingled them with others.’

[23](#) (p.71) See lecture by Rudolf Steiner on 21 May 1907 in *Bilder okkultes Siegel und Säulen. Der Münchener Kongress Pfingsten 1907*, collected works, Dornach 1957.

[24](#) (p.99) See Rudolf Steiner *The Mission of the Individual Folk Souls in Relation to Teutonic Mythology*, Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1970 (Die Mission einzelner Volksseelen im Zusammenhange mit der germanisch-nordischen Mythologie).

[25](#) (p.103) The Plateau Experiment: 'A mixture of water and alcohol is prepared having exactly the same specific gravity as pure olive oil. A fair-sized drop of oil is poured into this. The oil does not float on the surface but sinks to the middle of the liquid and takes on a spherical shape. A long needle is inserted in the centre of a cardboard disc which is then carefully lowered into the centre of the drop so that its periphery forms the equator of the drop. The disc is set spinning, slowly at first and then increasingly fast. It causes the drop to spin in turn. As a result of centrifugal force small droplets become detached and continue to spin round the drop for quite some time, themselves assuming a spherical shape. In this way a constellation often surprisingly like our planetary system arises, with the largest drop in the middle representing our sun and the smaller drops playing the part of the planets with their moons.' Quoted after Vincenz Knauer in *Die Hauptprobleme der Philosophie* (The Chief Problems of Philosophy), Vienna and Leipzig, 1892, p.281. J. A. F. Plateau, Physicist (1801-1883).

[26](#) (p. 109) See Rudolf Steiner *Spiritual Science and Medicine*, Rudolf Steiner Press, 1975 (Geisteswissenschaft und Medizin).

[27](#) (p.112) Goethe *West-Eastern Divan* (West-Östlicher Diwan, 'Selige Sehnsucht').

[28](#) (p.123) The father, Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1743-1812) in Frankfurt am Main; Solomon, 1816, head of the firm in Vienna; Nathan moved the firm from Manchester to London in 1813; Karl founded the firm in Naples in 1820; Jakob became head of Rothschild Brothers in Paris in 1812.

[29](#) (p. 124) Galatians, Chapter II, Verse 20.

[30](#) (p. 134) Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy (1828-1910).

[31](#) (p. 188) See Rudolf Steiner *The East in the Light of the West*, Rudolf Steiner Publishing Company, London, and Anthroposophie Press, New York, 1940 (Der Orient im Lichte des Okzidents. Die Kinder des Luzifer und die Brüder Christi).

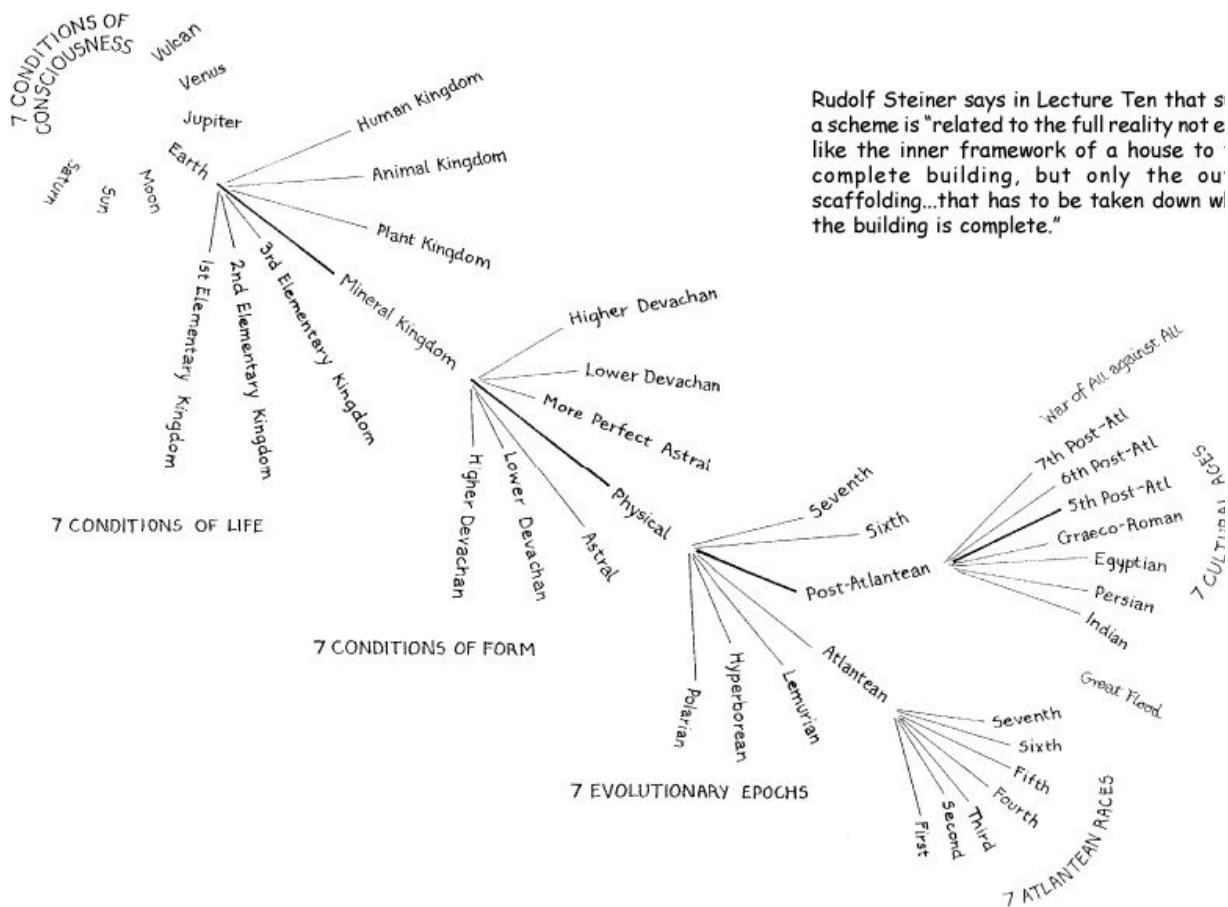
[32](#) (p.149) See Note 23. Also Rudolf Steiner *Weltwesen und Ichheit*, Rudolf Steiner Verlag, Dornach, Switzerland, 1963.

[33](#) (p.198) See the well-known description in *De occulta philosophia II*, 22 by Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (Agrippa von Nettesheim) (1486-1535).

[34](#) (p.200) Vau is read as 'O' in 'or'.

[35](#) (p.224) With regard to *Seals and Columns* see Note 36.

[36](#) The Illustrations. The seven occult seal pictures were painted on panels serving to decorate the hall in which the Congress of the 'Federation of European Sections of the Theosophical Society' took place in Munich at Whitsun 1907. They had been executed in colour by Clara Rettich of Stuttgart. In *Bilder okkulter Siegel und Säulen. Der Münchener Kongress 1907*, Rudolf Steiner Gesamtausgabe Domach, 1975, they are also reproduced in black and white, whereas the newly-discovered sketches by Rudolf Steiner for the second, third, fourth and seventh seal, from which the artist worked, are there reproduced in colour.



THE SEVEN APOCALYPTIC SEALS





