

Reading the Pictures of the Apocalypse

By Rudolf Steiner

GA# 104a

(Paris lecture is GA# 94)

We are daily overwhelmed by pictures of the world situation which reflect mighty spiritual events in our time. Our task is to learn to rightly read these pictures and make judgments about them. This book offers rich opportunities for such practice, or inner schooling, so that we can meet the world situation in full wakefulness.

These lectures, consisting of listener's notes, present Steiner's account of the meaning of the most esoteric book in the Bible.

Themes include: the nature of the third millennium; Sorat and the significance of the number 666; the War of All against All; the Second Coming of Christ; and the true nature of the I and the possible futures open to it — futures that depend upon our actions now.

The illustration on the cover is drawn from these lectures. It represents the occult sign for the Intelligence of the Sun, the Christ, the adversary of Sorat, the Demon of the Sun. Translated by James H. Hindes. Preface by Virginia Sease.

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A Lecture held in

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FOREWORD

The inflation of pictures and of sounds during the twentieth century is greater than at any other time in the history of humankind, whereas a conscious relationship to seeing and to hearing seems to be diminishing rapidly. Human beings drown in pictures and sounds, becoming dulled in the process, and yet experiencing an uncanny feeling if only the natural world surrounds them and all grows silent.

Rudolf Steiner draws attention to the fact that although the gesture of this hunger for pictures appears today in a distorted form, it nevertheless indicates a future condition in which humanity will have developed the “conscious picture-consciousness” that at the present time only spiritually advanced human beings can call upon. In this state human beings will be able to perceive in totally awakened consciousness not only what appears to the physical senses but also the spiritual configuration that lives behind and in a thought, for example, or a feeling or even a will impulse.

Inwardly, human beings tend to sense their own spiritual future, and this tendency often lies behind artistic impulses that seek to express the deeper secrets in human and divine existence. Through many centuries since St. John, “the disciple whom the Lord loved,” received the Revelation on the island of Patmos from the resurrected Christ Jesus, artists have depicted the content of these Revelation pictures in many forms, such as in the seventy-four miniatures of the Trier Apocalypse from the ninth century and the well-known Dürer Apocalypse. And yet the Apocalypse of St. John has remained essentially undeciphered for modern consciousness, although it seems clear that it contains mysteries concerning the past and future evolution of humanity.

From 1901 to 1909, Rudolf Steiner gave lectures in which he illuminated many aspects of the Revelation of St. John. The lectures on this theme from 1907, contained in the present volume, were held just prior to the large international Congress of the Theosophical Society in Munich. It was during this congress that it became clear to all members that Rudolf Steiner’s spiritual direction and intentions were deeply and decidedly connected with esoteric Christianity. In these lectures, in those of 1909 in Oslo, also printed here for the first time, as well as in the lectures in Nürnberg in 1908, “The Apocalypse of St. John,” Rudolf Steiner serves human beings at the end of the twentieth century as a timely revealer of mysteries that must be grasped soon if humankind’s earthly and spiritual development is to progress in an upward direction. We can be grateful that these lectures of 1907 and 1909 to the English-speaking world have become available through this translation so soon after the first publication in German. They hold many a key which may unlock crucial doors for an understanding of the final years of the twentieth century.

December 1992
VIRGINIA SEASE
Goetheanum, Switzerland

INTRODUCTION

Although the struggle between good and evil is described throughout the Bible, perhaps the most dramatic and esoteric images of this battle are contained in the Apocalypse. John the Evangelist, to whom these visions were entrusted at age ninety-seven, had been preparing for them all his life. Known to the high priests as Lazarus, a brilliant young nobleman in Jerusalem, he was educated in the wisdom of the Jewish traditions. He was then the first to be initiated by Christ when, at age thirty-three, he was raised from the dead at Bethany. Later known as the “disciple whom Jesus loved,” he was the only one of the twelve disciples strong enough to be present at Christ’s crucifixion. His work and suffering on behalf of the nascent Christian church through the next sixty years eventually led him to imprisonment on the island of Patmos during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian (A.D. 81–96).

The visions recorded in the Apocalypse were given to him during this imprisonment with instructions that he write them down for others. They are intended to encourage, admonish, instruct, strengthen, and inspire us in the great battle against evil that will continue into the distant future. As in any protracted battle, knowledge of the adversary’s plans, indeed, knowledge of one’s own leaders’ strategic intentions, is essential. In the past the Apocalypse has sometimes been used to inspire fear and to motivate human souls to strive to be better Christians. But such use constitutes misuse. Fear is a tool of the adversary powers, not of Christ and his followers. The Apocalypse received by John is nothing if not a Christian book, and when properly understood, expands our conception of Christianity to cosmic proportions again.

It reveals in images, that is, a kind of picture language, the deepest secrets of earthly and human evolution. John was instructed to pass these images on to humanity so that, through knowledge, we can be better equipped to evolve spiritually and meet the unfolding power of the adversaries. The images themselves contain the power of the Word, the Logos himself, the power of all becoming and evolving. Taken into the soul they transform; over time they can initiate. This is the connection between the Apocalypse and the work of Rudolf Steiner, who said that simply hearing and reading the results of anthroposophical research can gradually transform the human soul and awaken in us the ability to perceive the spirit.

Rudolf Steiner’s writings and lectures on the Bible in general and the Apocalypse in particular involve a dimension of our humanity that is underappreciated in traditional religious streams: the dimension of human knowledge. In the ancient past it was known that knowledge of spiritual realities was attainable, although only by initiates. Today, only knowledge of the physical world is considered valid, while people interested in spiritual things must be satisfied with faith. However, faith alone cannot make sense of the Apocalypse, and traditional Christian theologians are not sure what to do with the book. Its source is non-earthly. It is prophecy, but unlike Old Testament prophecy, we cannot look for its fulfillment in the New Testament. The thinking behind it derives from a source either beyond or preceding the modern, scientific mind.

But when modern methods of science, exact thinking and observation, are applied to spiritual questions, then knowledge of the spirit is possible. In his basic books Rudolf Steiner describes the spiritual scientific method with its three steps of Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition. The results of this method are found throughout Steiner’s work. They include, among other things, descriptions of the evolution of the earth including its future. This description of future events provides the basis for Steiner’s lectures on the Apocalypse. *For this reason, a general knowledge of anthroposophy and Steiner’s terminology is required to understand these lectures.*

This requirement is especially pressing since these lectures are not transcriptions of complete stenographic reports. They have been reconstructed from notes hand written by individuals who

attended the lectures. Hilde Stockmeyer took notes during the first Munich lecture while Mathilde Scholl was responsible for the other three. The notes by an unknown auditor that form the basis for the German edition of the lectures held in Kristiania (Oslo) are the most fragmentary. They are stylistically uneven, with frequent omissions and gaps in the manuscript. The lecture of June 14, 1907, held in Paris comes to us through notes taken by Edouard Schuré. Because of their brevity these lectures are, in a sense, incomplete. *The reader would do well first to read Steiner's most comprehensive lectures on the Apocalypse, held in Nürnberg* [See [Note 1](#)] *and refer to them again while reading the present lectures.* Although there is little contained in these present lectures not already mentioned in Nürnberg, this new volume is quite useful just because of its brevity.

The lecture of May 21, 1909, contains what is probably the earliest mention of Christ's reappearance in Steiner's work. While describing the sixth post-Atlantean cultural epoch from the point of view of the development of manas, the transformed astral body, Steiner says that those who have made themselves capable of recognizing Christ will see him in his etheric body, "for he will come again." A few months later, on January 25, 1910, the second coming of Christ was predicted for the twentieth century. Eight days hence, on February 2, 1910, it was narrowed down to the decade between 1930 and 1940. We can see from this sequence an example of the way in which Steiner apprehended facts from the spiritual world. After first perceiving some spiritual reality he could narrow his focus and inquire even more closely with his clairvoyant consciousness.

Eventually Steiner pointed to the year 1933 for the appearance of Christ in the etheric, an event made possible only through the expiration of Kali Yuga and through the evolution of certain faculties of the human soul. Human beings will become increasingly able to perceive the surrounding world of formative forces. At first this perception is a "delicate seed that can be trampled to death by brutal materialism."

But the year 1933 appears to have brought something quite other to humanity. Emil Bock in his book the *Apocalypse* [See [Note 2](#)] describes how Rudolf Steiner speaks in 1924 of the work of Christ's opponent, the demon of the sun, called "the beast" in the Apocalypse. In order to grasp the etheric event of Christ's reappearance, it is necessary to encounter the beast, the adversary of humankind who "rises up" in 1933. Steiner considered the simultaneous appearance of Christ and the Antichrist to be a first in world history. The double aspect of the year became apparent: the renewal on a wide scale of Paul's experience of Christ on the way to Damascus, and the opening of the abyss of evil. Human beings have been driven by the struggle against evil in all its forms to the very brink of existence, where they have perceived Christ. Although Steiner almost always stressed the positive, he could certainly also describe the negative, dark aspects of any subject under investigation. The "war of all against all," for example, is given a full description in the Nürnberg cycle, and is also mentioned here. This great culmination of egotism known as the war of all against all, is to take place at the end of the seventh post-Atlantean epoch, which would place it three to four thousand years from the present. Because of misunderstandings concerning Steiner's statements on the dates for this war, it is important to point out that he did *not* say this war would occur at the end of the twentieth century. He spoke only of conditions at the end of our century that would be similar to a war of all against all.

He did say, however, that the working of Sorat, the two-horned beast described in chapter 13 of the Apocalypse, was connected to the number 666 and therefore, we could expect an intensification of his influence around the year 1998. Sorat's influence is not to be confused with the war of all against all, or with the incarnation of Ahriman, an event projected to take place in the early part of the third millennium. For a complete discussion of the nature and timing of these events, as well as a clear distinction between the three adversaries of human evolution — Lucifer, Ahriman, and the Asuras — the reader should refer to three outstanding articles by Hans-Werner Schroeder which appeared in the Newsletter of the Anthroposophical Society in America, Summer 1979, Spring 1980, and Summer 1980. Many questions that might arise in reading these lectures will find their answer there.

A note concerning the translation: The terms for intervals of time — period, epoch, age, culture, time, times, and so on — are not used in a consistent, technical manner. Steiner himself did not employ the German terms in this way. The seven post-Atlantean cultural epochs, for example, are designated by a variety of German words: *Kulturperiode*, *Kultur*, *Zeitraum*, *Kulturepoche*, *Zeitepoche*, *Zeit*, and so on. In any given context, readers must discern for themselves which particular time-cycle is meant. It did not seem right to impose a rigid terminology upon Steiner when he himself avoided one.

In the New Testament it says that the second coming of Christ will occur in the realm of the clouds. What Steiner's lectures make clear is that some of these clouds will be very dark, bringing thunder and lightning.

James H. Hindes

LECTURE ONE

MUNICH — April 22, 1907

THE REVELATIONS OF JOHN SEEK to tell us what will happen in the course of time. The Apocalypse is written in pictures that express the appearance of the eternal spirit of the world. John, who beholds them, is to record these highest mysteries.

We are, to begin with, concerned with seven communities, represented symbolically by seven lamp stands and seven stars. The stars are the communities' geniuses watching over them.

In the second vision John sees the four apocalyptic living beings, the lion, the bull, the eagle, and Man, surrounding a throne where sits the spirit of God. Twenty-four elders are sitting around the throne of the spirit of God. "And I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals." ([Rev. 5:1](#)) A lamb opens the book. The book contains, with the opening of the first four seals, what is expressed symbolically in the four apocalyptic riders; with the opening of the fifth seal the martyrs appear. These are those who have lifted themselves up to knowledge and life in the spirit. The opening of the sixth seal is followed by a horrible earthquake. With the seventh the revelation becomes audible: the seven trumpets sound forth. Mysterious pictures are then revealed; for example, a being whose legs are like two pillars, one foot stands in the sea, the other on the earth. "Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. He had a little scroll open in his hand." ([Rev. 10:1,2](#)) John must eat the secret of this book. Then a woman appears dressed with the sun, and the moon at her feet.

We read further: "And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads." ([Rev. 13:1](#)) The sound of trumpets accompanies this vision. The victory of good over evil is shown us in a picture. A beast is shown which, in a certain sense, is supposed to represent to us the principle of evil. It is the beast with seven heads and ten horns.

Then a beast appeared with two horns like a lamb, a beast that will appear in the future. "Then I saw another beast which rose out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first beast ... And it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave to be marked on the right hand or the forehead so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast, or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom; let him who has understanding reckon the number of the beast, for it is a human number, its number is six hundred and sixty-six." ([Rev. 13:11,16-18](#))

It is further related how all enemies are eliminated: Michael conquers the dragon, the evil elements; then a new world arises. In the first Christian centuries this was prophesied and always understood as a reference to the future. Admittedly, the exegetes soon knew little more than that; but again and again, also in the Middle Ages, there were those who came forward to explain it. The year 1000 A.D. was often thought to be the time for the beast's appearance. The later the era the more senseless the explanations became, especially in the nineteenth century — when the ancient commentators were seen as children still able to believe in prophecy. The Apocalypse was seen as a historical document, as if everything described therein had already taken place when John wrote it. There were wars after the appearance of Christianity. John could have meant to express them with the red horse. The white horse would then symbolize the martyrs. Earthquakes such as John described with the opening of the sixth seal were also to be found at that time in Asia Minor. And neither was it difficult to prove the existence of locust plagues. But the passage concerning the two-horned beast was a real cross for the commentators. They had heard a rumor concerning the way numbers are to be read but it was dripping with occultism. How does one read in numbers? Every letter also signifies a number; the esotericists wrote in numbers when they wanted to hide something. One had to replace each number with the correct letter; one had to be able to read the letters and then also know what the resulting word meant. Who then, is the beast whose number is 666? The commentators thought it must be something in the past. One wrote the letters in Hebrew — wrongly — in the place of the numbers. That resulted in "Nero." The horns were then related to the generals or the enemies of the Romans, for example, the Parthians. If one had written correctly with Hebrew letters (right to left) and then read correctly (also from right to left), the following would have resulted: 60, Samech, 6 Waw; 600 was written by esotericists as 200 + 400: 200 Resch + 400 Taw. Hence, we get 666, which in Hebrew letters spells "Sorat." Sorat is also the corresponding word in Greek. Sorat has meant "Demon of the Sun" since ancient times. Every star has its good spirit — its intelligence — and its evil spirit — its demon. The adversary of the good powers of the sun is called Sorat. Christ was always the representative of the sun, namely, the intelligence of the Sun. Sorat is, then, the adversary of Christ Jesus. The sign for Sorat looks like this:

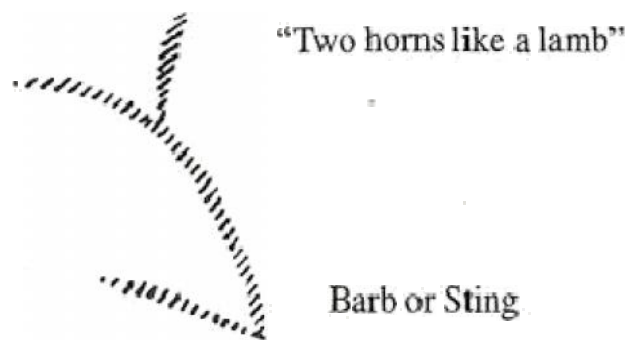


Diagram
Click image for large view

The sign of the intelligence of the Sun is the following:

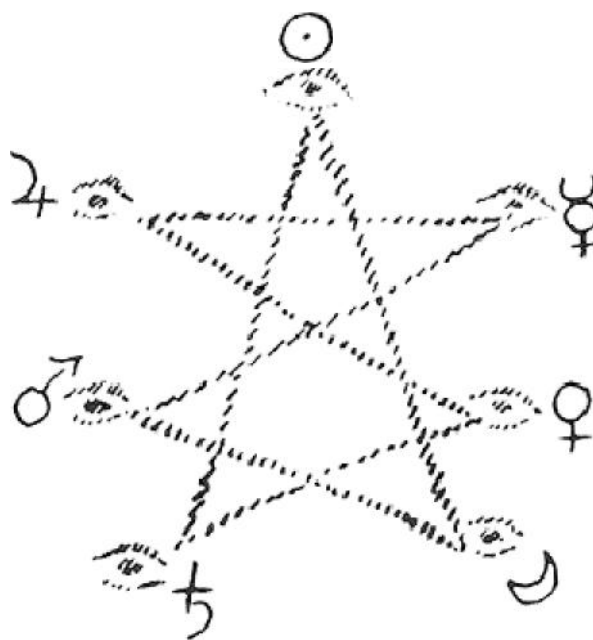


Diagram
Click image for large view

2

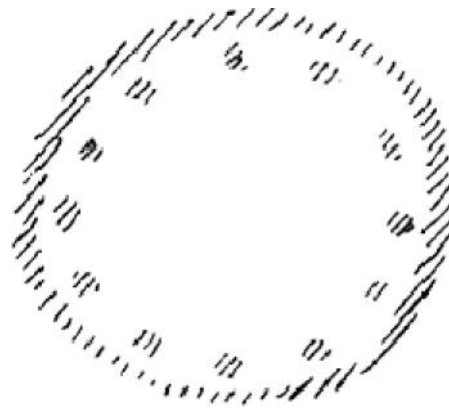
This is, at the same time, the occult sign of the lamb. The lamb receives the book with the seven seals. “And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” ([Rev. 5:6](#)) The seven corners of the sign are called “horns.” But what do the “eyes” mean?

In occult schools the signs of the seven planets are written next to the seven eyes. The seven eyes signify nothing other than the seven planets, while the names of the planets designate the spirits incarnated in them as their intelligence. “Saturn” is the name of the soul of Saturn. The names of the planets come from the spirits of the seven planets found around the earth. These have an influence on human life. The lamb, Christ, contains all seven. Christ is the alpha and the omega; the seven planets are related to him like members to an entire body. The entwining of the lines of the sign portray in a wonderful way the interaction between the seven planets. From Saturn one rises to the Sun, from there down to the Moon, then on to Mars, Mercury, and so forth. The same thing is expressed in the names of the seven days of the week: Saturday, Saturn; Sunday, the Sun; Monday, the Moon; Tuesday, Mardi, Mars; Wednesday, Mercredi, Mercury; Thursday, Jeudi, Jupiter; Friday, Vendredi, Venus. Christ is the regent of all these world spheres; their actions constitute only part of his being; he unites them all. In Rosicrucian schools a lamb is often drawn as a sign for the intelligence of the Sun.

We determine time according to the movement of the heavenly bodies. Was the method for calculating time always the same as today’s? Important things have changed. If we look into the past a little we see the Atlantean culture before the great flood on earth. The Lemurian age preceded it. If we go even further back into the past the earth, sun, and moon are still united in a single body. Back then time had to be determined differently than today. Day and night were entirely different. In Lemuria, conditions for the whole earth were the same as it is today at the north pole, half a year day and half a year night. When sun, moon, and earth were still one this unified mass moved through space. Already back then this movement was calculated by occult

wisdom, just as today one calculates time according to the sun which moves across the sky through the signs of the zodiac. Eight hundred years before Christ the sun stood in the sign of Aries. Christ was originally worshiped under the sign of the cross, with a lamb lying at the foot of the cross. The cross with Christ upon it appeared only in the sixth century. Before that the Bull, Taurus, was worshiped when the sun stood in its sign. Earlier, it was the Twin, Gemini, that was worshiped in Persia. The team of goats that pulled Thor's chariot had the same significance. Before that the Crab, Cancer, was worshiped, and so forth.

Before the Lemurian age the sun, moon, and earth, united in one body, moved forward in terms of the zodiac. Time was measured following this movement. For this reason, the twelve signs of the zodiac are characterized as the heavenly clock and drawn as such.



Diagram

[Click image for large view](#)

A planet alternates between *pralaya*, a cosmic night, and *manvantara*, a cosmic day, just as we alternately pass through day and night. The planet passes through the signs of the zodiac during both *pralaya* and *manvantara*; for that reason the twelve signs of the zodiac are counted twice, just as we also count two times twelve to equal twenty-four hours. The hours symbolize the signs of the zodiac. The united sun, moon, and earth also moved through the cosmic days and nights according to the heavenly clock. Then their separation occurred. But at that time human beings were not the same as we are now. The soul only gradually descended, and only gradually did the human being develop from the generic into a specific individual being. If one had taken together the generic souls of human beings during the Lemurian and Atlantean times, then one would have perceived something very strange. The aura of the human being is constantly changing; like all astral beings it is in constant motion. The generic souls were reflected in the forms of animals, for example, in sphinxes and so forth. The ancient Atlantean and Lemurian generic souls were constantly changing but they expressed themselves again and again in a fourfold way. The fourfold nature of human generic souls is characterized by the four living creatures of the Apocalypse: lion, bull, eagle, and Man. The lower human being is portrayed through these four living creatures, and the lamb symbolized the perfected human being — that is, the fifth living creature.

Twice twelve heavenly constellations and four living creatures were once the regents of the world. Mighty cosmic powers ensouled the signs of the zodiac and the four living creatures. The twenty-four elders in the Apocalypse are the two times twelve stars on the world clock who were once rulers. The evolution of the human being can be portrayed in this drawing:



Diagram

[Click image for large view](#)

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The lowest point designates clear day-consciousness. In pre-Lemurian times the human being had a dull clairvoyance. At that time human beings were closer to God than today. Then they acquired day consciousness. Human beings will take that consciousness with them in the course of their further evolution when they again approach God and become clairvoyant. Every point on the descending line corresponds to a point on the ascending line. If we could live backward we would see all the things that we will see in the future in a different, clairvoyant way. In the future we will again see the twelve spirits of the planets, and the sun, moon, and earth will once again be united, "... and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood ..." and so forth. ([Rev. 6:12](#))

When the soul first descended from the womb of God it found a human animal on earth. These human animals looked grotesque; they needed to be transformed, overcome. In the future, there will also be such an animal to overcome. That is what the beast with the two horns would say to us.

Only someone who explains the Apocalypse within its entire context can understand it properly. The Apocalypse is a cosmic explanation of the world. The author was an initiate. He spoke of universal laws that apply to the world from the beginning to the decline, from the alpha to the omega.

We should allow the holy symbols given in the Apocalypse to work upon us. The sign of the Sun intelligence, for example, should not remain a mere sign for us; we should immerse ourselves in this sign until we feel it is no longer dead but flowing with life. The signs should be for us doors connecting the physical to the spiritual world. Then we have fulfilled our duty: to connect the physical and the spiritual worlds.

LECTURE TWO

MUNICH — May 1, 1907

EIGHT DAYS AGO WE BEGAN WITH a presentation to help us understand the language of John. We considered how the Apocalypse is to be read and what is hidden behind some of the mysterious expressions, for example, behind the lamb as the beast with seven eyes and seven horns. We also sought to explain the beast with two horns and considered the number 666 as an example of how we must live into this mysterious book. Today, we again seek to find the meaning of this book.

The record of the New Testament is a record of initiation. Using individual images as examples we have seen how deep their meaning really is. All the images have shown us that the Gospels express, in pictorial form, the deepest imaginable meaning of the evolution of the world. It could occur to someone to ask why there are contradictions in the individual Gospels, why they do not correspond to each other. What needs to be said concerning this is already laid out in my book, *Christianity as Mystical Fact*. [See [Note 1](#)] The Gospels are not records of the biography of Christ Jesus, but rather records concerning initiation. And the Apocalypse is the profoundest record. Augustine said: What is now called the “Christian religion” is the ancient true religion. What was the true religion, now is called the Christian religion. [See [Note 2](#)]

We understand what is meant by this statement when we consider the fundamental assertion of Christianity: “Blessed are those who do not see and yet believe.” ([John 20:29](#)) In this way something entirely new has come into the world. The teachings are already contained in other religious systems. Among those who understood who “Christ” is the main emphasis was never placed on the content of this teaching. One can also find this content in records from earlier times. What is important with Christ is what this individual means for humankind. We can acquire an understanding for this most readily if we take a look at the ancient mystery centers.

Until the time of Christ only a few specially chosen people were initiated. After severe testing they were permitted to learn the teachings that can now be found in my book *Theosophy*. [See [Note 3](#)] One had to wait a long time until the higher degrees of vision were permitted. Only the most initiated knew the tradition of how to carry out an initiation. If someone wanted to become a pupil, as a first step they had to do this, as a second step, that, and so forth. The initiation concluded when the pupil had gone through the preparatory stages and was led by the wise ones into the mysteries themselves. That took place in a state of consciousness called “ecstasy,” a state of existence outside the physical body. It was connected with a diminution of consciousness, but at the same time with a vision of the spiritual world. An inner schooling consisting of certain will impulses, meditations, and a purification of the desires brought the pupil to a point where the last step was possible. Then the pupil was put by the initiator into a state that lasted three and a half days, a state like the one we enter when we fall asleep at night. External sense impressions disappeared. When we are asleep, nothing enters into the place where the sense impressions of sight and sound have disappeared, but with those being initiated a new world appeared. They were surrounded by a new world, a world of astral light, not the darkness, nothing of what today’s human being experiences in the night appeared to them. The darkness was permeated by spiritual light and beings that are incarnated within the spiritual light. These beings became visible in the astral light. Then, after awhile, the astral world full of flowing light began to resound with the music of the spheres. What had merely been seen earlier began to be heard; it was a pure, spiritual music. External music is only a shadow-like reflection of the sounds of the spheres the seer hears, the seer who also perceives the inside of spiritual beings. Suppose we enter a large room filled with people; only when they begin to speak do they reveal their inner life to us. That is how it is in the spiritual world. First the beings become visible, then the inner life of the beings speaks to us. That is the harmony of the spheres.

Then, when the initiates were led back to vision of the physical world, they experienced themselves fully transformed into new human beings. Everyone who returned in this way then typically expressed: “My God, my God, how you have glorified me!” (Compare [Matt. 27:46](#) and [Mark 15:34](#)) [See [Note 4](#)]

And so they returned, knowledgeable concerning the spiritual world out of their own experience. They were then seen as messengers from the spiritual world. What they had experienced up to the point of entering the spiritual world was prescribed precisely, stage by stage.

Although the rites of initiation were not recorded exactly, still there were canons of initiation containing prescriptions for all the steps. Everywhere, whether in the Egyptian schooling of Hermes, or in the Persian school, or in the Greek mysteries, or with the Druidic or Drotten mysteries, there were typical, traditional rules concerning what was to be experienced by anyone wanting to become an initiate.

Typical, similar characteristics appear wherever the lives of the great apostles of religions or world-views are described. The lives of Orpheus, Pythagoras, Hermes, and Buddha have many features in common, features that are important for all religious heroes. Why is this? Superficial researchers have believed that one borrowed from the other. But that is not true. Nevertheless, all of these typical religious heroes passed through these steps up to the highest stage of initiation. There were no biographies in ancient times that took into consideration the external conditions of a person's life. The further back we go before the turning point of time, the less value we find ascribed to the externals of life. Absolutely nothing was said concerning what the very greatest heroes of humankind experienced externally on the physical plane. Their lives were entirely dedicated to initiation. Telling the story of their initiation meant telling the story of their life. The main thing about a Hermes or a Buddha was what he had experienced until the initiation. Since the stages of initiation were similar everywhere, one heard a spiritual description of the life of the great initiates.

What in the past had been experienced only in secret became historical fact in Christianity. What could be described of Herme' experience took place in inner mysteries, at locations far removed from profane eyes.

In Christianity, for the first time, something was experienced as an external physical event that otherwise only took place in the mystery centers. The course Christ's life followed is the same as that experienced by all initiates when, to begin with, they had their etheric bodies lifted out of their physical. Everything that Christ Jesus experienced physically, on the physical plane, they had experienced in the etheric realm. Their last words were also, “My God, my God, how you have glorified me!” They had experienced earlier in the etheric body what Christ experienced in a physical body. In this way the prophecies of the prophets were fulfilled. This one time only experience of Christ represents the greatest decisive turning point in our world history and separates it into two parts.

The evangelists did not write ordinary biographies, but took rather the existing canonical initiation books. All four Gospels are to be seen as initiation writings, each presented from a different perspective. Since, however, initiation is described everywhere in the same way, the Gospels are in agreement on the most important things. We can describe the life of an initiate if we consider it as a life dedicated wholly to initiation. It would have seemed unholy to the evangelists to give an ordinary, external, historical biography of Christ Jesus. They had to take the building blocks for their writings from books derived from the mysteries. Hence, to a certain extent, what the prophets had said was fulfilled.

In a certain sense the Apocalypse represents a new kind of initiation; it shows how the old mysteries were transformed into Christian mysteries. When we look back at the old mysteries we find in them a more or less unified feature. It consisted of the following: Whether we go to

Egypt, or to Persia, or to India, whether we are deepened in the Orphic or the Eleusinian mysteries, we find there complete agreement in one feature: a prophecy concerning the One who is to come. [See [Note 5](#)] This trait is also found in the Northern European mysteries. There was an initiate in the most ancient times who was signified by the name “Sig.” The Drotten mysteries, which were in Russia and Scandinavia, the Druidic mysteries in Germany all derived from an initiate with the name Sig, who was the founder of the northern mysteries. What happened in the mysteries has been preserved in the various myths and legends of the German nation and other Germanic peoples. The myths and legends are pictorial representations of what was experienced. In the Siegfried legend [See [Note 6](#)] we see most clearly that feature that seeks for an end. This feature is expressed in mythological terms in the “Gotterdammerung,” the twilight of the gods. [See [Note 7](#)] This is characteristic of all the northern mysteries.

In all mysticism the image of the feminine is used for the soul; this image is also used by Goethe in his “chorus mysticus,” in the concluding scene of the second part of *Faust*. It is the eternal in the human being, the divine soul that draws the human being forward. Just as initiation was described in ancient Egypt and Persia as the union of the soul with the spiritual, so was it also described here in the north. Here in the north it was understood best that a man proved his worth on the field of battle. Those who counted for something in the north were honored as fighters who fell in the field of battle; those were the ones who entered into eternal life; the others died in their sleep. The fallen fighters were received by the Valkyries, [See [Note 8](#)] their own soul; union with the Valkyries was union with the eternal. It was said of Siegfried that he had already united with the Valkyries here on earth; that shows he was an initiate. The meaning of the story, that Siegfried had already experienced union with the Valkyries here on earth, is that he was an initiate. This legend tells us something with the death of Siegfried. When experiencing initiation in the ancient mysteries the initiate is told: We can only bring you to a certain point ... further than this only another can bring you — this other one is Christ Jesus — all that we can give you will be darkened when he comes, the One who will bring the new initiation. Siegfried is vulnerable to Hagen [See [Note 9](#)] on his back because the cross has not yet been placed on the back of the one who will take over from the ancient initiation. This part of the body will one day be made invulnerable when the cross has been laid across it. In this way the northern mysteries alluded to Christ Jesus.

All the ancient mysteries looked toward him who was to come, who will live on the physical plane so as to found a new world order. The new initiation is what will occur through the impulses he gave. We find a portrayal of this in the Apocalypse. It tells us how initiation will proceed until Christ Jesus comes again in a new form. The Apocalypse refers to the time when an organ for receiving Christ will be developed. The time until Christ Jesus again will approach is described in the Apocalypse. We will understand the individual words if we adopt the way of thinking of one who has experienced such an initiation. We remember here the words of Christ — if we understand them we will also understand the Apocalypse — “Before Abraham was, I am.” ([John 8:58](#)) Christ directs his view from the past over to the present because for him there is an eternal present.

If we wish to understand what is meant by this we need only remember the fourfold human being who consists of physical body, etheric body, astral body, and I. When the I lights up in the course of evolution then the astral and etheric bodies are changed; and then finally the physical body too. The I is here for eternity; it is born out of the womb of a higher spirituality. Whether we look into the past or into the future, this I is what is eternal. If we observe an individual we can ask the question: What transformation has this person’s I gone through? If we look back to the great Atlantean flood and then further back we do not find the I in a body such as exists today. At that time we were in a state wherein we could not think as well as we can now. When we look into the future we find the I in bodies ever more perfect, bodies having a perfection that we today with our thinking cannot even imagine. We cannot now imagine the perfection of thinking, the purity of feeling, and so forth in the future bodies of humankind. Initiates must make use of the form the human body has at any given time. Christ, too, had to use the ordinary form of the human body in his time. Still, when we look deeper we see in him a stage of

evolution that humankind will only achieve in the distant future. Christ Jesus was the first born among those who could overcome death.

Let us compare the two ways of developing. The human being is born, goes through a life on earth, dies, goes through an astral condition, through devachan, and is then born again. When we go back to the beings who were present before the Lemurian age we have beings who do not die and are not reborn. They are constantly exchanging sheaths, as we do between physical birth and death. Then a certain revolution enters in. Today, human beings alternate between spiritual and physical life. With the group souls of animals it happens this way: Individual animals discard their bodies but the group souls themselves never die.

If we try to imagine the very highest being, the one who was as highly developed at the beginning as others will be at the end of evolution, then we have the image of Christ. He was the I that was as highly developed at the beginning as the human being will be at the end. “Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come ...” ([Rev. 1:4](#)) He is the first and the last.

The one who gives the Revelation to John is thus described. It is a Christian book; that is proven by the passage that reads: “... and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first born of the dead and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” ([Rev. 1:5,6](#))

Christianity represents the greatest possible individualization of the human being, the freedom of the human being as an individual. At the beginning of the human race we see small communities held together by blood ties. Love was limited to those of the same blood. Now Christ Jesus comes and expands all ethnic groups and communities to include all of humanity. All ethnic religions are overcome through him. Christianity is the religion of the world. Within it there are only human beings; Christianity knows only human beings. Christianity would never be able to speak of the community of religions, but only of community of human beings. An age began when the secret mysteries became accessible to everyone through the mystery of Golgotha, which was placed in the center of the world. The chosen priests and kings gradually cease to exist. A final state is pointed to wherein everyone is a priest and a king, a state wherein all distinctions are swept away and all human beings are made equal. Therefore, the Apocalypse speaks of: “... a Kingdom, priests to his God and Father.” ([Rev. 1:6](#))

The book portrays a real initiation, an ascent, to begin with, through learning on the physical plane. This step is portrayed in the words concerning the seven letters to the seven communities. The seven letters present what must first be learned. Then a number of pictures lead us to the astral plane. We see groups of beings undergoing transformation in the astral light: “... and he who sat there appeared like jasper and carnelian, and, round the throne was a rainbow that looked like an emerald.” ([Rev. 4:3](#)) “And before the throne there is as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.” ([Rev. 4:6](#)) The quality and being of the astral light is indicated by the transparency. In the astral light we can see through objects; they appear like glass. The entire astral world is like a glass sea.

The four living creatures then follow; they are to represent the human group souls. They were full of eyes within and without and had no peace day or night. There is constant movement in the astral world — astral eyes are everywhere and everything is transparent to them, both within and all around.

We see how, at first, the mysteries of the physical plane are described and then, out of the sealed book, the astral imaginations. They approach us in pictures.

After the seer has perceived the spiritual beings in the astral light for awhile, they begin to sound forth. This is described in the resounding of the trumpets when the sixth seal is opened.

That is the condition of devachan. The seer becomes “clairaudient,” able to hear spiritual sounds — the spiritual ear is opened.

The stage then follows when the seer expands his consciousness over the entire earth. This is indicated in the swallowing of the book. It expresses the ascent into the higher regions of the spiritual worlds.

Notes:

[Note 1.](#) Rudolf Steiner, *Christianity as Mystical Fact* (Hudson, N.Y.: Anthroposophic Press, 1993).

[Note 2.](#) Actual words: “For what is now called the Christian religion existed even among the ancients and was not lacking from the beginning of the human race until ‘Christ came in the flesh.’ From that time, true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christian.” Augustine, *The Retractions* Book I, chapter 12, section 3, trans. Mary Inez Bogan in *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1968).

[Note 3.](#) Steiner, *Theosophy* (GA 9) (Hudson, N.Y.: Anthroposophic Press, 1993).

[Note 4.](#) Compare lecture of September 12, 1910 in *The Gospel of St. Matthew* (GA 123) (Hudson, N.Y.: Anthroposophic Press, 1965).

[Note 5.](#) Compare the lecture cycle *Wonders of the World, Ordeals of the Soul, and Revelations of the Spirit* (GA 129) (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1963); *Mystery Centers* (GA 232) (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1973); and *World History in the Light of Anthroposophy* (GA 233) (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1977).

[Note 6.](#) Compare the lecture of October 21, 1904: “Die Siegfriedsage” in *Esoterik und Weltgeschichte in der griechischen und germanischen Mythologie* [“The Legend of Siegfried” in Esoteric and *World History in Greek and German Mythology*] (Dornach, Switzerland: Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 1955).

[Note 7.](#) Compare the lecture of August 14, 1908 in the lecture cycle *Universe, Earth and Man* (GA 105) (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1987).

[Note 8.](#) The virgin heroines of Germanic mythology.

[Note 9.](#) One of the main heroes of the Nibelungen saga: he treacherously suffocates Siegfried after a hunt while Siegfried is drinking at a fountain.

LECTURE THREE

MUNICH — May 8, 1907

A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE SUCH as we have today [See [Note 1](#)] means much to those who belong to the theosophical movement, who feel that they belong to a spiritual movement. It means something entirely different from a day of remembrance for others, for those departed human beings who were firmly anchored in our materialistic culture. Such a day for us is also a day of gathering together; for what would the teachings of Theosophy be if they did not enter into every fiber of our hearts and there enrich our innermost life of feeling? If a soul has been separated from its physical body, that means only that a person's inner being has entered into a different relationship to us. It is just such a relationship to the founder of the theosophical movement that we would like to especially enliven on this day. We want to be filled with a feeling for our connectedness with the founder of our movement. We want to become fully conscious that thoughts and feelings are invisible powers in our soul, that they are facts. Feelings are living forces. If we today unite all our thoughts with what is included in the name "Helena Petrovna Blavatsky," if we are united with the spirit who left her earthly sheaths behind on May 8, 1891, then our feelings and thoughts are real forces and create a real, spiritual bridge to another form of existence. Another world finds access to our souls across this bridge. For human beings who see, such thoughts and feelings are really living rays, rays of spiritual light that shoot forth from a human being, and are then united in a point that meets with the spiritual being. Such a festive moment is a reality. When our soul, dwelling in our body, wants to work on the physical plane, then it must form a body for itself: it must build and form matter and forces in such a way that it can express itself through them. If the matter and forces did not fit together then this soul could no longer live its life on the physical plane. Just as it is here on the physical plane, so it is also on the higher planes for spiritual beings. If we want to understand correctly Helena Petrovna Blavatsky then we must realize that all of her efforts are bound up with the proper progress of the theosophical movement. And so it has been since her soul freed itself from her physical body. Even now she is working as a living being within the Theosophical Society. If she is to be able to work then matter and forces must be at her disposal. From where could they be better taken than from the souls of those who understand her being within the theosophical movement. As our souls take hold of matter and forces on the physical plane, so also does such a being take hold of the matter and forces in human souls in order to work through them. If those people who are members of the theosophical movement were not willing to place themselves at the disposal of this being, then she could not find expression on the physical plane. We ourselves must create a place in our souls for reverence, love, and devotion, thus creating the forces through which Helena Petrovna Blavatsky can work, just as our soul works through our bodies of flesh. We must become aware that we are truly creating something when, in this moment, we are loving and receptive. It is true that all the love and devotion that today streams up to the soul of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky are powerful forces that are called upon to connect with her.

We must correctly understand what this personality signifies within our cultural life. The nineteenth century will one day be described as the materialistic century in the history of humankind. The people of the twentieth century cannot really imagine how deeply the nineteenth century was entangled in materialism. Only later when people have again become spiritual will that be possible. Everything, even the religious life, was permeated by materialism. Anyone who can look upon human evolution from higher planes knows that in the forties of the nineteenth century there was an extreme low point in the spiritual life. Science, philosophy, and religion were in the grip of materialism. It was incumbent upon the leaders of humankind gradually to allow a stream of spiritual life to flow into humanity. It is most telling that, within the widest circumference of spiritual life in Occidental culture, no one was found as suitable as Helena Petrovna Blavatsky to guide the stream of spiritual life into the world, the stream that should refresh humankind and begin to pull it out of materialism. In the light of this one fact, the impact of all the attacks against her swirling around in the world today fade away. For, among many

other things, the Theosophical Society must teach us the feeling of positivity. We must acquire an attitude that seeks, above all, to see what speaks of greatness in a human being. Then, in comparison to this greatness, all the little faults that incite criticism must fade away. Just as with other great personalities many things that were seen by their contemporaries with critical eyes have disappeared, so too will all these things fall away from her. But the great things she has accomplished will remain.

Let us learn to regard the mistakes of human beings as their own affair and the accomplishments of human beings as something that concerns all of humankind. People's errors belong to their karma; their deeds concern humanity. Let us learn not to be troubled by people's mistakes; they themselves must atone for them. Let us rather be thankful for their accomplishments, for the entire evolution of humanity lives from them.

This year's White Lotus Day, a day of remembrance for souls who have struggled free from the body and lift their experiences in another form up into the heights like a lotus flower, is the first day of this kind that we are not celebrating in community with Henry Steel Olcott, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's associate. He, too, has left the physical plane, he who stood there as the great organizer, as the form-giving power. [Here follows an indecipherable sentence.] To him we direct our grateful, revering, and love-filled thoughts; these thoughts will flow into the spiritual world and we ourselves will thereby be strengthened. We should continue the celebration on the other days of the year as we send out our thoughts as rays of light, as we apply the strength we have received to the work that we call the theosophical movement. We will only work as they would if we are devoted to the spiritual life in an entirely undogmatic, nonsectarian way. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky did not ask for blind faith. What can be asked of her followers is that they let themselves be stimulated by her spirituality. There is a spring of spiritual power in what Helena Petrovna Blavatsky left to the physical plane, a spring that will be a blessing to us if we let it influence us in a living way. The letters on the page can stimulate us, but the spirit must become alive within. One thing that can be said of the writings of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky is this: Only someone who does not understand them can underestimate them. But someone who finds the key to what is great in these works will come to admire her more and more. That is what is significant about these works — the more one penetrates them the more one admires them. It is not the case that there are no mistakes to be found in them. But those who really take hold of life know, if they strive to evermore penetrate these works, that what is therein expressed could only have come from the great spiritual beings who are now guiding world evolution. This is how we must read *Isis Unveiled*, [See [Note 2](#)] a book containing truths which, although sometimes caricatured like a beautiful face seen in a distorting mirror, are truly great.

A person who would merely like to speak out of a critical spirit might perhaps say: It would have been better not to give any such distortion. But anyone seeing matters in the proper light will say: If someone places their weak spiritual forces at the disposal of spiritual powers who wish to reveal themselves, and knows that these forces will produce only a distorted picture but that there is no one else who could do it any better, then that person, through their devotion, is making a great sacrifice for the world. All renderings of the great truths are distortions. If someone wanted to wait until the whole truth could be manifested, then they would have a long wait. Selfless are those who devote themselves to the spiritual world saying: It doesn't matter if people tear me apart, I must present the truth as I can. This sacrifice is much greater than a moral sacrifice, this noble sacrifice of the intellect — an expression so often misused by a wrong-headed conception of religion — it signifies the yielding up of the intellect for instreaming, spiritual truth. If we are unwilling to offer up our intellect then we cannot serve the truth. When we look toward Helena Petrovna Blavatsky with gratitude, we do so above all because she is a martyr in the sense just described, a martyr among the great martyrs for the truth. This is how we consider her when we gladly and willingly regard her as a model in the Theosophical Society. Therefore, when I speak about regions of the spirit inaccessible to her it will not profane this day.

I will speak about spiritual streams in the world that Helena Petrovna Blavatsky least understood on the physical plane. We serve her best by placing ourselves in the service of that to

which she could find no access. She would much prefer to have followers rather than worshipers. Although much of what I say may sound opposed to her, nevertheless we know that we are acting according to her wishes; by taking this liberty we esteem her the most.

Our transition now to the Apocalypse is not sought after, not forced. For if we wish to understand more deeply the world mission of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, then we must imagine evolution as consisting of two streams. Eighteen forty-one was the low point of humanity's spiritual life. The opponents of spiritual life had, in 1841, the strongest point of attack in the evolution of humankind. [See [Note 3](#)] They did the groundwork necessary to prepare for many of the things described in the Apocalypse as prophetic visions of the future. What is represented by the beast with the horns of the ram and the number 666, the beast with the seven heads and so forth — that is prepared by the powers who, in 1841, found their moment for attacking the evolution of humankind. Those elemental beings who, at that time, found suitable soil, those powers have taken possession of a large part of humanity and, from that position, are exerting their influence. Otherwise, the adversarial powers that find expression in the two beasts would not reside in humanity pulling it down. Against this downward pull there is another movement drawing us upward. What is accomplished today for this upward movement is a preparation for all those who are to be sealed, who enter the stream of spiritual evolution. This stream found an instrument precisely in Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. We do not understand our present age if we do not recognize the deep necessity for this spiritual stream. We stand now in the fifth subrace of the fifth root race and are living toward the sixth and seventh subrace, then the sixth ground-race. What does it mean to say that we are living toward these races? [See [Note 4](#)] It means that an understanding of Christ is contained in the sixth epoch — be it in the sixth epoch of the sixth subrace prophetically announced, or the sixth root race — for the human being who wants it.

At that time there will be human beings who are Christ filled, who have been sealed; in the ages of future spirituality the opening up, the breaking of the seals of human souls will take place. That the five wise virgins have oil burning in their lamps, that the bridegroom finds illuminated souls, signifies that a portion of humanity will have revealed to it the mystery that is still today closed to humankind. The book with the seven seals will be deciphered for a portion of humankind. The writer of the Apocalypse, John, wants through signs to point to this time, wants to proclaim prophetically this age. In one sentence we read: “And a great sign appeared in heaven ...” ([Rev. 12:1](#)) That means we are dealing in the Apocalypse with signs representing the great phases of the evolution of humanity. We must then decipher these signs. We remember that our present fifth root race was preceded by the Atlantean race, which was destroyed by a flood. What will destroy the fifth race? The fifth race has a special task: the development of egotism. This egotism will, at the same time, create what causes the downfall of the fifth root race. A small part of humankind will live toward the sixth main race; a larger part will not yet have found the light within. Because egotism is the fundamental power in the soul, the war of all against all will rage within this larger part of humanity. As the Lemurian race found its end through the power of fire, the Atlantean through water, so will the fifth race find its destruction in conflict between selfish, egoistic powers in the war of all against all. This line of evolution will descend deeper and deeper; when it arrives at the bottom everyone will rage against everyone else. A small part of humankind will escape this, just as a small part escaped during the destruction of the Atlantean race. It is up to every individual to find a connection to the spiritual life in order to be one of those to go over into the sixth root race. Mighty revolutions stand before humankind; they are described in the Apocalypse.

First, seven letters to seven communities are placed before us. If human beings are to find the path to that great point in time, they must have something to hang on to, something that enables them to ennoble the seven sheaths of their human constitution, so that they are prepared when the time comes. There are places on the earth where, through religious exercises, the main emphasis is on the development of the physical body. In other places the emphasis is on the development of the etheric body. In other locations the emphasis is on the development of the astral body, or the I. There will also be more and more places where special attention will be given to the development of manas, or budhi, or atma. [See [Note 5](#)] We would not believe in reincarnation in

the proper sense unless we would say: If a person has once been born in a location where the primary emphasis is on the physical body, then, another time, he or she would be born in a place where more attention was paid to the other bodies, and so forth.

Seven letters are directed to seven separate geographical regions where particular emphasis is placed on one of the seven parts of the human being. The first letter is directed to the Ephesians. They put great stock in the development of the physical body. The Phrygians in Smyrna emphasized the etheric body; in Pergamon people worked especially on the astral body.

We want to consider why seven geographical regions signify special kinds of development for humankind in relation to the seven members of the human being. Let us assume that someone lives in a region where the physical body is especially developed; if that person then neglects the physical body, it then becomes a caricature of what it might have become. If what is supposed to be brought to a certain perfection is not developed, then something arises inwardly that makes such a person receptive to the evil manifestations in the evolution of humankind.

The first letter is directed to the community in Ephesus, the place consecrated to Diana. [See [Note 6](#)] It emphasizes the beautiful formation of the human body. Where does the development of the physical body lead? We can become increasingly clear about this if we realize that the physical body must be evermore purified, and must become more and more an expression of the etheric body. The etheric body must itself become an expression of the astral body, which in turn should become an expression of the I.

Numbers played a large role in the ancient Pythagorean schools. Let us remember that in the world of devachan, everything is ordered according to measure and number. Of course, this is the case with everything. What would it mean to seek the laws of nature, if they did not already exist? We weigh and measure the bodies of the world as we do substances on a smaller scale. We must put this fact together with another. We can think of this space as filled with the “sound forms” of a sublime musical composition, for example, the sounds of the “Good Friday Spell” from Wagner’s opera Parzifal. That is the higher, soul form for what a physicist would express in numbers for the frequency of the sound vibrations. The spirit of these vibrations of the music flows through our souls. If we think of the numbers being heard by the ear of the spirit, then we have the music of the spheres. If a physicist would record in numbers the vibrations in the air he or she would record the magic of “Good Friday” just as little as a mathematician describes Pythagorean ideas in measure and number. The numbers express only the harmonies. When Pythagoreans wanted to express the four members of the human being, they expressed the harmony in the ratio: 1:3:7:12. That signifies the sound wherein the four numbers harmonize in the same way as do the four parts of the human being. The three sounds: I, the sound of the sun; II, — the sound of the moon; III, the sound of the earth — resound into the astral body.

Physical body : 12 Ephesus

Etheric body : 7 Smyrna

Astral body : 3 Pergamon

I : 1

Spirit self

Life spirit

Spiritualized human being

What comes forth from the earth, sun, and moon sound together in our astral body. But what comes forth from the planets sounds in our etheric body. There is a sevenfold influence from the planets on the etheric body, as there is from the seven musical intervals: the unison interval, major second, major third, perfect fourth, perfect fifth, major sixth, major seventh — Saturn, Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus. These seven planets resound into our etheric body. There are twelve influences from the signs of the zodiac that resound into our physical body. The seer experiences twelve fundamental tones on the devachanic plane. They influence our physical body. Everything in the I, astral body, etheric body, and in the physical body resounds in tones.

One tone resounds in the I, three tones in the astral body, seven tones in the etheric body and twelve tones in the physical body. Altogether this results in harmony or disharmony.

There is an expression in occultism: the twelve goes into the seven, which means that the physical body is constantly becoming more like the etheric body. If the physical body sounds right then we can hear the seven tones of the stars through the twelve tones. “Become such that the twelve becomes the seven, that the seven stars appear” is said to the Ephesians, because with them the physical body is especially developed. They should turn to look at the seven stars. We know that the development of Christianity means a transition from the old forms of community based on blood ties to spiritual love, that the spiritual will take over from the flesh. Those who tell us that we should endeavor, above all, to insure that the sensual, the elemental gets its due — those people were called the Nicolaitans: They wanted to remain rooted in the material forces of the blood; hence, the warning concerning the Nicolaitans. [See [Note 7](#)] They are the ones who will bring about the downfall.

Oposing them are those who want to overcome material evolution, who want spiritual life. The letter closes with the symbol of the tree of life: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna ...” ([Rev. 2:17](#))

The second letter is directed to the community that is supposed to be most concerned with the cultivation of the etheric body. The etheric body must gradually be developed into life spirit. The human being now goes through birth and death, but later this etheric body will become life spirit. Then it will have overcome death. In the Sermon on the Mount we read: “Blessed are those who pray for spirit, for they find through themselves the Kingdom of Heaven” (compare: [Matt. 5:3](#)) Those who pray for spirit are blessed; that means that soul permeates their life. Just as the physical body is developed by the Ephesians, so, too, in the second community, is the etheric body developed into a body of soul. When they strive for this blessing they are called “beggars for spirit”; they pray for a blessing through the enlivening of the etheric body. This is indicated by the words: “Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life.” With these words the development of the etheric body is clearly expressed.

The Apocalypse is one of the greatest spiritual documents. There are hardly any great spiritual truths whose significance is not to be found there. The study of the Apocalypse is not without its connections to theosophical evolution.

By understanding such a work we allow ourselves to be stimulated by the spirit who spoke through Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. What the Theosophical Society seeks to achieve must strike us like a trumpet proclamation sent to humankind. The more we understand the Apocalypse the more we understand the task of our movement.

Notes:

[Note 1.](#) Day of remembrance of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (born 1831) who died on May 8, 1891. In 1875 with Henry Steel Olcott (1832 – 1907) she founded the Theosophical Society.

[Note 2.](#) *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*, 2 vols. (New York: J.W. Bouton, 1877).

[Note 3.](#) Compare Rudolf Steiner’s lecture of October 14, 1917 in *The Fall of the Spirits of Darkness* (GA 177) (Forthcoming from Rudolf Steiner Press).

[Note 4.](#) Steiner uses the old theosophical term “root race” to designate the seven epochs of earth evolution: the Polarian, the Hyperborean, the Lemurian, the Atlantean, Post-Atlantean and the

last two, the sixth and seventh epochs. Each of these epochs consists of seven “subraces” It should be noted that Steiner used the word “race” only in the early, the theosophical, period of his work. Furthermore, his use of the word has little in common with the word’s use today. On June 20, 1908 he said, “... we speak of ages of civilization, in contradistinction to races. All that is connected with this idea of race is still the remains of the epoch preceding our own, namely, the Atlantean. We are now living in the age of cultural epochs. Atlantis was the age in which 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 they are really mixtures and are quite unlike those distinct races of the Atlantean epoch. Today the idea of civilization has already superseded the idea of race” (*The Apocalypse of St. John*, London: The Anthroposophical Publishing Co., 1958, 61).

[Note 5.](#) Characterized by Rudolf Steiner in his book [Theosophy](#). as Spirit-self, Life-spirit, and Spirit-Man.

[Note 6.](#) Ancient Roman goddess of the forest, protector of wilderness and women. She was identified with the Greek goddess Artemis.

[Note 7.](#) The Nicolaitans mentioned in chapter 2 of the *Book of Revelation* are pagan Christians from Pergamon. They disregarded the Old Testament proscriptions concerning the consumption of food sacrificed to idols and certain marital unions characterized as sexually immoral.

LECTURE FOUR

MUNICH — May 15, 1907

WITH OUR STUDY OF THE APOCALYPSE we have reached the point that leads us to the so-called third letter. This third letter portrays to us — entirely in keeping with what we have seen in the first two letters — the evolutionary secrets, so to speak, of a certain geographical territory. In order to find our way into the following train of thought we must once again briefly call to mind the basic tendency and goal of the Apocalypse.

We have seen that the Apocalypse is a book of initiation. It describes the steps to be taken by a candidate for initiation in order to develop the highest vision of the spiritual world. We have seen that acquiring knowledge of all aspects of the physical plane is the first step. Those to be initiated must raise themselves to the astral plane, and then to the devachanic plane. It has become clear to us that human beings who raise themselves to the astral plane are surrounded by a world of pictures, which are much more real than anything we call pictures in our poor language. These astral pictures are much more real than what exists here. These pictures experienced by the seer are the fundamental forces of the physical world. The physical world is formed out of this world of pictures. When human beings have worked through to the astral plane, then they raise themselves to the devachanic plane; this plane’s world of pictures resounds with the so-called music of the spheres, which constitutes the inner being of all things. Progressing then from the astral plane to the devachanic the seer hears for the first time what the Pythagorean school characterized as “the music of the spheres.” The music of the spheres finds only an abstract expression in what we call the higher numbers. But what are ordinary numbers and measure? What are the numbers physicists speak about when they discover wave motion, when they speak of oscillations? What are these numbers compared with what our ears hear when they hear the sounds themselves? What we find in the philosophical books concerning the “mysticism of numbers” is nothing more than a babbling. But what Pythagoras described is what the seer perceives after the spiritual ear has been opened, when it hears the sounds that make the wave movement or hears what is expressed in such wave movement. The devachanic world is

nowhere else. You can remain standing in the same location and experience the physical world fading away. The world is enlivened with colors and forms — and then you can experience that this world of light is penetrated by tones.

In the Apocalypse you will find a description of how Christian mysticism describes the devachanic world. If you raise yourself to that elevated condition as the servant of the Lord did, then you first experience what is taking place on the physical plane. This is described to us in a certain way in the seven letters to the seven communities. Then the enlightenment achieved through knowledge of the physical plane is put into signs in the seven seals. When human beings raise themselves to the astral plane they experience a world flooded with light, pictures, and forms. That is described to us in the picture of the man surrounded by the four living creatures, of the lamb receiving from his hand the book with the seven seals. As these picture-seals are unsealed the astral world comes to meet us, and the trumpeting angels signify the harmony of the spheres on the plane of devachan.

With the Apocalypse we are confronted by a book of initiation. Such a book is, at the same time, always a prophetic book. One who experiences the events of the astral and devachanic planes also, at the same time, experiences the events of the future — a profound mystery of the future is present here. What is found today on a higher plane will appear in the future on the physical plane. Place yourself with a seer presently on the astral plane; the seer can only rise to this world if his or her spiritual eye is opened. Think of everything that you experience on the astral plane condensed, grown solid like water to ice; then you have the condition of your own physical world in the near future. The present, today, in the astral world, is the future in the physical, so that the seer can see today the future state of humankind on the astral plane. Initiation means, at the same time, penetrating the secrets of future events. Hence, the Apocalypse is first of all a book of initiation and secondly, a prophetic book. This prophetic wisdom we want now to illuminate a little more closely; we want to see how this wisdom encompasses the meaning of the evolution of our humankind.

You have heard that the Apocalypse speaks of very bad conditions of our earth, devastating conditions. We have just studied the task of Theosophy within our human evolution. Let us look at the future: There will be terrible conditions, conditions that devastate the earth. Human beings will be in a moral state that will allow egotism to attain heights compared with which our present-day state is mere child's play. One might ask how will it be in the future with souls of the present day? Must they be condemned to incarnate in a morally degenerate humanity, in an evil race? We must answer with a decisive “no.”

A wonderful legend describes to us the state of development of the soul. The soul is in a different line of evolution than the body of the human being. The difference between soul and racial development can be seen if we look into the past. Souls were incarnated many times in the Atlantean race; all of you were Atlanteans at that time. The souls worked themselves out of that situation and the remaining human bodies belonged to the races that had become decadent and were falling into decline. The souls left the bodies of the races and rose up to higher races. Human bodies afflicted with fundamental evil will not have souls within them that are striving to rise above their present state to a higher one. Souls that proceed with their development, who rise above themselves, will have, through their work, achieved different kinds of bodies in the sixth root race. But there is also something in Christian esotericism called the melting of human beings with their race. There is a great difference between a human being who says: I will raise myself above what I am capable of giving today to something higher; and another who says: I will stay in the life that surrounds me today. Those who do not strive to go beyond the present-day configuration, who fuse with their race, will be condemned to lead further lives in the bodies of the later races that are left behind.

When we look to the great leaders of humankind who are our pathfinders, we look to them as leaders who will show us how to go beyond the evolution of races in order to dwell in bodies that are more perfect in the future. The fact that a human being can say: I want to stay where I am! is

expressed in a legend that has lived for a long time and found various explanations. However, it is really only explained by Theosophy. Think of the pathfinder whom we call Christ Jesus, the one who points to the passage in the Apocalypse we have just discussed. It is the passage he most often refers to — the place where he speaks of the overcoming of death. When you find human souls sitting along the way who are not interested in evolving — what do they experience? They must again and again be born in the same race because they have rejected the signal from the redeemer. This tragedy is expressed in the Ahasuerus legend; [See [Note 1](#)] Ahasuerus, “the wandering Jew,” created his own destiny because he had pushed the redeemer away from himself.

We must, then, distinguish between the evolution of the soul and the evolution of races; and we are shown how souls climb ever higher. But we are also shown how races sink deeper and deeper in a terrible way. We have now explained how present day evolution is described in the seven letters. We think of the letters as directed to the seven communities of our earth.

If we divide the earth into seven zones geographically, a letter is directed to each. The first territory is one where human beings, particularly today, work to perfect their physical bodies into a higher form. In the second region etheric bodies are the focus and in the third astral bodies are especially cultivated. So you will find one aspect emphasized in one territory, and another aspect in another. Think of these regions spread over the earth. What we refer to as the various peoples or folk groups cultivate particular parts of the human constitution: one folk especially develops the physical human being, another folk cultivates another aspect. But we have mentioned that it is not true to say that at one location only the astral body, at another only the physical body, is cultivated. In our various incarnations our souls must learn the lesson of each individual region. The seven letters are directed to every human being because every human being must pass through the seven stages of evolutionary development. The letter to the community in Ephesus is directed to a territory where the physical body is especially cultivated. The individual words characterize wonderfully just this kind of development. The third letter, to the Pergamonians, goes to the region where the astral body is particularly developed.

Let us keep together all the different facts we have discovered in the course of time. The evolution of the human being proceeds in such a way that the I works into the astral body, spiritualizing it. That part of the astral body transformed by the I is designated by the term “spirit self” or “manas.” Cultivating the astral body means, then, to work manas into the astral body. As much as you have cultivated your astral body — to that extent have you worked manas into it. In Christian esotericism the word “manna” means the same as manas; what is indicated as manna in the Bible is what we mean when we speak of the manasic nature flowing into the human being.

In the third letter we read: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (communities). To him who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna.” ([Rev. 2:17](#)) That is clearly stated; and with this letter the other side of the issue is also indicated, that those who do not undergo this development bring their bodies down, bring them into decline. In Christian esotericism the degeneration of the astral body is indicated in a very radical way.

In the Lemurian age the higher part of the human soul descended into the three human members. Remember, at that time the external human being was at a stage just somewhat higher than today’s highest animals. From that time onward human beings have been working to form and develop their astral body because the soul is dependent on it. The soul is dependent on the astral body which, when the soul first entered it, was almost at the stage of animality. The progress of humankind consists just in this, that we work on the astral body, that we purify the animalistic emotions and instincts.

Assume for a moment the opposite; the consequence is not that the astral body remains unchanged but rather that it sinks down into a condition lower than it was in during Lemuria. Such neglect is portrayed as the temptations of Satan. For a Christian esotericist, “Satan” is a being who seduces human beings into bringing their astral bodies into decline rather than into

ascent. When the writer of the Apocalypse wants to describe the other side, he says: If you develop your astral body then you will enjoy the heavenly manna. But there are regions where people do not develop the astral body — they experience the temptations of Satan. He describes this pull downward on the astral body: “I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is ...” ([Rev. 2:13](#))

The fourth letter — to the community in Thyatira — is addressed to the region where humanity’s sense of personality finds expression. This I plays a large role with all those wanting to lead human nature into a descent. Especially in middle European esotericism, the I is presented altogether as the middle point, as what is actually active and at work within the human being. The human being is like a flowing together of forces, forces that flow together in the astral body, etheric body, and physical body; and the I is presented as what is at work on these three members. In Germanic mythology this is portrayed by the tree, the world-ash, the symbol for threefold human nature. The middle point for this threefold human nature is the I; through its incorporation in the three members it carries the entire tree of human growth and evolution. “Ygg” is the ancient form for growth and evolution. You will find that in the ancient forms of speech as a characterization for what has been incorporated, the world-ash is called “Yggdrasil.” Yggdrasil means, “the carrying I”; and the name of the god who is connected with the formation of the I is also derived from it.

In the course of evolution the human being first learned how to inhale; in Hebrew that is connected with the word “Jehovah.” In old High German that corresponds to Odin, who is a god of the wind and races around in storms. “Jach” (Jahweh) is the “blower,” and when we speak of Wotan, and his army that rushes here and there, then we are speaking of the Odem, who was necessary for the growth of the I. In Christian esotericism a very special value is placed on this word altogether. It is seen as the name for the eternal in the human being and is, therefore, portrayed as what carries the other bodies, as what forms their middle point. Consider only this passage: “... and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received power from my Father; and I will give him the morning star.” ([Rev. 2:27,28](#)) This I means the same thing as the actual name of Christ Jesus. Here, in almost every sentence, the word I appears again to tell us that it is the eternal in the human being. You will find this meaning expressed again and again by the words in the Apocalypse.

I will cite only a very special passage. The sixth letter must be addressed to a community where budhi is especially cultivated. What does that mean? If manas is especially cultivated, and if the human being has become a knower, then what we previously knew will pass over into our living feelings; it becomes for us a natural, given, feeling. It becomes a passion for us. If you realize that justice should prevail, that justice should live, if you realize that humankind cannot live without the beautiful and the good, then you are on the way to develop budhi. If higher things have become your second nature, if your soul is fully permeated with enthusiasm for the beautiful and the true, then you are on the path to budhi. Budhi takes its substance from the realm of feelings; and atma from the realm of the will. And when humankind finally reaches the point where it has made enthusiasm for the good into a reality, then what is called the Christian ideal of brotherhood will have appeared. This sixth territory can receive its name only from the ideal of brotherhood, and “Philadelphia” is the city of brotherly love. If you read the relevant passage you will see the city described this way: “I know your works. Behold, I set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut; I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.” ([Rev. 3:8](#)) They did not deny the name that comes from fraternal duty.

The seventh letter is taken from the realm of atma, the atma or breath of the human being. When we have come as far as the physical breath we take in, when the I has worked down into the physical body — perhaps you know that in Christian esotericism this is designated by the word “amen” — then the esotericist, when speaking of this, will refer to the “amen,” and to the Angel of the Church (community) in Laodicea write: “The words of the amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation.” ([Rev. 3:14](#))

I have been able to select only some of the passages. If we could discuss everything, then you would see that we have messages for regions in our own time in these seven letters.

Let us now go from the past into the future. What does the writer of the Apocalypse think of the future? He speaks entirely in the following way: What you can see today on the astral plane is nothing other than the formation of the physical future of human beings. Look at what is on the astral plane and you will experience the future of humankind. There is no future that does not result from the present.

You know that the human being is enveloped in an astral body that permeates the physical body. You know, too, that there are sense organs in the astral body that are entirely different from the sense organs in the physical body. We speak of the lotus blossoms or wheels. What the human being can develop today in terms of such astral senses, the human physical body will have in the future as physical senses. The astral is on the way to becoming physical. How do human beings form these organs of the future, which today are still astral? Through what we achieve today in terms of the true, the beautiful, and the good. Work and deeds of today form the foundation for organs in the future. There was a time when human beings did not have eyes — they couldn't perceive light and color. Human beings acquired eyes through their actions at that time. They had other organs previously — by turning to the light they developed eyes. Present deed is future destiny; the deeds of the past were such that eyes could be created, and from your deeds in the present day, your sense organs of the future will be created.

Human beings who are active in terms of the true, the beautiful, and the good will have normal organs in the future. If they strive against the true, the beautiful, and the good then they will have crippled organs in the future. It is impossible to erase what we do in the present. A deed laid down in the present in order that it emerge in the future is termed “sealed” in Christian esotericism. In terms of Christian esotericism one says: Today you have eyes that were nonexistent in the past but you did this or that. Your eyes were “sealed,” now they are “unsealed.” Your eyes are the “unsealing” of your past deeds. We have now the sealing of what will be unsealed on the physical plane in the future. For anyone who looks only at the physical plane, evolution is a book with seven seals. Anyone who looks at the astral plane can see all future organs already laid out. The organs reveal themselves as pictures. An esotericist would say: If you look to the middle point, which is characterized as the lamb, then the lamb will put the book into your hand; and the book is unsealed in such a way that what will have form in the future can only be expressed in pictures. Therefore, what can occur is expressed through pictures, piece by piece. In the first seal a future condition is portrayed pictorially by a horse, a further condition is revealed in the second seal through another horse and so forth. In order to discern the meaning we will consider one image, let us say, the third horse. This is the picture that appears when the third seal is broken. It is presented in the following way: “When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, ‘Come!’ And I saw, and behold, a black horse, and its rider had a balance in its hand.” ([Rev. 6:5](#))

What does this mean? A future condition of the human being is here portrayed, a condition that proceeds from the evolution of the third member of the human being, the astral body, which has been worked on and purified by the I. An unpurified astral body is one that knows only itself, that finds everything that does not belong to it to be antipathetic. A purified astral body is one that receives everything coming to it weighed out with a just balance. If we rightly purify the astral body, an organ is created that can be expressed pictorially by a rider with a balance. An organ in the astral body arises for the human being out of just deeds in the present. This is expressed here pictorially. We could explain the other pictures in the same way. Then we would see the inadequacy of the usual explanations that are given.

When the fifth seal is opened we are told something very significant: “When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne ...” ([Rev. 6:9](#)) What happens to a soul that develops itself up to the fifth step? It is strangled in its lower soul; the impurities that cling to it are done away with, and

the soul thereby appears clothed in innocence: “And they were each given a white robe ...” ([Rev. 6:11](#)) The soul is white; it has become innocent when it has developed to the fifth step.

If we ascend higher we arrive at the place where the astral pictures go over into the devachanic, to the sounding of the trumpets. The Ahasuerus human beings form one group of humanity; the others will be those who can enter into other beings. Now, it will appear obvious to us that what has fallen behind must be described with pictures that can only be described as repulsive. While the souls that have developed further are hearing the trumpets, the others will have achieved the peak of egotistical development. Those who have advanced, who have developed their souls, will live like lofty initiates today.

I have told you that initiates progress through various stages. They must transform not only something of their astral body, but also something of their etheric body, and even something of their physical body. In earlier times initiates were kept in a state such that their etheric body existed outside their physical body for three and one-half days while the physical body lay there as if dead. Meanwhile, the hierophant lead the etheric body through higher worlds.

The writer of the Apocalypse describes to us what a present-day initiate experiences. He describes it as something similar to the initiation process of three and one-half days. Remember that there is actually a passage in the Apocalypse that says two witnesses of God appear, who lie as if dead for three and one-half days and then again become alive: “... and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange gifts, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. But after three and one-half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.” ([Rev. 11:10,11](#)) The Apocalypse speaks of these two prophets in addition to the leader of humankind, whom the people could see. You have here a description of a process of initiation. You see how everything fits together.

There is something else that will show you how deeply the writer of the Apocalypse has penetrated into the mysteries of the world. I can best explain this if I relate to you the Golden Legend, [See [Note 2](#)] which has played an especially large role in Christian esotericism.

We are told that Seth was able to journey to Paradise, that the cherub with the flaming sword permitted him to pass and actually enter Paradise. He encountered there a vision: The crowns of the two trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge, had grown together. Seth took a seed from this tree that had grown together; this seed he placed in the mouth of his deceased father, Adam. From this seed then grew a tree with three trunks, which provided wood for various things. It was especially important that Seth could see how a kind of flaming script was formed in the branches of this tree. The following words appeared: “Ejeh, Ascher, Ejeh,” which mean, “I am he who was, he who is and he who will be. The wood from this tree was used to make the staff with which Moses performed his miraculous deeds; the wood was used to build Solomon’s temple; then it was used for a bridge over the Bethesda pool, which Jesus walked over. Finally, the wood was used to make the cross on which Christ Jesus was crucified. What do these two symbols mean, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge? What does it mean that they have grown together? And what does the tree signify, the tree that provided the wood even for the cross?

The fact that Seth could enter Paradise means nothing other than that he had become an initiate, that he could penetrate into mysteries that were closed to others. Now let us ask ourselves: What do the trees that he saw signify? That is something found in every human being, something present in every individual.

How did the human being become a knower? The answer is connected with the inhalation of air through the lungs, where the “used” blue blood is transformed into red blood. In this way the human being could take up the Odem, the breath of God. This is the becoming of the individual human I: through the infowing of the Odem of God through which the human being became a

knowing soul. A real tree is actually incorporated in the human being, a tree you can still see today if you study the human body. This is the tree created by the main arteries, which branch off into smaller and smaller capillaries throughout the entire body. There is no being in the world that can become a knowing being if it cannot, like a human being, take up the oxygen from the air — the oxygen that is so necessary to create red blood — so that human beings can take into themselves the tree of knowledge through the red blood.

The other tree, the tree of blue veins, has been taken away from the human being in terms of human mastery over it. It contains the used, blue blood which is a poison, filled with death. Before the human being descended from the bosom of God, it was the tree of life. By becoming earthly, the human being was divided into two parts, comprising the veinal and arterial, the blue and the red blood vessel systems. The blue blood streams up to the heart and must unite with what the plants give. The human being breathes out carbon dioxide; plants breathe in carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen. In this way human breathing, which expresses itself in our actual “I-ness,” is an intertwining of the red and blue “blood trees.” This is, however, only possible if the human being has a tool, and that is the plant, without which the human being cannot live. The plant is what allows us to intertwine the blue and the red “blood trees.”

The alchemy of the human being is this: what the plants do for us today, human beings in the future will be able to accomplish within and through their consciousness. What is outside the human being today will be intertwined within the physical body when we have taken in the entire plant world, when we have expanded our consciousness to include the entire world of plants. That is the future condition of humanity. Then, what exists outside in the natural world surrounding us will be entirely different.

Our entire cosmos will be changed with us. Earlier conditions will return at a higher level. There was a time when the earth and the sun were united with one another. At that time the human being existed within the being of the sun. But by entering into a physical body, the human being actually left the Mars state — and it is this state that someday humankind will once again attain. At that time the tree of life and the tree of knowledge were intertwined; at that time the human being did not need any external tool. That will be the case again in the future. What humankind will have then attained has always been indicated symbolically by drawing the sun, and then indicating the earth at a higher stage of development — with the human being also more highly developed. What will bring human beings to that point is the union of the red and blue bloodstreams by means of an expanded consciousness. This is indicated with two metal pillars — those are the two bloodstreams — and the sun is what will be ... [omission in manuscript]. Then the blue blood tree will no longer be a tree of death.

The seer must see this condition in astral signs. To describe this condition the writer of the Apocalypse must indicate it with pictures. “Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun and his feet were like pillars of fire.” ([Rev. 10:1](#)) We have here a picture of this condition. In the same way the entire Apocalypse is composed with occult signs.

Christian esotericism sees the earth as the body of Christ. When Christian esotericism speaks of the body of Christ, it is speaking of the planetary body of the earth. Therefore, you must take words such as the following seriously: “He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.” ([John 13:18](#)) When we eat the bread of the earth we are treading on it with our feet.

If so, the writer of the Apocalypse can say even something more. We have seen that Seth was an initiate. Abel was a man of God who voluntarily lived from what was given to him. Cain was a farmer who himself built whatever he needed. Two lines of development are spoken of. One could be called the Seth or Abel direction, while the other included those who themselves had to change the form of everything. They will have to work for a long time; therefore tilling the soil, the work of the farmer has always been a symbol for those who transform the earth. The children of Abel or Seth stand over against the servants of Cain, who are the successors of Cain or the

people of Cain. Those who have received revelations from the beginning have seen from the beginning, but also those who diligently work and strive will become initiates and behold the one who is the spirit of the earth, the planetary spirit of the earth. If the writer of the Apocalypse wants to indicate that the spirit of the planet will be seen by those who themselves transform the earth, then he will say: “All eyes will see Christ Jesus, also those who have pierced him.” Therefore, the writer of the Apocalypse says, right at the beginning, “Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, everyone who pierced him.” ([Rev. 1:7](#)) Those are, at the same time, words that describe the goal, the essence, the leitmotif of the Apocalypse. Precisely these profound words show us that the Apocalypse is really a prophetic book, that we can read from it the future that is here portrayed in pictures. It is our task as Theosophists to see things that Christ Jesus could not speak about in those days because the people could not yet understand. But he did point to them with signs.

What Christ Jesus has poured into these signs must become clear to us for the sake of the stream of Theosophy in the world. It must stand before our eyes symbolically during the next days of our Congress through the seven seals of the Apocalypse, through the motifs on the pillar capitals, and through the five planetary seals that we find as vignettes in the program. These five vignettes were not invented; they are rather five vignettes from the occult script.

If we learn to understand every line, all the curves and marks, then we have understood something of how human evolution has been written in the occult language of signs. Theosophy must point out this language of occult signs.

We meet together in order to work for knowledge. Everything else will come by itself through this work for knowledge. Therefore, the moral admonition, “You should love your brother” is just like saying to a stove: Your task is to heat the room! Saying so does not make the room warm. But when you put wood in the stove then it will warm the room by itself without having to be told.

By striving for knowledge, by accomplishing the work of knowing, you heat the human soul and this leads to the great work of the brotherhood of humankind. The Theosophical Society must be a society that promotes work toward esoteric knowledge, otherwise it will not thrive. If we absorb something from these ideas, then we will be able to do some of what the Theosophical Society must do, also on the occasion of this Congress. [See [Note 3](#)] If Theosophy is also connected with what is described in the book of wonders, the Apocalypse, then we must also do something in order to break the seals ourselves. Only when within our society we open the seals of the books that have been given to us by great individuals, only then are we striving toward that which the Theosophical Society should be, if it wants to be a real influence on our modern culture.

Notes:

[Note 1.](#) Ahasuerus is a figure in Christian legend fraught with mystery and ambiguity. A reference in John 18, 20–22 to an officer who struck Jesus is sometimes seen as the origin of the story. Another possible source, the English *Flores Historiarum* (1228) describes a man in Armenia, Cartaphilus, who later converted to Christianity. Cartaphilus had been Pontius Pilate’s doorkeeper. He had struck Jesus on the road to Calvary and Jesus responded: “I go, and you will wait until I return.” This legend was revived in Germany in 1602 in a pamphlet entitled, “A brief description and narration regarding a Jew named Ahasuerus.” Since then the tale has been the subject of many plays, poems, novels, and paintings. Rudolf Steiner’s acquaintance, the Austrian poet Robert Hamerling, for example, wrote an epic *Ahasver in Rom* (1862), while Edgar Quinet in *Ahasverus* (1833) used the legend to symbolize the progress of humanity.

[Note 2.](#) Compare the lectures in part II of *The Temple Legend* (GA 93) “Concerning the Lost Temple and How It Is to Be Restored in Connection with the Legend of the True Cross, or Golden Legend” (London:Rudolf Steiner Press, 1985)

[Note 3.](#) IV Annual Congress of the Federation of European Sections of the Theosophical Society, May 18 – 21, 1907.

PART 2

LECTURE ONE

KRISTIANIA — May 9, 1909

WE HAVE OFTEN SAID THAT Theosophy should not be regarded as something new. Other, external approaches of knowledge often want to see something new. But Theosophy wants to be, and should be, an expression of the striving for wisdom appropriate for our time, a manifestation of the striving that has existed through all time. Theosophy sees in all the temporal manifestations the various forms of a primal wisdom that has been flowing through all ages.

The Apocalypse, which belongs among the oldest ancient documents of Christianity, has been explained in the most various ways during every age of Christianity. These explanations always carry a subjective imprint of the understanding characteristic of different epochs.

On the whole, if we quickly survey the centuries of Christian development, we see, even in the earlier ages, a dawning materialistic interpretation brought to bear on this book. We find the mistake soon made of seeing in the pictures of the Apocalypse certain events in the evolution of the earth and humanity, for example, the descent of the Messiah who had been proclaimed, or even the establishment of a heavenly kingdom in the physical sense in this world. When the subsequent ages neither fulfilled nor revealed any of this, people in the various regions of the Occident believed that a mistake had been made in calculation; the date for the fulfillment of these prophecies was pushed more and more into the future. Around the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Apocalypse began to be interpreted in a more inner way. At that time people began to see the kingdom of the Antichrist in the externalization of Christianity. For many, the Roman church itself became the expression of this kingdom of the Antichrist; the Roman church, on the other hand, saw the same thing in Protestantism.

In more recent times, times entirely permeated with a materialistic attitude, it has been said that, of course, the writer of the Apocalypse could not have known anything about the future; he was describing events that lie in the past. It was thought, for example, that he saw in the beast with two horns an opponent of Christianity as great as Nero. When the descriptions then went on to include earthquakes, swarms of locusts, and so forth, it was not hard to prove that such events did occur in those regions at that time. That is what is called “objective research”; nevertheless, it is wholly prejudiced by subjective understanding.

Theosophy should become an instrument for us to spiritually comprehend the Apocalypse again and thereby penetrate its meaning. One could also think that the explanation given by Theosophy is as subjectively colored as all the other explanations. In a certain sense it is, but there is a difference between it and the other explanations. Those who describe history externally want to be objective, but they can only be subjective. We, however, want to explain subjectively in the sense that we are aware, in all modesty, that the wisdom of the world is always in harmony with advancing evolution, with the advance of time. When we do what is right for our time it is a force that works into all of the future. Theosophy must not become a dogmatism. What we teach today as Theosophy will not change in its essence but in its form. When the souls of the present age are born again in future times, they will be mature enough to take up other, higher, future

forms of the spiritual life. Our explanation of the Apocalypse will age; future ages will go beyond it. But the Apocalypse itself will not, therefore, age. It is much greater than our explanations and will find even higher, even loftier explanations.

Let us place before our souls the first lines of the Apocalypse as they are read in truth. We are told that the mystery of Jesus Christ is given to us in signs, that these signs are to be interpreted and that the writer is attempting to explain — to the best of his ability — as much of the signs as possible. The Apocalypse was written with a different intention than John's Gospel. We are dealing with a personal experience when the writer tells us that he is describing the revelation of Jesus Christ, the appearance of Christ. It is something similar to Paul's experience on the way to Damascus, similar to the mystery of Paul.

Paul is the one who did the most to proclaim and spread Christianity despite his not being one of the disciples who experienced the events in Palestine with Jesus. Neither did he experience the tragic ending of those events: the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Through the descriptions in the Gospels we know how all of this entered into the hearts of humankind at that time. Paul had heard about all that is described in the Gospels. Paul knew exactly what had happened in Palestine; nevertheless, he simply could not imagine that the one who had ended up on the cross was the promised Messiah, the redeemer. The Messiah, Paul said to himself, could not end up like a common criminal. Paul is not well understood unless we look deeply into his soul, unless we look at what lived in him as the knowledge of a Jewish initiate. He knew that the savior, the Messiah, had proclaimed himself ahead of time in the burning bush, in the fire of Mount Sinai. Christ points to this when he says, "But if you do not believe his [Moses'] writings, how will you believe my words?" ([John 5:47](#)) With these words Christ is saying that he had announced himself earlier through external means, through the power of the elements, and that he then, however, went on to reveal himself through life, suffering and dwelling in a human body — that he had descended, so to speak, from the fire of Sinai. Certainly the Jewish initiate, Paul, knew of the Christ who had been previously announced; for behind the mystery of Moses lay the following.

During the time of the Old Testament and in ancient Jewish occult teaching there were, as in all ages, mysteries and initiates. Let us bear in mind the fundamental principle, that initiation must adapt to the conditions prevailing during any given age. If we consider initiation according to that principle, then we must begin by thinking of the human being as the human being presented by Theosophy or spiritual science. We must think of the human as a four-fold being, a being with four members — as endowed with a physical body in common with the mineral world; an etheric body in common with the plant kingdom; an astral body in common with the animal kingdom; and finally with an I or I-bearer. Standing before us, the human being consists of these four members. During the day they are bound together with one another but at night the I and the astral body are in the spiritual world. During the night the present-day human being perceives nothing. When human beings develop to a higher spiritual vision, they must apply certain methods of inner development to themselves. Anyone wishing to ascend to higher worlds must allow meditations and concentration to work on their soul. They must immerse their souls in certain things; one example among hundreds is the Rose Cross.

When human beings of the present day are asleep what they experience during the day does not make a strong enough impression on their astral body for it to continue working at night. When a normal person of the present day falls asleep in the evening, day life is as if extinguished. With students of initiation it is different, even if they do not notice the transformation of their astral body for a long time. In a meditator who has begun and practices the exercises prescribed in occult schools, a clairvoyant sees entirely different streams, other forms and organs than those unorganized and chaotic forms seen in ordinary people. This shows itself as the results of the exercises even if the students themselves have not noticed any results for a long time. The astral body changes, it becomes a different being even if the meditation is very short. The astral body was chaotic before and everything the human being did was drowned out by the impressions of the day. Only the prescriptions from the occult school provide something that drowns out the impressions from everyday life. Therefore, this transformation of the soul is

called purification or catharsis. The student is purified while the astral body continues to be chaotic and unordered in an ordinary person.

Now, the teacher must also make the student aware of the nature of the surrounding spiritual world. For what happens in the astral body to carry over into the etheric body, the following steps were undertaken with the student in earlier times. When the students were ready, at the peak of their initiation, so to speak, they had to spend some time, usually three and a half days, lying down, during which time the initiator brought them to a state of complete lethargy or torpor. The etheric body was then lifted out of the physical body and the astral body impressed into the etheric body all that had been prepared in the astral through occult exercises. Otherwise the physical body is a hindrance to bringing to consciousness what the person experiences in the spiritual world. In this moment, when the initiator led the etheric body out of the physical body, enlightenment occurred and the enlightened one experienced the spiritual world; after three and a half days the student was an initiate who could tell others about the spiritual world.

We can find the same process in the mysteries of various ancient peoples. But initiation was different with the initiates of the Old Testament, for they experienced yet again what Moses had experienced at Sinai. In this way they were able to tell the people that the Messiah would appear, that the Messiah would come forth from the nation itself, that he would incarnate the principles of development for all human evolution in a body of flesh. That was the supreme moment of the initiation — when the enlightened Hebrew was allowed to experience that the Christ would arise in the future. Paul, as a Jewish initiate, knew all of this; nevertheless, before the Damascus event he could never have believed that the one who died on the cross was the same one as the Messiah.

Paul said of himself that he was a “premature birth,” that is, an initiate through grace. He stresses that he did not receive initiation through a training that required a sequence of steps. But he stood closer to the spiritual world than those people who had descended deeper into matter. He was able to experience the “crown of life,” the last act in Old Testament initiation. This was the crowning through the appearance of Christ. What the Old Testament initiates always experienced appeared to them in a glorious light. What they had experienced as a future event, he now saw as a vision that told him this being was the same one who had lived and died in the body of Jesus of Nazareth. Now he knew that the Messiah, the Christ, is already here.

The greatest element of the old initiation had been the knowledge that the Messiah was to come, that he had died and yet still lived, now united with earthly existence — and continues to work in the evolution of humankind — this we see from all the letters Paul wrote. He saw this event as something that had already become present.

Let us put ourselves in the place of all the other initiates who were not ancient Hebrews and not Christian. They knew that in the ancient Atlantean times we come to a form of the human being entirely different from that of the present. The etheric body creates and forms the physical body, of course, and through initiation they could always see the etheric body that formed the basis for the physical body. In the spiritual world they had to do without a picture of the physical human body; they saw only the etheric body of the human being.

But the ancient Hebrew initiates always saw the physical human being spiritualized and placed in the spiritual world as its crowning, and such people understood the Christ to be the first real human form that could be seen in the spiritual world from the point of view provided by the physical world. In this way those receiving the Hebrew initiation saw how, in the distant future, the “Son of Man,” the Christ, would heal and purify the physical form. For this reason Paul knew that what appeared to him before Damascus in human form could be none other than the Christ.

The writer of the Apocalypse describes the same thing to us when he speaks of the “Son of Man.” He calls the seven communities the “seven stars,” and he saw the “Son of Man” as the

spiritualized, purified form of the physical body, not only the etheric body, but the spiritual-physical form of “Man,” the human being, now purified and sanctified.

In this way he places before us the same being that Paul beheld outside Damascus. Then he details what the impulse behind this Christ event should mean for all humanity. He speaks to us of the seven communities in seven letters to the communities. They are messages concerning the tasks of the seven post-Atlantean cultures. In the seven seals, he portrays the seven cultures following our fifth main epoch. [This fifth main epoch is called the post-Atlantean. It consists of seven cultures of which we are now in the fifth with two more to pass before the start of the next main epoch.] And in the seven trumpets, he portrays the seven cultures of the seventh great main epoch.

What takes place in our present-day culture we can see in the physical world. But what will take place in the sixth great main epoch can be seen ahead of time in the pictures of the astral world. The seventh great main epoch, on the other hand, can be experienced in the sounds heard in the harmony of the spheres, in the devachanic world. They are experienced as a result of an impulse given by Christ.

In this way, the Apocalypse is a portrayal of what the Christian initiate experienced. It is a description of Christian initiation, a picture of the experiences of a man initiated in the Christian sense who has understood what has come into the world through Christ.

LECTURE TWO

KRISTIANIA — May 10, 1909

NOW THAT WE HAVE SEEN WHAT Theosophy has to say concerning the historical evolution of humanity, we will consider what the Apocalypse can tell us about it.

To understand this we must go beyond our culture back to the Greco-Latin cultural epoch, the fourth in our great post-Atlantean epoch. In spiritual science we calculate it to have begun in the eighth or ninth century of the pre-Christian age. Further back in the past we arrive at the Egypto-Chaldean cultural epoch, then the most ancient Persian age, concerning which the historical research of our day knows only the last faint echoes. Then we go further back to the primal holy age of the ancient Indian culture. In this way we finally arrive back at the time of the great Atlantean culture which is reported to us by all ancient religious writings. Before the great Atlantean water catastrophe, between Europe and America there existed the ancient Atlantean continent. That is where the precursors of humanity lived, those whom we call the Atlanteans.

We want to consider now the spiritual life of the Atlanteans; for, of course, the same souls who are present today lived there, but they were equipped with other soul abilities or states of consciousness that are of interest now to the spiritual researcher.

During the fullest blossoming of the Atlantean culture, we find the modern human being's capacity for perception present only in its first rudiments. The ancient Atlanteans did not see external objects as we do today, with sharply defined contours; they saw them rather surrounded by an aura. When they fell asleep at night, the external picture disappeared for them but they were conscious in the spiritual world. They had a dim form of clairvoyance. But they did not have any of what we today call counting and computation, the power of judgment or logical thinking. They had none of the mental abilities that our present-day culture has created; for example, they did not know about the power hidden in coal. Instead, they had magical abilities with which they could awaken the powers hidden in plant seeds and then put these powers in their service. In this way they possessed clairvoyant and magical powers. Those people in Atlantis best able to make use of their magical powers were the best technicians and engineers.

What our present-day scholars and natural scientists represent, we can compare to the people most highly gifted with powers of clairvoyance in Atlantean times.

There were great mystery centers at that time. Our present-day mystery and occult schools work much more secretly than theirs did. The mystery centers of Atlantean times were generally known as both school and church. Piety and wisdom were cultivated at the same time. The leaders of that time can be called the great teachers of the mysteries. They taught in these Atlantean oracles of which there were seven. Students who had become sufficiently mature were initiated into the mastery of magical powers and into a conscious vision of the spiritual world. Unlike our culture, which is limited to the three lower kingdoms, Atlantean wisdom stretched over the physical earth and beyond to spiritual realities. Present-day science limits itself to the three kingdoms that do not go beyond the earth. However, through clairvoyant development, the Atlantean initiate also achieved a vision and experience of higher spiritual beings that work beyond the earth, even up to the region of the stars.

During those times there were mystery centers that were especially concerned with the various planets in our solar system and the spiritual powers standing behind them. For this reason there were Mars, Venus, Sun, Jupiter, Mercury, Saturn, and Moon oracles. However, the greatest and loftiest was the ancient sun oracle. The initiates of this sun oracle could survey all the other oracles and watch over them. The great sun initiate of the sun oracle stood at the top; he saw prophetically the water catastrophe of Atlantis. Therefore, he had the task of seeing to it that the culture was guided through and beyond the catastrophe.

Now those human beings who had possessed the best talent for clairvoyance were of no use at all for the post-Atlantean cultures. These new cultures required the selection of people who had nothing left of the ancient magic. Like a sunrise over the great post-Atlantean culture, they developed the individual spiritual capacities of thinking and judgment in their first primitive forms. The simplest people were precisely those best suited for the future.

They were led by the great sun initiate to a colony near present-day Ireland; later they were led to the middle of Asia. Those were the people whose consciousness was already then closest to our present-day consciousness. Furthermore, for the sake of this advanced population copies of etheric bodies of the greatest initiates of the Atlantean oracle were incorporated into those individuals who came from the various oracles with the best aptitude for present-day culture. This was necessary for the future.

It is a law of spiritual economy that what has once been achieved for humankind is not lost. If we were to survey the various oracles we would find everywhere what is achieved through occult training; the etheric body is transformed and organized through and through by the I. The etheric body of ordinary people who have not undergone this transformation dissolves at death into the world ether. However, with the highest initiate something different happens. An etheric body transformed in this way is preserved for the blessing and healing of humankind. The great sun initiate preserved the etheric bodies of the seven great Atlantean initiates as spiritual treasure and took them along to Asia. These were then imprinted into seven of the very best individuals so that they grew up endowed with the etheric bodies of the greatest initiates of ancient Atlantis. Through many generations the great sun initiate exercised his educational skills on the health and spiritual discipline of the people so that he developed, so to speak, the very best human material.

These seven individuals were in external life simple people; they had their I and their astral body for themselves, but in certain states of consciousness their speaking was inspired by higher powers. They were then sent by the great sun initiate down to ancient India, to those still longing to return to the true primal home of humanity and who characterized everything external as maya or illusion. That was the chorus of the seven holy Rishis. What this chorus harmonized together as a spiritual symphony was the primal wisdom of the pre-Vedantic age. We are looking into an age much more ancient than the Vedas. What is written in the Vedas is nothing more than an echo; it reaches us only in broken rays through the wisdom of the holy Rishis.

Now we come to the ancient Persian culture. In place of the seven Indian teachers came the first Zarathustra. He was himself an initiated student of the great sun initiate, who stood behind the Rishis. Because of this he could proclaim the great teaching concerning the spiritual being of the sun, concerning Ahura Mazdao. We see here how the great teachers of humanity guided the evolution of human development in wisdom.

From the beginning the ancient Indians were protected from falling into materialism. Their longing for clairvoyance, for the spiritual, for the feeling of connectedness with God was still too great. The Persians, on the other hand, were farmers and fighters. Therefore, in order not to fall into materialism, they had to receive the teaching concerning the great Ahura Mazdao, the spirit of the sun, the highest being. Zarathustra initiated one of his students in such a way that he brought the student's astral body to a higher stage of development. With another student he developed the etheric body to the highest stage of clairvoyant consciousness so that the student became able to read the Akashic chronicle by means of this etheric body which is, of course, always the vehicle for our memory.

Now, the first of these two students was reborn as Hermes, the great impulse giver for the Egyptian culture; his astral body was especially well developed. When he was reborn as the Egyptian Hermes, he bore within himself the astral body of the great Zarathustra and was therefore able to work with the intentions of Zarathustra.

The other student also became one of the most important personalities of post-Atlantean culture when he was born again as Moses. That is why Moses already as a child had to be brought to the point where his etheric body and I could be wholly influenced by Zarathustra's etheric body. For this reason he had to be placed in a basket deep in the water at a tender age; [See [Note 1](#)] this is a symbol for his calling. And so he became the great Akashic visionary who could write down the pictures he perceived in the Akashic chronicle. These are the majestic images found in Genesis. In these ways events of the past are led over into the future — behind the scenes of the physical, external development of humankind.

Zarathustra was also able to become the greatest teacher of the fourth post-Atlantean cultural epoch. Living in the Near East in the sixth century before Christ's birth he was known as Zarathos or Nazarathos. He was the teacher of the most important Greek teachers and initiates — Pythagoras, for example, was his student.

These four post-Atlantean cultures were inspired by the great sun oracle of ancient Atlantis, and the culture of the ancient Hebrew nation continued to develop uninterrupted on a parallel course — a subgroup of this Hebrew nation always living contemporaneously with one of the named cultural epochs. The ancient Indian culture was initiated in the secrets of the spiritual world and the planetary states; the ancient Hebrew ... [gap in the manuscript.] Then, living contemporaneously with the Persian culture of Zarathustra, the Hebrew ancestors developed a teaching much like that in Persia concerning Ormuzd and Ahriman, a teaching concerning good and evil. The third, the Egypto-Chaldean culture, then followed. The exodus out of Egypt under Moses' leadership took place at the same time. Then the Greco-Latin culture developed during the time of the great Hebrew initiate-prophets, Elijah, Jeremiah, and so forth. Already in primal ancient times these prophets had been given the idea of the great being, Ahura Mazdao, announced to them by Melchizedek. In this way, the same nuances were at work simultaneously in the Hebrew culture as in the other nations through the epochs.

Now, such cultures always had their second blossoming. That of Hermes soon encountered a decline. It had contained deep mysteries for the ancient Egyptian culture but had fallen in the worst way and entered into the most terrible decadence as black magic. The ancient Indian culture had fallen into decadence the least.

So we see how all that had appeared successively was still maintained in the ancient Hebrew nation. In various groups they preserved the feeling and the states of consciousness of various

other cultures. These groups could be addressed with the names of the ancient cultures, according to how their states of consciousness had been maintained.

When the writer of the Apocalypse speaks of the “community at Ephesus” he means the representative of the first, the Indian culture; the Persian finds its representative in the “community at Smyrna”; the Egypto-Chaldean in the name of the “community at Pergamon”; and finally, the fourth, the Greco-Latin culture in the “community of Thyatira.” He was able to address the representatives of the four ancient cultural epochs in concurrently existing groups.

Then he looked further into the future and saw our cultural blossoming in the “community at Sardes.” The “community” following ours — for which we are consciously preparing through the theosophical movement — he characterizes with the name “Philadelphia.” After that, humanity will finally reach the “community at Laodicea,” where new impulses can no longer be brought forward. When we work and act in the fifth epoch as conscious representatives of the theosophical spiritual life we are introducing the age of Philadelphia or brotherhood.

The seven spirits of God, the seven stars, are what we find in theosophical teachings concerning the evolution of the earth through the planetary states. These teachings should lead us up to an understanding of the secrets of the stars and their spirits. In this way we enter consciously the community of Philadelphia when we absorb the teachings of spiritual science.

Notes:

[Note 1.](#) In [Exodus 2:3](#) we read: “And when she could hide him no longer she took for him a basket made of bulrushes, and daubed it with bitumen and pitch; and she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds at the river’s brink.” RSV.

LECTURE THREE

KRISTIANIA — May 11, 1909

WE HAVE SEEN THAT THE WRITER of the Apocalypse intended the seven letters in the first chapters of the Apocalypse as messages for the seven representatives of the seven cultural epochs of the post-Atlantean age; that is, the age that followed the great water catastrophe also known as the Flood. The age that will come after the seven post-Atlantean epochs reveals itself to the initiate in seven seals as the seven epochs like those of our post-Atlantean age.

We must realize that the soul development of humankind in the future still has many and manifold changes to go through. The more we imagine ourselves back into the state of consciousness in the ancient past when the human being’s feeling for self was just a dim dawning, the more we also find a dim clairvoyance; the further back we go the less people appear as individuals. If we go far back into Atlantean times we no longer see people as individual beings but rather united with one another into group souls. But even in historical times, in the last centuries before Christ, we still find group souls. At that time the people in middle Europe felt themselves to be members of an organism, members of a tribe. Tacitus tells us how the individual Cheruskans experienced themselves, not as individuals, but as members of the tribal. [See [Note 1](#)]

We find in early Atlantean times that human beings over wide, wide geographical regions were very similar in appearance. They broke down into groups of striking similarity. In the middle of the Atlantean age humankind still fell into four main groups. In the first stages of Atlantean development the members of the individual groups still resembled one another in a very pronounced way: only the groups were sharply distinguished. The clairvoyant today can see very little of what constituted the physical body at that time. It was still completely made up of a

very soft material, much like certain fish in the ocean today that can barely be distinguished from the rest of the water. The air then was entirely permeated by the watery element and the human physical body was still very difficult to distinguish from the watery element surrounding it. However, the bones and nervous system were also already present as forces at that time. The human being only became a real earthly human being through a process of hardening.

If we wish to characterize the various human beings, borrowing, as it were, present-day images, then we can consider first those who had developed and condensed their physical nature the most. The occultist refers to them as the bull people. The people whose etheric body was developed the most, the aggressive people, the powerful ones, were called the lion people. A third group had an astral body that strongly ruled over the other members; that is the group referred to as actual human beings. Then there were the people who could be called the eagles, who had already developed a strong I. In this way they ruled over the others. We can speak of these four group souls, and a clairvoyant perceives them by looking back into those ancient times.

These four groups of people were characterized by whatever aspect had been most formed in them on the earth below. The bull people at that time had developed their digestive system the most; the lion people their heart and blood circulation ... [gap in the manuscript]. The clairvoyant can see four such group souls. That is what appears with initiation in the astral world. What then presents itself to the clairvoyant can be compared approximately with what those four animals are today. One who sees the evolution of humankind today with the view of an occultist sees this picture of the four human groups symbolized in these four animals.

The war of all against all will be an expression of the egotism that is always growing stronger, the egotism conjured forth by humanity today as the I is and will always become, stronger and stronger. That will be the end of the last post-Atlantean culture. This catastrophe will also have its mission, its usefulness in the ascent of the entire human race. However, the great war of all against all will be something much worse than war of the present-day with weapons. It will be a war of souls, of souls who no longer understand one another, a war of the classes. This future catastrophe is difficult for present-day consciousness to understand.

The Atlanteans were magicians. As we today use the powers asleep in coal, so the Atlantean used the forces in plant seeds. The forces in the seeds served them in their technology, in their industry.

There is a mysterious connection between these forces. As long as the Atlanteans used the seed forces properly, they were in harmony with the working of the forces of the air and water. However, from the middle of the Atlantean age onward, the Atlantean magicians increasingly approached their moral fall; and in the mysteries of the black occult schools these magical forces were misused in a terrible way. They were placed in the service of the most horrible egotism. In this way the powers of air and water were increasingly excited which finally had to result in the mighty Atlantean water catastrophe. Today, those who know the secret of the use of these forces know full well that the use of such forces in our time means that powers of black magic are at work. Magic must never be made to serve when selfish purposes are involved. Hence, the employment of seed forces is not permitted today even to serve white magic. On the other hand, in Lemurian times the seed forces of the animals were used. But everywhere that the growth forces of animals are misused, horrendous forces of fire, the volcanic element, are awakened.

Today these things are not so obvious. Today the feeling for one's self, the overwhelming egohood of people has brought about the drying up, the desolation of those regions of the earth that have developed this egotism to the greatest extent. It is absolutely true that this war of all against all is being prepared on the surface of the earth because a connection exists between the egotistical withering of the soul's forces and the paralyzation of the earth's productive powers. The Nordic myth of the Twilight of the Gods also tells us this.

We must understand the difference between the evolution of souls and the evolution of bodies. From epoch to epoch human souls find themselves again and again in different bodies. These souls will one day see the strife that will reign among the human souls who will be born in the last post-Atlantean age. This experience will be a lesson for them and will help to free them from egotism. Then they will be able to grow into an era where they will have the fruits of selfhood but without its disadvantages. An age will come with clairvoyant conditions similar to those prevailing in ancient Atlantis, but with this difference: human beings will have a free consciousness of self. We will then have learned, in these seven cultures of the post-Atlantean age, what can be achieved in the physical world. This self-perception or consciousness of self can only awaken in a physical body; but the human being must again subjugate the physical body. After the war of all against all, we will have achieved a stage of evolution where we live in a bodily nature in such a way that we are no longer slaves of our physical bodies.

The impulse for this development comes from the Christ principle. Christ even falls right in the middle between the age of the Atlantean catastrophe and the war of all against all. On the one hand we can thank the descent into matter for our consciousness of self within our physical bodily nature. On the other hand, we thank the Christ event for our ability to ascend with the achievements of the physical world. We thank the Christ principle for our ability to ascend to universal brotherly love, to the universal love of humanity, since we will again unite in groups with love for one another.

If we look back to the time of the original group souls of Atlantis and then into the future we see these four group souls appearing again. The lamb will stand in the middle as a sign for the love that will unite people who will then be living in a bodily nature that is less dense.

But this state must be prepared today through the setting aside of a small group that will carry brotherly love into the future. Therefore, a stream has arisen in our time that will lead to brotherly love through real spiritual knowledge. Humankind will not attain brotherly love through preaching but rather through knowledge. Preachers who constantly speak of love achieve nothing. But if people are given wisdom, knowledge of evolution, in such a way that it becomes life in the soul, then humanity will arrive at love. The soul can attain this when it is warmed by wisdom. Then it can radiate love.

For this reason the masters of wisdom and harmony of feelings have formed this stream for the raying forth of love into humanity and for the influx of wisdom into humanity. Humankind, rushing toward the war of all against all, will then find the fruit of the theosophical movement in an understanding of peace — while all around it, the nature of humankind will have everywhere led into strife those who have not heard the call of the master of wisdom and harmony of feelings on the basis of the Christ impulse in the fourth age.

Let us look back again to the first epoch of our culture, to the holy Rishis who pointed to the Vishva Karman, whom, as clairvoyants, they saw by means of the etheric bodies of the Atlantean initiates they carried within them. The writer of the Apocalypse directed his spiritual gaze toward him and saw how he holds the seven star oracles, through the seven Rishis, in his hand. These holy, simple men wanted to awaken the spiritual senses of humanity by saying to human beings that the world surrounding them is just maya or illusion. Only the spirit standing behind the surrounding world could be called truth. The seven holy Rishis pointed to this spirit. Human beings had to descend into physical life; but in order to preserve them from a descent into matter that would be too deep, they first had to absorb the teaching concerning maya or illusion. The souls that are now living in our bodies have also lived in Indian bodies, and at that time learned to see matter as an illusion. But all around there were the souls of many human beings who were locked in the fetters of matter. For those souls incarnated again today it means that they are theoretical materialists. Among materialists those are the least harmful, for their materialistic thoughts will be driven out of them in the future when the earth will become devastated and only the soul will remain alive, the soul that they no longer believe in today.

What is even worse is practical materialism. But this form of materialism was even more dangerous in ancient times because the memory of magic powers was still present; then this materialism always led to the practice of black magic. Therefore, at that time this materialism always signified the fall into the decadence of black magic. The writer of the Apocalypse always spoke of these people as Nicolaitans who have lost the first, the glorious love of the spirit. Therefore, when he wanted to praise he said that the Nicolaitans were hated.

We find the least amount of black magic in the ancient Indian culture. We find the greatest misuse in Egypt because the lofty teachings of Hermes went over into the art of black magic. Balaam is intended as a black magician. The writer of the Apocalypse directs his admonishment to the community in Pergamon in the verse: “But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teachings of Balaam.” ([Rev. 2:14](#)) Common immorality is not meant here but rather the development of the powers in matter, black magic.

In the occult schools of the first age after Christ the Apocalypse was a favored book. The ancient mysteries founded the primal wisdom, the wisdom of the Atlanteans. The Christian mysteries, on the other hand, strive to direct their view to the future. They did this not only in order to know but also in order to stimulate their wills so that, with this spiritual treasure, humanity could pass through increasingly higher incarnations.

Notes:

[Note 1.](#) Publius Cornelius Tacitus (ca. 55 – 120 A.D.), the Roman historian, in his book “De origin et situ Germanorum,” generally known as “Germania.”

LECTURE FOUR

KRISTIANIA — May 13, 1909

IN THE SEVEN LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES found in the Apocalypse we find a portrayal of the great main epoch of the seven post-Atlantean ages, from the mighty Atlantean water catastrophe to the event that is called the war of all against all.

We will now consider some important passages from the letters in order to show the compass of John’s overview. He came from a cultural era when much was still taken for granted, much that, today, could appear to ordinary consciousness as forced.

The leading power behind these cultural epochs is presented with the seven stars in his hand. Looking at the cultural epoch that saw the outer world as maya or illusion, we find there the chorus of seven holy Rishis, who point to Vishva Karman. The writer of the Apocalypse sees him as the being who has the wisdom of the seven stars in his hand. Above all the writer of the Apocalypse must look into the future. Because he is speaking to the descendants of the Atlantean cultural epoch he refers to what lives in their memories. So he calls the Nicolaitans the representatives of black magic, who are excluded from the community that preserved the “first love.” Therefore, he says of those who have continued to keep themselves from becoming entangled in matter, that they will develop into the future. Those who hear this admonishment will easily find their way back into the spiritual world.

Then he speaks to the people of the second cultural epoch, the age of Zarathustra. He speaks to the followers of the great Zarathustra who have recorded their wisdom in the teachings of Hermes, who have preserved for us an echo of Zarathustra’s teaching. Indications are given everywhere in these writings that people should not develop a love for dreamy wandering, that

they should get to like life in the physical, sensible world. They are to see the sun as the expression of a being, the spirit of the sun, and they should look upon the stars as the bodies of the spirits who populate space. For this reason it was the concern of Zarathustra to show the physical-material world as the expression of the spirit. In this way the cultivation of the earth's fields should be like a cultivation of the physical body of God, who stands behind the physical world. The ancient Hebrew nation that existed parallel to the ancient Persian culture also looked up to this God. They also had a religious service to Zarathustra, which is indicated in Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek.

From this we see that remnants of the second cultural epoch remained. We know how mightily the great Zarathustra admonished the people to work with the earth but not to become slaves of matter. The power that wants to mislead people into thinking there is nothing but physical matter he calls Ahriman, the ahrimanic power. The danger arises through Ahriman that the human being may come to like physical life too much.

In the ancient Hebrew wisdom, Ahriman was given a name made up of two parts: Mephistophel, Mephistopheles. This is he who called to Faust, who believed in the spirit and went to the "Mothers," that is, entered the spiritual world: "You are coming to nothing!" Like Faust, those who are seeking the spirit call back to the materialists: "In your nothing I know how to find all." [See [Note 1](#)] So the writer of the Apocalypse had to say: "Have no fear ... Some of you Tophel will weave into the prison of matter." ([Rev. 2:10](#)) These are the ones who have become too wrapped up in matter.

We know that human beings must descend into various incarnations on the earth where they live their lives in physical, sensible bodies. Every life on earth is followed by a life in the spiritual world. One day this ring of reincarnations will be closed. The profound meaning of these reincarnations, if we understand well the second letter of the Apocalypse, is this: human beings should struggle through to a consciousness of self, to their I consciousness.

The soul saw the world so very differently in the ancient Indian epoch, and how much has the soul seen since then in other incarnations! Today we perceive in a way entirely different from earlier incarnations. As the soul ascends from stage to stage we acquire the concept of history. A thinking human being must say: There is a history of life in the spiritual world. Because in elementary theosophical teaching we cannot describe the life between death and a new birth in more detail we usually describe the life in devachan and kamaloka only in general terms. But it is different during each of the various cultural epochs; for souls always have something different to experience. We can describe this history only in separate characteristic features.

Let us look back to ancient Atlantis; human beings were still in their soul and spiritual home during life on earth. During the ancient Indian age human beings were still in the spiritual world at night and after they passed through the gate of death. In this original home it became light and bright around them. To the extent that people came increasingly to like this physical world, to that extent they lost their vision into the spiritual world; it became darker and darker for them.

During the Egyptian culture human beings already stood so firmly in the physical world that they had to be taught to live in such a way that they could find Osiris in the other world. Only in this way could the students still feel the light between death and a new birth. The teaching of *The Book of the Dead* and the "judges of the dead" should be understood in this way: Only by uniting with the Light of Osiris, the Osiris impulse, could human beings hope that the spiritual world would be filled with light and brightness for them.

Let us now look at the Greco-Latin age when people had become so fond of physical matter that they created physical forms incorporating ideals in the physical world. That is why a human being of that time could say, "Rather a beggar on earth than a king in the kingdom of shadows." [See [Note 2](#)] It is not merely a legend that people went into darkness when they descended into

Hades. Humankind is in danger of losing itself in the world of the senses. That is why God had to descend into this sense perceptible world, this sense existence, and save it.

Zarathustra proclaimed Ahura Mazdao through the veil of the sensible-sensual world. Yahweh was proclaimed to Moses in the burning bush through the veil of the sensible-sensual world. Then the same power proclaimed himself as Christ in the body of Jesus of Nazareth. What then occurred had significance not only for the physical world but also for the spiritual world.

In the same moment when the blood flowed from the wounds of the redeemer, Christ appeared in the underworld to the souls who stood between death and a new birth. Below in the realm of matter the blood is flowing and while it is flowing, the kingdom of the dead begins to become brighter and brighter. To the extent that our culture now begins to climb upward to a spiritual understanding of the fact of Golgotha, the brightness grows.

History is everywhere, in the physical and in the spiritual. The whole of our post-Atlantean cultural evolution has as its meaning the goal of leading humanity through the physical world while, at the same time, keeping awake faith in the spirit. It is always the same principle that manifests in the successive cultural epochs.

The writer of the Apocalypse turns his clairvoyant vision to the fact that these are people who are becoming one with matter, who are using up the spiritual forces they possess like an old inheritance without joining company with Christ. Such people would gradually lose devachan; kamaloka would last longer and longer and they would be captured, united with the gravity of earth.

Today only black magicians do this; ordinary human beings cannot yet close themselves off from all wisdom. The writer of the Apocalypse, however, must place everything in perspective in order to point out that the impulse of Christ is what saves human beings. For this reason the second letter says that it would be the “second death” — the “spiritual death” as Paul refers to it. The admonishment had to come in the second letter because this letter refers to the second cultural epoch. In the first post-Atlantean epoch this admonishment did not need to be directed to humankind.

In the second letter the leading spirit characterizes himself as “the alpha and the omega.” ([Rev. 1:8](#)) In all of occultism there are certain symbols that dominate and always mean the same thing. In ancient Egyptian times value was placed on the formation of wisdom through the word; wisdom appeared then for the first time in rigorously delineated words. The Indian world did not yet place any value on knowledge; the culture of Zarathustra just as little. For this reason the divine power of the word in the mouths of human beings is everywhere signified by the “sword.”

Everywhere we find the sword employed as a symbol of the humanization of divine power. “And to the angel of the community in Pergamon wrote: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.’” ([Rev. 2:12](#)) But through knowledge the human being can also most be misled into black magic.

In the Bible human beings experience the power of God that flows to them as “manna.” Let us now consider the full character of this age. Yahweh reveals himself in the burning bush on Sinai. “Then Yahweh spoke to Moses: ‘I am the I am.’ And he spoke: ‘You should say to the sons of Israel: ‘The I am has sent me to you!’” ([Exodus 3:13](#)) With these words the people were told: The I am has sent me to you! Yahweh is the unpronounceable name of God. The name “I” can never be spoken to a human being from outside. It is the intimate name of God that human beings are only permitted to receive, sanctified in their hearts. It was written on the altar of the tabernacle. Therefore, we read: “To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna and I will give him a white stone with a new name written on the white stone ... ([Rev. 2:17](#)) Those who received the I learned through an inner power of the spirit to recognize the name with the hidden manna. Through the fact that Christ revealed himself in a physical body on the earth,

human beings are to learn not to disdain the earth like the ascetics, but to recognize that this earth has something to give them. And so, the thirst for existence should not be extinguished but we should purify our desires. The westerner should say: “Here work is done; here hands are in motion and what is achieved here is taken through the gate of death.” It is not our intention to tell of miracles but, through legends, to come to realize what humanity has been given as wisdom.

We hear that Buddha had an important pupil, Cassapa. [See [Note 3](#)] He was the one whose task it was to spread the teaching of Buddha. We are told in a legend that Cassapa did not die but disappeared into a cave. There his physical body is being preserved until the day when the Maitreya Buddha appears. Then the mortal remains of Cassapa will be touched by the fire of heaven and dissolved.

Let us think our way into this teaching. How will there be people in the future who can understand the teaching of the Maitreya Buddha? Through the fact that the redeemer himself carried his own mortal remains to heaven after three and a half days. [See [Note 4](#)] That means that those human beings who unite themselves with the impulse of Christ will take what they have achieved as the fruit of their lives with them and carry it into the spiritual world. We will see how, by means of the connection with the principle of Christ, all the fruits of earthly existence can be carried into the spiritual world. The teachings of the Orient have always proclaimed the future coming of the Christ, even in their legends. Because we are to learn in the fourth post-Atlantean epoch how the earthly-physical element directly goes over into the spiritual world, this is presented to us with the phrase “he has eyes like a flame of fire” ([Rev. 1:14](#)) and we are told: “His feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace.— ([Rev. 1:15](#)) Later we read, “And all the communities shall know that I am he who searches mind and heart ...” ([Rev. 2:23](#)) Here we are told that Christ is the one who brings the “I am.” This inconspicuous little word must merely be read. The meaning is that the principle behind the “I am” will become the savior who leads us out of the material world. Word for word, line for line the text can be explained in this way.

The contents of the fifth letter ([Rev. 3:1–6](#)) are especially important for us. We read there that we have received the secret of the name through the teaching concerning the development of the earth, which is given to us by the “masters of wisdom and the harmony of feeling.” [See [Note 5](#)]

Notes:

[Note 1.](#) *Faust II* (Act 1, Royal Palatinate, Dark Gallery, line 6255).

[Note 2.](#) Homer in the 11th book of the *Odyssey*.

[Note 3.](#) This disciple of Buddha was also called Maha-Cassapa, because he was a chief support for the buddhistic brotherhood. After his conversion he immediately assumed a very high rank among Buddha’s followers. According to the legend he called together the first gathering after Buddha’s death and functioned as the leader. He is considered the collector of the canon and is the first buddhistic patriarch.

[Note 4.](#) Compare the lecture cycle held in Karlsruhe, *From Jesus to Christ* (GA 131) (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1973), lectures held on 11, 12, 14 of October 1911.

[Note 5.](#) Compare: *Zur Geschichte und aus den Inhalten der ersten Abteilung der Esoterischen Schule 1904—1914* (GA 264), chapter titled: “Aus dem Lehrgut der Meister der Welshed ...” [*Concerning the History of and from the Content of the First Section of the Esoteric School 1904—1914*, chapter entitled: “From the Teachings of the Masters of Wisdom ...”], pp. 199–240, and the appendix, pp. 241–259.

LECTURE FIVE

KRISTIANIA — May 14, 1909

THE AGE OF HUMAN EVOLUTION that counts as the fourth and is characterized by the letter to the community in Thyatira began in the seventh or eighth century before Christ and lasted until the thirteenth or fourteenth century after Christ's birth. Only then do we begin to count our fifth age, the Germanic cultural epoch. The fourth age stands in the middle. In manifold ways it brought to expression the life between birth and death and developed a love for the material world. It had its greatest blossoming in the beauty of Greek art.

The soul would have had to experience a darkening if the event of Golgotha had not occurred, if the light coming forth from this event had not had its effect. After human beings came to full consciousness of their earthly I, when they had fully entered into the physical world, there appears, among other things, for the first time the concept of the "last will and testament" as a sign that the human will had become so important that it survived death. This first appears only in ancient Rome, not yet in Greece. Greece did not yet have the concept of the single man or woman standing firmly anchored on the earth. Only gradually did the feeling arise that the human being was not only a member of a community but an individual. Before this the concept of personality, the concept of the divine-spiritual anchored in the human being, would not have been understood. In ancient Greece they could only understand the divine-spiritual residing in the spiritual world. But Greek culture could, in the fullest sense, feel what it meant to know with human consciousness that the I lives. Nevertheless, it did not recognize that the I is divine. In the Orient it was proclaimed by Moses. For the Greeks, between birth and death it was not present as something spiritual. And there was a deeply tragic feeling that went through all the souls ... [gap in manuscript]. The Greeks said to themselves that the human being has descended from the divine spiritual world. But they did not know that human beings could work themselves back up into that world again, that they could return in the future to the spiritual world.

This is expressed in the myth of Prometheus; [See [Note 1](#)] it is expressed so tragically in the drama of Aeschylus [See [Note 2](#)] when Io, who has become insane, appears to Prometheus. Io represents the old clairvoyant consciousness that, in this fourth epoch, could no longer appear in normal states of consciousness but only in a state of madness. Science in the modern sense did not yet exist in the earliest times of our culture. Only gradually did the human being become a seeker in that science which can independently research the external world independently. For this reason something like science has only existed since Thales. [See [Note 3](#)] It is an abstraction to speak of "oriental philosophy." Those who began science with Thales were right: before them science was always inspired, born out of the mysteries. That was the case with Heraclitus, [See [Note 4](#)] who was still inspired by ancient mystery wisdom. We are told that he placed his book on the altar of the goddess of Ephesus.

To the extent that external natural science increases in humanity, to that extent true wisdom will be obstructed. We are told in the fourth letter of the Apocalypse how people must find the connection to true wisdom. Let us assume that the Christ principle, the revelation of Golgotha would not have come. Then, in terms of external science, outstanding people such as Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, and so forth, [See [Note 5](#)] would have been present, but the science would have remained merely intellectual and none of it would have contributed to a new ascent to the spiritual. Celsus, [See [Note 6](#)] the contemporary of Marcus Aurelius, wrote only external historical gossip about the event of Golgotha. But in terms of scientific, logical thinking these people all stood at the highest level.

What is called skepticism came into this stream. We find in Roman culture a complete skepticism existing alongside a highly refined approach to knowledge concerning all things intellectual. Let us consider, on the other hand, a personality like Augustine's. He was not in a

position to arrive at anything other than doubt concerning what he had learned of Greek and Roman science. Then he encountered Manicheism, which he came to know only in a false form. He became acquainted with a teaching that took into account everything that Zarathustra taught. However, his soul was not inclined to take in all of this because the souls of the people living at that time were not meant to undertake such lofty flights of the spirit and see the spirit everywhere behind the physical world. The science that had penetrated all the way to the stars deteriorated; and even if this science had reached the Europeans no one could have understood it. The soul had to remain attached to what could be seen in the external world of the senses.

Science only reawakened during the time of the Renaissance. What Greece and Rome had started became Arabic wisdom; it became the spirit of Mohammedanism. Arabism then spread from Spain into Europe. This science is outstanding with regard to everything directly relating to the sensible-sensual world. The science that became a powerful stimulus for European science, that influenced Bacon and Spinoza, [See [Note 7](#)] arises from Spanish Arabism. It comes from Spain. However, it cannot rise above a pantheism that is unable to reach concrete spiritual beings. Arabism did not arrive at the concrete. It ascended to the sensible human being but what was seen beyond that was only an abstract divine unity. It was not known what this unity is. A poor and comfortable world view! There is no knowledge of the spirit if it is summed up in a unity. Therein lies the poverty of pantheism.

As a result, we entered the fifth age with a science of the external world that began its great rise to ascendancy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. We see this, for example, with the Scholastics. We experience in their thought the dawning of a new science that is, however, wholly chained to the sense world, that is unable to go even a step beyond the sense world. Thus we see how the split appears between faith and knowledge. Augustine was not able to understand a reference to something spiritual standing behind the sun. He did not understand Manicheism because it speaks of the veil of the senses spread over the spiritual. He could believe in Christ who had descended into a physical man. But faith and knowledge had entirely split apart at that time. All believers who stood on medieval science wanted faith and knowledge entirely separated.

We can illustrate schematically how what began in the Greco-Latin age still lives today, only on the external, physical level. The evolution of humankind takes place in such a way that what was cultivated in the Egypto-Chaldean age we experience again today — but we experience it as *knowledge*, and now it is illuminated and spiritualized by the Christ impulse. Everywhere in Europe we see the ancient wisdom of Egypt appearing again, but illuminated by the principle of Christ. In our time the human being will only be able to take this in consciously through the Rosicrucian teaching.

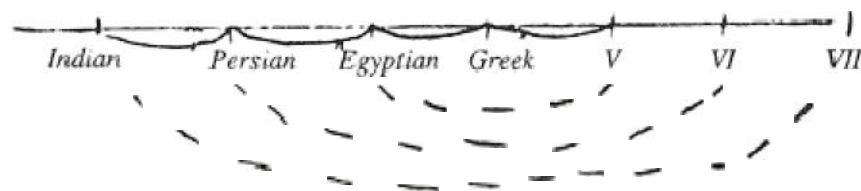


Diagram
Click image for large view

When the ancient Egyptians spoke of the stars they meant the spiritual aspect of the stars, which they still knew. A wonderful consciousness of ancient knowledge penetrated the science of Copernicus and Kepler. As a result, what the ancient Egyptians knew we now see appearing in

a physical form. In the past they had seen beings moving through space, now only spheres were seen, moving in elliptical circles.

The fifth epoch is called to find again the spiritual world behind sense existence; and Theosophy must reach the point where it can lead people increasingly to permeate all knowledge with the principle of Christ.

If a clairvoyant being had been in a position to observe the earth through millennia then, it would have appeared that the entire aura of the earth suddenly changed color, radiated with different colors when the redeemer died on Golgotha. Ahura Mazdao, who had been proclaimed by Zarathustra, became at that time the elemental spirit of the earth. Christ expressed this when, at the Last Supper, he said: "This is my body" ([Matt. 26:26](#)) and, for the grape juice, found the expression, "This is my blood." ([Matt. 26:28](#))

If we really studied the earth we would have to see members of the spirit of Christ in everything that lives and grows, even in the smallest thing we look at. Human beings of the future will not speak of atoms; they will scientifically understand the earth as the expression of Christ.

We are standing only at the beginning of this development. Christ must first be understood in the simplest way. In the future all science will find Christ, even though it finds today nothing but a dead corpse-like existence in the sensible world. The fifth epoch can feel, to begin with, only as a perspective, that this new science is approaching, that humanity will understand in a new way what Zarathustra meant when he spoke of Ahura Mazdao.

The ancient wisdom of Zarathustra will appear again in a new form in the sixth age. Finally, the age of the holy Rishis will come again in a new form. There may be only a small band of people who understand Theosophy in our age; there may be only the smallest of groups present to hear the reenlivened wisdom of Zarathustra in the sixth age; and, finally there may be only a fraction remaining for the seventh age. The further course of human evolution will be such that more and more people will gather together who will understand what Zarathustra proclaimed.

Then an age will come upon the earth when the victors will be those who lead the war of all against all. But the souls who will have been preserved from the sixth age must found a new culture after the war of all against all. The seventh age will have neither people who glow with enthusiasm for the spiritual, nor those who glow with enthusiasm for sense existence; even for that these people will be too blase. Very little of the Indian, the first culture, will be perceptible on the earth in the seventh age. But these souls from the sixth age when earned up into the spiritual world, purified and "Christened, will walk as it were etherically, no longer touching the earth, while humanity then will be able to master what the entire culture of earth has to offer. The seventh age will be such that here below on the earth, people living in increasingly dense and hardened bodies will make the greatest discoveries and inventions. In the seventh age, human beings wholly entangled in matter will no longer have to fear much from Theosophy, for on earth there will no longer be much to find of those transformed human beings who will have increasingly spiritualized themselves in the sixth age by absorbing Theosophy. The people who have understood the call of the master today will be carried over into a distant future. The key will be turned in the sixth cultural epoch. Those who have heard the call will be the founders of a new humanity. If only a few people are entangled with matter, the community of Laodicea will not last long. It lies within the free will of every human being to belong to either the community of Philadelphia or the community of Laodicea.

Notes:

[Note 1.](#) Compare the Berlin lecture of October 7, 1904 on "The Prometheus Saga," in *The Temple Legend* (GA 93) (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1985).

[Note 2.](#) Aeschylus (525 – 456 s.e.) was the most important founder of Attic tragedy and the oldest of the three great Greek writers of Greek tragedy. Quote comes from his trilogy “Prometheia.”

[Note 3.](#) Thales of Miletus, (ca. 625 – ca. 545 B.C.) was a Greek philosopher, one of the “seven wise men,” and one of the founders of philosophy.

[Note 4.](#) Heraclitus of Ephesus, (ca. 540 {544} – 480 {483 s.c.}) was a Greek philosopher.

[Note 5.](#) Marcus Aurelius: (121 – 180 A.D.) also know as Marcus Aurelius, the Philosopher. was the Roman caesar from 161 A.D.; Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 B.C. – 65 A.D.) was a Roman politician, philosopher, and poet.

[Note 6.](#) Celsus: was a Greek philosopher of the second century. Around 180 he wrote “True Discourse” which was the first polemic against Christianity. It has been lost but the essence of its content is contained in Origen’s response, *Contra Celrum*.

[Note 7.](#) Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626) was an English Renaissance philosopher. Benedictus Spinoza (1632 – 1677) was a Dutch philosopher.

LECTURE SIX

KRISTIANIA — May 15, 1909

IN ORDER TO PLACE THE TASK OF OUR TIME and our future evolution before our souls we must look at the facts we already know. When we speak of the earth we mean, of course, all of the spiritual beings that belong to it. At the beginning of our evolution the earth was not yet separated from the other bodies in our solar system. We include in our solar system everything up to Saturn; and just as physical science speaks of a large ancient earth, from which the other heavenly bodies have come, so also spiritual science speaks of a large, ancient body called Saturn that reached far out beyond the present earth and encompassed the entire solar system. [See [Note 1](#)] Old Saturn consisted of interweaving, surging warmth. There was no air; the space in which this primal sphere existed was permeated with regular streams of warmth. These streams were the predecessors of human beings. At that time our body consisted of streams of flowing warmth.

We can imagine what this was like if we think away the bones, nerves, and muscles from the human being and keep only the warmth of our blood. Only the human being’s warmth substance was present at that time; there was no mineral kingdom, but the human being existed within the lawfulness of the physical, mineral world. That is what we today must clearly feel as the first epoch of our earth evolution.

Then there was a time when the earth had shed old Saturn but the sun, moon, and earth remained together as one body. At that time human beings were present in their bodily nature as forms made of air. All the power that comes from the sun came forth at that time from within the earth. Everything came from within outward. Only after the sun had separated from the earth did it begin to shine upon it from outside. Therefore, we have a second epoch in human evolution when the human being had an existence as a form made of air as well as a plantlike form. [Here there is a big gap in the manuscript. The Moon condition and the Polarian and Hyperborean ages are described.]

Then the third age comes, the Lemurian age, when the moon leaves the earth and the beings of the moon work into the earth from outside it. It would be impossible to think of the carpet of vegetation covering the earth without the forces of the sun and the moon working alternately from outside. If the moon had remained within the earth, then the earth would have become so rigid that the human being would have been hardened in body and soul. Only because the moon was separated from the earth could the earth be placed between the sun and the moon. Otherwise the earth, solely under the forces of the sun, would have entered into a rate of development that was much too fast. We thank our position between sun and moon for the proper tempo of evolution. We have, then, a third stage when the moon is already outside the earth.

These three stages are reflected in the post-Atlantean evolution of humankind. What took place on a grand scale during the evolution of the earth (old Saturn, old Sun, old Moon) is reflected on a smaller scale in the post-Atlantean age. We see how the external, cosmic processes of the so-called Polarian age are reflected in the first post-Atlantean culture, in the ancient Indian epoch. During the Polarian age everything was inward, was within the warmth body of the earth; and we see how the ancient Indians felt all of that in their inner lives. Therefore, their feeling life did not look out into cosmic spaces. They felt themselves rather as one with Brahman.

The Polarian age was followed by the Hyperborean age, with a race of human beings who had airlike bodies. The sun had separated from the earth and now worked from outside. This separation was reflected in the ancient Persian cultural epoch when Zarathustra proclaimed Ahura Mazdao the spirit of the sun. The sun spirit was the guiding and leading principle of the ancient Persian cultural epoch.

The third, the Lemurian age, was reflected during the Egyptian age in the mood of its religion. The teaching of Osiris and Isis can be characterized from the most varied sides and points of view. But what is characteristic of this teaching is the following: In the ancient Lemurian age birth and death did not yet exist. At first, human beings repeated the condition in which they had been when the sun had not yet separated from the earth. At that time they were in a spiritual body. Then, when the sun was no longer united with the earth, they came to the point of having an airlike body; and then the human body was filled with a watery mist. Before the Lemurian age the human being was present only as mist and steam, barely distinguishable from what was flowing all around as mist or fog — changeable like the clouds, constantly changing forms in a way similar to the clouds of today. In these ancient times the human being was not yet altogether on the earth, but rather hovered above it. Pieces of this fine matter were constantly separating off and going away from human beings, welling up and flowing away from them. The condensation of human bodies into solid forms only occurred in the Lemurian age. What we call the succession of incarnations only began to appear with this condensation or “densification” of the human being. Only now are the bodily and soul aspects separated to such an extent that one can say human beings begin to regard the external as opposed to their inner life. Today we distinguish our inner and our outer being as the contradiction between our life of soul and the external world. In the age of the sun, human beings perceived the spiritual beings surrounding them as their external world. Then came the age of the separation of the moon. The external began to separate from the internal. In this way the difference between waking and sleeping arose. Human beings alternated between states when they were exposed to the sun and then were turned away from it. Then the time approached when the human being began to perceive objects on which the sun shone. At night the forces of the moon continually stimulated the life of the soul so that human beings distinguished a time when they perceived the external world and a state when they felt forces that worked through the moon and made them clairvoyant. Human beings said to themselves that through the spirituality that lived in the moon, they could perceive the spiritual world that was inwardly flowing into them through the forces of the moon. The forces of the moon were reflected sun forces that the spiritual world mediated to human beings, while the external world became increasingly perceptible to them during the day.

This was reflected in the ancient Egyptian’s feeling life. The sun spirit was characterized as Osiris and the soul that seeks the sun spirit was seen as Isis. Thus, all we have been describing

was reflected in the worship of Isis in the ancient Egyptian culture. Hence, the religious life was a worship of the moon. Osiris was a sun spirit residing on the moon. He could be seen clairvoyantly by the souls that sought him. But as the human being descended more and more into the physical bodily nature this bodily nature became like a box to Osiris. As human beings increasingly came to be earth beings in the strict sense, Osiris withdrew more and more.

The Lemurian age was followed by the Atlantean age — which was reflected in the fourth, the Greco-Latin culture. This era had an aspect of the world that had already presented itself cosmically in the Atlantean age. The human being became denser and denser. At the beginning of the human being's evolution the bones were present only as lines of force within. Then the human being became a being of air, and later a gelatinous being. The forms of the skeletal system are increasingly formed. On the other hand the powers of soul were in equal measure greater at that time. The Lemurians, who lived in viscous bodies in ancient times, had powers of soul much greater than those of the following races. It was much the same with the Atlanteans. If cannon balls had existed at that time, for example, such an Atlantean could have simply deflected any cannon ball through the power in his soul even though his physical body was not as dense as bodies are today. In terms of their physical bodily nature, Atlanteans were much thinner than we are today.

There were beings among the Atlanteans for whom it was not necessary to evolve into our dense bodily nature. They were similar to human beings but more highly developed. These beings could pass through their full stage of human existence already in those thin Atlantean bodies. They stand one degree higher than we human beings, for we must descend all the way down into a dense physical bodily nature in order to develop our I consciousness.

A memory of all these beings is reflected in the world of ancient Greek gods and in every aspect of the thinking and feeling of that epoch.

The gods of the European north are, in a similar way, former companions of humankind — but they were not as “densified” as the Greek gods. The ancient Norse bards and singers still knew of them when they allowed what lived within them to speak. In ancient times, the Edda was not needed in order to prove that something like this existed. But if God had not come down to us in the fourth epoch, then human beings would have forgotten their old companions who had been so well remembered by many even into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Now we come into our own age. Human beings no longer have any memory of an earlier age. We now have nothing to repeat. We have seen how ancient cultures were always reflected in the previous repetitions. But now in the fifth epoch there is nothing more for humankind to repeat. The world would have become empty if, in the fourth epoch, the Yahweh-Christ-God [See [Note 2](#)] had not come and lived in the body of Jesus of Nazareth. The fifth epoch would have become the godless epoch if Christ had not descended into Jesus of Nazareth's body of flesh.

We see the Polarian age reflected in the ancient Indian age, the Hyperborean in the ancient Persian, the Lemurian in the Egypto-Chaldean, and the Atlantean in the Greco-Latin age. And now we will see the important processes that take place in the etheric and astral bodies of human beings who take into themselves the knowledge of Christ Jesus in our age.

Notes:

[Note 1.](#) Compare Rudolf Steiner's descriptions in [An Outline of Occult Science](#) (GA 13) (Hudson, N.Y.: Anthroposophic Press, 1972), page 114—134.

[Note 2.](#) Compare the following lecture excerpt: “Who did Moses see on Sinai in the burning bush and in the fire? Christ! But, just as we do not see the light of the sun directly on the moon but

only reflected sunlight. so ton Moses saw a reflection of Christ. And just as we call sunlight that has been reflected by the moon, moonlight, so Christ, at that time was called Yahveh. Therefore, Yahveh is nothing other than the reflection of Christ before he appeared on the earth. So Christ was announced to the human being, who was not yet able to see him in his fundamental, essential being, just as sunlight announces itself through the rays of moonlight at night when, were it not for the full moon, the sky would be dark. Yahveh is Christ, but not seen directly, but rather as reflected light.” Lecture of September 21, 1909, Basel, in *The Gospel of St. Luke* (GA 114) (Hudson, N.Y.: Anthroposophic Press, 1964).

LECTURE SEVEN

KRISTIANIA — May 16, 1909

TODAY WE WILL CONSIDER a more occult side of yesterday’s observations. The first four post-Atlantean cultures had the task of reflecting in human souls the great cosmic processes that had taken place in the course of time. In our cultural period, on the other hand, from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries onward, we no longer incorporate such a reflection. For what takes place externally in the evolution of humankind can be traced back to deeper causes.

We know that the etheric bodies of the great Atlantean initiates were preserved for the seven holy Rishis; we also know that the etheric body and astral body of Zarathustra were woven into Moses and Hermes. The possibility has always existed for etheric bodies, which have been transformed and prepared by initiates, to be used further in the spiritual economy of the world. [See [Note 1](#)] Other things have also happened. Special etheric bodies are formed in higher worlds for especially important individuals. When someone was essential for a special mission to humanity, such a special etheric body or astral body was woven in higher worlds and then imprinted into him or her.

This is what happened to Sem, who actually had something to do with the entire tribe of the Semites. A special etheric body was formed for such a progenitor of a tribe. Because of this Sem was a kind of double personality. As incredible as it may sound to modern thinking, to a clairvoyant a personality such as Sem appeared, with his aura, like an ordinary man whose etheric body was filled by a higher being reaching down from higher worlds. In this way the man’s aura became a mediator between his personality and higher worlds. When dwelling in a human being such a divine being has a very special power. He can reproduce a particular etheric body, and these reproduced etheric bodies then form a fabric that is again and again woven into the descendants. In this way the descendants of Sem were endowed with copies of his etheric body. But the etheric body of Sem himself, not only the reproduced copies, was also preserved in the mysteries. Then, any special individual who had been assigned a special mission had to use this etheric body in order to make himself understood to the Semitic people, just as highly educated Europeans would have to learn the language of the Hottentots in order to make themselves understood to them. The individuals given a special mission therefore had to carry within them the real etheric body of Sem in order to make themselves understood to the Semitic people. An example of such a personality would be Melchizedek, [See [Note 2](#)] who could only show himself to Abraham in the etheric body of Sem.

We must now ask ourselves the question: If only now, in the fifth post-Atlantean cultural epoch, an understanding for Christianity can be developed, then what was the understanding in the rest of the Greek and Latin age that lasted until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries?

There is a mysterious occult process taking place here. Christ lived, of course, for only three years in the body of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus was such a highly developed individuality that he could leave the physical world in the thirtieth year of his life in order to enter the spiritual world just as the dove appeared over his head. The three highly developed bodies, physical, etheric, and

astral, left behind by Jesus were then filled by the individuality of Christ through the fact that he lived in the physical human body. These bodies of Jesus of Nazareth, invisible to the physical eye, were then replicated in a way similar to what happened to the etheric body of Sem. As a result, since the death on the cross, there exist copies of the etheric and astral bodies of Jesus of Nazareth. This has nothing to do with his I, which went on into the spiritual world and later continued incarnating.

In the first centuries after the Christ event we see how Christian writers were still working on the basis of a tradition passed on orally from the disciples of the Apostles. They placed value on tradition passed on through physical means. But later centuries could not have built upon these alone. Especially from the sixth and seventh centuries onward, great proclaimers of Christianity had a copy of the etheric body of Jesus of Nazareth woven into them. Augustine was such a man. In his youth he had to go through mighty battles. Then the impulse of the etheric body of Jesus of Nazareth became active in him in a very significant way; only then did he begin to generate Christian mysticism out of himself. His writings can only be understood in this light.

Many personalities have walked on the earth bearing such a copy within themselves. Columba, Gallus, Patrick [See [Note 3](#)] — they all carried such a copy of the etheric body within them and for just this reason were in a position to spread Christianity. In this way a bridge was built from the Christ event to succeeding times.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries we then see people who received into their own astral bodies the astral body of Jesus of Nazareth. Francis of Assisi was one such special person. When we follow his life we will find much that is not understandable. But we can understand especially his humility, his Christian devotion if we realize that such a mystery lived in him. Around the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries such people became proclaimers of Christianity through this interweaving of astral bodies. They received Christianity through grace.

The I of Jesus of Nazareth left the three sheaths at the baptism in the Jordan. Nevertheless, an image of this I, like the imprint of a seal, remained in the three sheaths. The Christ being took possession of these three bodies but he also took possession of something else, something that remained behind like an imprint of the I of Jesus. From the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries on, something like a copy of Jesus' I [See [Note 4](#)] was woven into those men who then began to speak of an "inner Christ." Meister Eckhart and Johannes Tauler were speaking out of their inner experience of something like an imprint of the I of Jesus of Nazareth.

Although there are still many people present today carrying something like a copy of the various bodies of Jesus of Nazareth, they no longer become leading personalities. More and more we see how in our fifth age there are people who must rely on themselves, on their own I. Such inspired people will become increasingly rare. Therefore, steps were taken to provide for the future so that a particular spiritual stream could arise in our time, a spiritual stream with the task of insuring that spiritual knowledge will still reach humanity. Those individuals who could see into the future had to provide for human beings who are wholly dependent on their merely human I. We are told in a legend that the vessel used by Christ Jesus with his disciples at the Last Supper was preserved. This is the legend of the Holy Grail. We see in the story of Parzival an expression of a pupil's typical path of development in our fifth post-Atlantean age. Parzival neglected to do one thing. He had been told that he should not ask questions. That is the important transition from the old age to the new. In ancient India, a devotion as passive as possible was necessary for the pupil; this was also true in Augustine's time and in the time of Francis of Assisi. All of these humble people let themselves be inspired by what lived in them, what had been woven into them. But now the I must carry the question in itself. Every soul today that passively receives what is given to it cannot go beyond itself. It can only observe what is going on in the physical world around it. Today the soul must ask questions, must lift itself above itself; it must grow out of itself. The soul today must ask questions as Parzival had to ask about the secrets of the Grail castle. [See [Note 5](#)]

Therefore, today spiritual research only begins when there are questions. The souls that are stimulated today by external science to question, to ask, and to seek — those are the Parzival souls. Therefore, a mystery stream was introduced that has been much persecuted, the Rosicrucian training that does not rely on any handed-down wisdom even if it gratefully accepts the old traditions. What constitutes the Rosicrucian approach to the spirit today has been researched directly in higher worlds with spiritual eyes — and with the means that the student himself has received as instructions. Today wisdom is proclaimed through the Rosicrucian approach to the spirit not because this or that is found in old books, not because these or those have believed this or that, but because it was researched. This was gradually prepared in the Rosicrucian schools founded in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by the individuality named Christian Rosenkreuz.

Today this wisdom can be proclaimed as Theosophy. Those people simply no longer exist who, without their own involvement, are implanted with wisdom that inwardly inspires them. Today only those people who feel that Theosophy speaks to their hearts should come to it. We should not use propaganda and agitate for Theosophy. Only through their own free initiative should anyone come to Theosophy. This can occur when individuals are deeply affected in a living way by spiritual knowledge.

Then, through this Theosophical-Rosicrucian spiritual stream, we draw toward us what is available from the copies of the I of Jesus of Nazareth. In this way, those who prepare themselves for it draw into their souls the image of the I of Jesus of Nazareth. Then, through the fact that their inner soul life is like the imprint of a seal of the I of Christ, through this, such human beings take into their souls the principle of Christ. In this way Rosicrucianism prepares something positive. Theosophy should become life, so that any soul that truly absorbs Theosophy is gradually transformed. Absorbing Theosophy means that a soul is transformed such that it can arrive at an understanding of Christ.

Theosophists make themselves into living recipients of what Moses and Paul were given in the revelation of Yahweh-Christ. Therefore, we read in the fifth letter in the Apocalypse how the people of the fifth cultural epoch are those who truly take into themselves what will later be self-evident for the cultural epoch of the community of Philadelphia. The wisdom of the fifth cultural age will blossom forth as a flower of love in the sixth cultural age.

Humankind is called today to take in something new, something divine, and thereby to undertake again an ascent into the spiritual world. The theosophical teaching concerning evolution is imparted; it should not be believed but rather humankind should come to the point of understanding it through its own power of judgment. It is proclaimed to those who bear within themselves a seed of the essence of Parzival. And it is not proclaimed only to a particular people or place. Those who hear the call of spiritual wisdom will come together from all parts of humanity.

Notes:

[Note 1.](#) Compare the lectures found in *The Principle of Spiritual Economy* (GA 109) (Fludson, N.Y.: Anthroposophic Press, 1986).

[Note 2.](#) Melchizedek: Compare, among others, the lecture of September 4, 1910 in *The Gospel of St. Matthew* (GA 123) (Hudson, N.Y.: Anthroposophic Press, 1965).

[Note 3.](#) The great Irish missionaries.

[Note 4.](#) Compare the descriptions found in the lecture “More Intimate Aspects of Reincarnation” in *The Principle of Spiritual Economy* (GA 109).

Note 5. Compare lecture cycle [*Christ and the Spiritual World and the Search for the Holy Grail*](#) (GA 149) (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1963) and Chretien de Troyes, Perceval, or the *History of the Grail*.

LECTURE EIGHT

KRISTIANIA — May 17, 1909

A SEER SUCH AS THE WRITER OF THE APOCALYPSE can already see the future evolution of humanity in the astral world. What will enter into evolution after the war of all against all is already being prepared. Those human beings called to carry evolution into the future, beyond the war of all against all, are already being prepared through the wisdom taught in Theosophy. In far-reaching ways, the spiritual stream of wisdom will become increasingly effective.

When the clairvoyant can observe the modern human being, it sees the etheric body extending a little bit beyond the upper part of the physical body. The etheric body of a man is feminine and the etheric body of a woman is masculine. The astral body, on the other hand, is a flowing structure, variable in terms of color and form, changeable according to the inner life. If we raise our hand the impulse to do so comes from the astral body. When we walk, when we cry or laugh — that is caused by an impulse in the astral body having influence over the physical body. However, what has the most essential influence on human beings is their I. The I works in an altogether roundabout way through the astral body.

In ancient Atlantean times and in the Lemurian age, human beings were not only able to stretch out their different bodies, but they could also extend and “puff” them up. At that time the physical body was only a very small inclusion; on the other hand, the etheric and astral bodies were gigantic. The astral body might look like one kind of animal but was constantly changing and soon resembled another. Human beings constantly changed their physical form according to the desires and impulses living within them. The air then was filled with thick foggy mists much thicker and water-filled than our mountain fog. The human physical body had the most varied colorings and forms; one could already see in its gelatinous substance indications of the physical organization, for example the blood system and the skeleton. Toward the end of Atlantis the air was cleared of thick watery masses. Only then could human beings become the creatures of air and earth that we are today. Atlanteans did not see the sun at all the way it is seen today; it was seen as the mighty ring of the sun. Because the air was never free of water, there were never any rainbows. Only after the separation of water and air were rainbows possible. The entire process of the Atlantean flood is portrayed in the story of Noah and the rainbow. ([Genesis 9:12–17](#))

It was also necessary for the beings on the earth to pass through their stages of evolution at very different times. If a portion of humanity in the early stages of Atlantis had not wanted to descend into a “densified” physical body, then the human form would have remained as it was — with all the instincts, desires, and passions still expressed in the physical form. However, there were beings that became solid, hardened at that time. Animals are nothing more than beings that entered into a hardened, dense condition too early. What the human being carries in the astral body today in terms of desires and passions has come to expression in the physical body of the various animals. Each of the groups of animals developed a particular instinct, and is “congealed” or solidified in it. During the Lemurian age it was the mammals; they are human passions that have congealed into a rigid form. What we carry within ourselves presents itself as a picture in the various animals. With human beings, the instincts have been gradually refined and we can hide them in our heart. The lowest instincts of the human being were first to fall into the physical world during eruptions of natural forces in the earlier times of Lemuria. The apes represent, so to speak, the last lower instincts to fall or be pushed into physical matter before the soul of the human being was itself hardened in matter. With some animals, horses for example, we still find today as a peculiarity the etheric body of the head extending beyond the physical

head. That was the case with Atlantean human beings. A certain point in the human etheric body moved into the corresponding part of the physical body only in the last third of the Atlantean age. Only then were human beings able to develop a physical form appropriate for the spirit.

There are sixteen groups of human instincts and passions and so too, are there sixteen groups of animals. Zoology will one day understand how these sixteen groups were gradually “precipitated out” of the spiritual world. We can easily say how the various parts of the mammal groups were created. The formation of hoofs, for example, occurred when, in a very special way, animal nature closed off from the outer world. Claws were created through aggression. The hoofed animals express a very different stage of evolution than animals with claws. We see just such a contradiction expressed in the forms of the centaur and the sphinx.

This is portrayed in the second part of *Faust*, a very important book from the occult point of view. The Sphinx encounters Mephistopheles and laughs at him because of his horse hooves, which are a sign of a hardened nature, a nature that has egotistically closed itself off from the world.

If we cut our finger we feel pain; this shows us the bearer of feelings, the astral body. Earlier, when the human being’s entire nature was still soft, the hair growth was also permeated by astral forces. We are told of Esau that he was covered with hair; he was still retarded in his development and in his power of judgment. For this reason Jacob could trick him, because Jacob had already come further in the development of his power of judgment, of his I. There are forces again working outward in human beings today. The more the I has mastery over the astral body, the more the physical body can also be molded and transformed. Today we have our karma within us like a life account, with a balance of everything we have prepared in our various incarnations. But because the human being’s physical nature expresses very little of the I, we carry our karma inwardly and unmediated. But later it will show itself on the human face. Humankind will evolve in the future so that its karma is carried on the countenance. No longer will the fact that a human being is born into a specific race or in a specific climate be decisive for external appearances. There will be rather a class of good people and a class of evil people. Let us understand Paul correctly, who said: “I live, but it is no longer I who live, but Christ in me.” ([Gal. 2:20](#)) What is called “receiving the Yahweh-Christ being” will later show itself in human beings externally. Today it is still possible to be a rogue and yet hide it; but in the future, human beings will carry the mark of their inner life on their foreheads.

Let us look at the human being after the war of all against all. We can think of him or her as someone with radiant, good features and a noble benevolent expression. This will become the fate of those who have taken in spiritual impulses at the right time. All moral, intellectual, and spiritual forces will, in the future, confront us visibly in the external features of a human being. What is taken in today will be sealed into souls. After the seventh age, after the war of all against all, they will be unsealed.

That is what the writer of the Apocalypse sees in the seven seals that will gradually be broken. The book with the seven seals is not intended to be like our books or like ancient scrolls. What is intended is a succession of events. The succession of epochs is the concept of the Apocalyptic “books” as, for example, the Evangelist Matthew speaks of the succession of generations, of the lineage of Jesus of Nazareth. Orders of succession are created in this way. The book tells us that the power of the lamb can break the seals.

That gives us an idea of what is intended with the seven seals.

LECTURE NINE

KRISTIANIA — May 18, 1909

WE HAVE SEEN THAT IN OUR AGE we can write into our souls what will later appear in the human being externally. Just as seven successive cultural epochs can be listed in our time, so too, the seven ages of human evolution that will follow the war of all against all are portrayed to the writer of the Apocalypse, who can see into the future. He sees these seven ages in the seven seals. But he distinguishes clearly the first four ages. Every time a seal is opened one of the four horses with its rider appears to him.

The Apocalypse presents a clairvoyant vision of seven future ages. They are astral pictures of what one day will be. Human beings who will have taken in something of spiritual culture will have overcome their lower nature. They will then rule over the human instinctive nature. What human beings have overcome is expressed in the seal in the form of a horse. They will be victors over their lower nature through what they will have made of their souls. They will master their lower natures just as a rider masters a horse.

Everything we have experienced since the time of ancient India will appear again after the war of all against all. As epochs are repeated, the ancient Indian age will reappear first. Back then everything in the physical world appeared to the human being as illusion, as maya. At that time the soul became mature enough to achieve victory over everything in the sensible world. The fruit of this Indian age appears to the writer of the Apocalypse in the picture of the white horse. It is characteristic of the soul of the ancient Indian that the external world, material culture, appears as yet untouched by human hands. The rider with a bow is as innocent as bright sunlight. Like a conqueror he has earned the right, after the war of all against all, to be conqueror over his lower nature. But the lower nature is still present. The human being has grown together with it. This is portrayed in the second seal as the red rider. Here the soul no longer appears in a white garment of innocence. Thus, the victorious rider cannot serve as a picture of the human being in this age. He appears to us as one bringing the fruits of egotism. After the war of all against all he no longer appears in a white garment. Once again he takes peace away from the earth; once again he shows himself with a sword in the battle for existence.

Then we are shown the fruit of the third age, the Egypto-Chaldean culture, during which humankind learned to count and to calculate. The human being continued to descend deeper and deeper into matter, into the darkness of the lower nature. This is seen in the black horse with a rider holding scales. Weighing, measuring, and counting are expressed to the writer of the Apocalypse as a black horse, and the human soul is the rider with the scales. State institutions for the allocation of property according to intelligent social laws did not exist among human beings in the Persian culture. There were no such institutions in ancient India or ancient Persia. In ancient India, people still had faith in their Atlantean incarnations. In ancient Indian times, people saw their position in life as the consequence of what they had prepared in ancient Atlantis. They told themselves that they were in a certain caste because of the karma of humankind; they looked up to the higher castes and considered this to be a just arrangement according to the karma of individuals. But this division into castes was made increasingly impossible by the evolution of the human I. Distribution of property and goods began to be calculated chiefly through the use of intelligence in the Egypto-Chaldean age. Therefore, the fruit of this third age appears as the black horse and the rider with the scales, with which all thinking and human intelligence are weighed. In this way, what will appear as the fruit of our seven cultures after the war of all against all appears symbolically to the writer of the Apocalypse.

In the Greco-Latin culture, the fourth age conquered the beauty of the physical world. The Greeks idealized nature in their art; they beautified existence. How beautiful Greek sculpture and architecture appear to us in comparison to Egyptian art, to the Sphinx, to the Pyramids. But the

Greeks became so fond of physical-sensible existence that the spiritual world became dark for them. Only through the event of Golgotha did light again penetrate into what for them had become absolute shadows. The soul had been completely thrown into chains in this fourth age. But the lower nature experienced a beautification; it received, so to speak, a cover of beauty and art. That is quite properly what is characteristic for the souls of this most beautiful age of the kingdom of earth. But for the souls themselves the fruit of this age means the same thing as death. From this age, which has given them mastery over external physical nature, the souls of human beings will reap the fewest fruits.

Then we come to the fifth age, when the Yahweh-Christ principle also illuminates souls between death and a new birth. Here souls become more alive. What happens in this fifth age? Through what a soul can assimilate through the Christ impulse, the astral body becomes brighter and more filled with light. We can imagine how an astral body that is permeated by the light of the I, that is totally illuminated by the I, appears when seen clairvoyantly. It appears to the writer of the Apocalypse after the war of all against all as a white garment. In the fifth age after the war of all against all, the soul will appear with an aura that is already illuminated by the light of Christ. [Gap in manuscript]

Those who already took up the Christ principle in the first era of Christianity suffered a great deal in terms of external physical martyrdom. But things are coming to a head in this fifth age. Through the Rosicrucian-Theosophical spiritual stream, the Christ impulse will be taken into selves that are increasingly selfless — and taken in with increasing understanding. Its followers will achieve, through spiritual development, ever higher stages of spiritual life.

But another stream sharply opposed to this is working, through a certain cultivation of the I, to drive the I constantly deeper into materialism. Its goal is that materialism should finally conquer the human personality. A result of this impulse is that all external, practical life is detached from the individual, becomes materialized. This happens, for example, through the activity of capital in joint stock companies, which is increasingly detached from any individual human personality. The personal diligence and hard work of individual human beings will become increasingly unimportant. Stocks or shares in companies are the path to materialization in this branch of practical human life.

We see materialism increasingly getting the upper hand. More and more the tendency will be that the spiritualized human personality will have to contradict the prevailing materialism. At the end of our age, this sharp opposition to materialism will appear as a humanity that has been outwardly vanquished. The people who will be put to death for the sake of the Word will have to suffer much. But they will be the most important cultural force after the war of all against all.

With the community at Philadelphia the sixth age will begin. Except for these spiritual human beings the rest of humankind will be entirely wrapped up in the social life, submerged in the materialism that will be constantly growing stronger. People will master the forces of nature to a high degree, as we have seen with wireless telegraphy and aeronautics. It is not without consequences whether the air is filled with spiritual thoughts or with thoughts of material needs. This will engulf our entire planet. We are looking into an age when humanity will intrude in large measure into air and light-filled space. What will be the fruits of this age? Seen in their true form it can be said that these electromagnetic waves will work back into the forces of the earth during a certain age. Then, according to good and evil, earthquakes and earth tremors will appear as the effects of human deeds. “When he opened the sixth seal I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth ...” ([Rev. 6:12](#)) When the feelings of human beings are carried into the air, they change all of nature and something like a meteor shower appears. In this way human beings unleash the forces of nature, but their achievements do not go unpunished. When we see this, it appears at the same time that humanity finds its own destruction within these unleashed forces of nature. But those who unite themselves with the spirit appear as the sealed human beings. Such people must take into themselves the teachings that concern the spirit and can reach humanity.

What human beings take into themselves as spiritual substance and teaching will be their soul and spiritual life blood in the future. It will be the light that will ray forth from them as spirit. The human being stands firmly as on two feet — one foot on the Atlantean, the other on the post-Atlantean culture, as it were: on water and on earth. But humankind must take in wisdom, like swallowing a book. This figure points toward the spiritual world, he gives the book to the writer of the Apocalypse. He is supposed to swallow it. It will be indigestible for the lower human being but like honey for the higher, when it is not read but swallowed. Human beings equipped with modern logical thinking who have also become clairvoyant through occult training can also experience what the writer of the Apocalypse described. They can see the visions of the writer of the Apocalypse in the Rosicrucian seals. The seal with the two pillars is portrayed in the tenth chapter of the Apocalypse.

LECTURE TEN

KRISTIANIA — May 19, 1909

WE HAVE SEEN HOW THE WRITER of the Apocalypse indicates that in the fifth age, after the war of all against all, people will appear in white garments, that the sixth age is characterized by the earth's enduring great tremors and earthquakes as the result of materialism, and that spiritual human beings will be the sealed ones.

We must point out that just as the angels or angeloi underwent their human stage in earlier planetary incarnations, humanity must also ascend through its development. What confronts us today as nature is the achievement of the gods. In the future, the human being will also accomplish divine spiritual deeds. We are speaking of the time when the human being will already have begun to work with magic from the periphery of the earth out of the realm of the invisible. However, in contrast to the sealed human beings there will also be those who have chained themselves to matter. These materialistic people will have been pushed down. This is why the writer of the Apocalypse sees the spiritualized people hovering above with the others bound to matter below. He sees this very clearly the moment the seventh seal is broken to reveal a vision of the future.

Then comes the next epoch of seven ages. Here the writer of the Apocalypse sees devachan and hears it prophetically proclaimed in the blowing of trumpets. Human beings will look down upon the earth itself as it becomes increasingly material; only the coarsest humankind will have consciously reacquired clairvoyance. In the age of the trumpets the Lemurian age will resurrect; human beings will be close to God, they will have completely spiritualized themselves. In the Lemurian age the earth still existed entirely within the element of fire. Human beings lived in fire before descending into a dense bodily nature — this will be repeated in a spiritual state. When the seventh trumpet sounds forth a kind of blessed state will come upon humanity. Then we come to a repetition of the time when the sun was separated from the earth. The human being, together with the earth, will have advanced to the time when the sun again unites with the earth. The earth will pass over into what is called an astral state. Human beings able to live in the astral world will raise up the finer part of the earth and then be united with the sun. The portion of the earth that has remained coarse will be united with the moon to form a new kind of moon. The kind of conditions prevailing during the Hyperborean age will enter in again, but at a higher stage of evolution. This is characterized by the woman clothed with the sun and having the moon at her feet. The beasts that rise up out of the sea or fall from heaven also belong to this whole stream of evolution that is pictured, as if captured in a moment of time. ([Rev. 12:1–13:10](#))

Zarathustra also referred to the Christ being, who has been working in the central regions of the earth from the event of Golgotha onward. After working on the earth from the sun in earlier times, he has united with the planet earth. It is the power of Christ that has descended from the sun and retrieved the useful part of earthly humanity, uniting it with the sun again. But he has an

adversary — every such being has an adversary. Christ is the good spirit, the intelligence of the sun; the adversary is the demon of the sun. Certain forces that are constantly working on the human astral body come forth from the demon of the sun. This demon of the sun is the opponent of the Christ spirit and is called Sorat. Earlier, in cabalistic sections of occultism, the custom of writing letters with numbers prevailed. The letters of the name Sorat, the demon of the sun, have the value 666. In the picture found at Rev. 13:11 – 18 the sun demon becomes visible.

It has two horns like a lamb. The writer of the Apocalypse describes the sign of the beast. Already at the beginning of the Apocalypse he clearly stated he was describing everything in signs and then adds: Wisdom is necessary in order to solve this riddle. In this way, the number of the beast has been explained in occult schools by real experts who do not explain it materialistically. We hear how the worst and coarsest elements are thrown out and how the noblest, spiritualized portion of humanity remains united with the sun. The newly spiritualized human body can then again be a temple for the soul.

LECTURE ELEVEN

KRISTIANIA — May 20, 1909

IN OUR SURVEY OF THE EVOLUTION OF OUR PLANET we have seen that the earth will again be spiritualized, that human beings can participate in this evolution and that they will again be able to return to the sun. Evolution leads to a constantly increasing spiritualization, to a higher condition, to the devachanic state. All those beings who are too stuck in their materialization will not be able to participate in this spiritual earth. First, everything must pass over into an astral condition. But the coarse, material elements of humankind and the base substances in the lower kingdoms enter with human beings into a kind of lower astral world. This could be called the sub-physical astral world. We have, then, devachan, the astral world, the physical world, and the lower astral world. This lower astral world is also working in opposition to our evolution today. It is ruled by the spirit Mammon, [See [Note 1](#)] that is, the spirit of hindrances. He is a power of the lower world.

All the beings who cannot rise up into the higher world must go down into this lower world. All the higher beings, after the age of the seven trumpet calls, will enter into a state of the earth united again with the sun.

Certain beings have passed through their human state on every incarnation of the earth: the angels during the moon stage, the archangels on the old sun, the good Asuras, also known as archai or primal beginnings, on old Saturn. There are also beings who did not complete their development. Such beings existed, for example, on the moon; these beings were then transplanted to the earth. They were higher than the human being but, at that time, had not yet reached the stage of humanity. These are the luciferic spirits. They have entangled the human being ever deeper in matter; they became connected to humankind in the Lemurian age. The human being would have gone through his evolution in a higher sphere if the luciferic spirits had not united with that evolution. But human beings can thank them for something good: their freedom. The luciferic spirits made, so to speak, a sacrifice for the good of humankind when they united their evolution with the earth and remained behind.

But Saturn, Sun, and Moon occurred before the middle of the earth's evolution. Those beings who remained behind before the midpoint have made an offering, a sacrifice. However, those who remain behind from now on, after the middle of the earth's evolution, merely represent a hindrance, not a sacrifice. The luciferic spirits have also brought humanity something positive. They have permeated the human astral body and thereby have brought us to independence.

If we consider that the human physical body was prepared for the human being during the ancient Saturn state, the etheric body during the Sun state, the astral body during ancient Moon, then we see how, in its way, this physical body is the most perfect member. It is the most evolved. If we could look into the miraculous structure of the physical heart, or the brain that is structured and organized with so much wisdom that physical science has not yet solved the riddles it presents, we would recognize this. The astral body is, indeed, a higher member but far less perfect; the etheric body has been perfected more than the astral but less than the physical. The I is the least perfect of all. For example, how little does the I understand the structures of the physical body. This is even precisely described in the Bible where it is said: "... then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being ..." ([Genesis 2:7](#)) This happened during Lemurian times. At that time luciferic beings worked into the astral body of the human being. However, it was just by doing this, by slipping into the astral body that they caught up with what they themselves had neglected in the past. What they should have accomplished on the Moon they went through vicariously within the human being.

When the sun will have again united with the earth, then human beings — through the fact that they will have purified their instincts, desires, and passions — will redeem the luciferic beings. The luciferic beings who do not go on to the Sun remain in their original condition. They then appear as expelled into the evil, lower astral world. This is the ancient snake and it emerges as the first dragon. Therefore, when the earth enters the sun, a dragon appears. But there are yet other beings left behind: such human beings who could not prevent themselves from dropping back into animality, who remain slaves to their animal instincts. While the other human beings go to the sun, these will form an evil power over and against the higher. These form the second monster, and the writer of the Apocalypse says in his exact fashion: The luciferic dragon appears in heaven because he comes from higher worlds; the second beast arises from the sea — this consists of the souls of animalistic human beings who have remained behind. (Compare: ([Rev. 12:3–13:10](#)))

We have still a third vision, that of the black magicians. They do not remain stuck in animality; they develop spiritual abilities. In full consciousness they have turned away, and provide a bodily incarnation for Sorat. That will be the incarnation in flesh of the demon of the sun.

But then we see how the earth emerges from the sun yet again in the future. If the spiritual human beings were to remain united with the sun forever, then the other human beings who, without guilt, had remained behind in animality would never be saved. So, these spiritualized people come forth once more and unite with what has fallen out of evolution in an attempt to save these backward souls. When the earth began its existence as "earth" it had to briefly repeat the Saturn, Sun, and Moon conditions once again. It went through recapitulations of those conditions before it became the present-day earth. Now, when actual earth conditions prevail, it must prophetically mirror the future embodiments of Jupiter, Venus, and Vulcan. In this way the earth goes through seven states during its actual earth condition. These states are usually called "rounds." During the prophetically mirrored Jupiter state, the earth will actually unite with the sun. On this Jupiter-Earth all the great cultural ages will appear again — with the seven intervals between them — but they will be far less sharply delineated. On this Jupiter-Earth, many beings still have the possibility of being saved, even the black magicians.

This will also be the case on the Venus-Earth, when we have a sixth planetary interval. Here also the beings that have remained behind will stubbornly struggle against help; but this Venus-Earth will at last be decisive.

Then, on the Vulcan-Earth, nothing more can be saved. On the Venus-Earth the last moment for salvation has come in the last sub-epoch. That is why the ancient cabalists formed the word "Sorat," because the number 666 is contained within it. That is also the number of those human

beings who, out of their own cunning free will, have become black magicians by placing spiritual forces in the service of their own egotism.

The first dragon is not a human being. It came out of the spiritual world. The second dragon is ascribed to animalistic nature but in a fundamental sense the Bible ascribes this number of the third group to human beings. So the number 666 is not a sign of the beast but a human number.

The Apocalypse is an outline of the whole of evolution. Venus-Earth is portrayed to clairvoyant sight in such a way that there is not much hope for those left behind. Human powers at that time will not be capable of very much. That is why everything appears so desolate and the worst vices will reign there in the most depraved ways. They must be expelled during the Venus state of the earth. On the Jupiter-Earth there are still many, many who will allow themselves to be saved and who will unite with the sun.

But during the Venus-Earth evil must be overcome and driven into the abyss; that is the “Fall of Babylon.” ([Rev. 17–18](#)) The people who have been saved can develop themselves further to a new sun state. What has been cleansed and purified will arise for the Vulcan-Earth.

Human beings today are already creative on the earth. They can force the lifeless forces of nature to serve them. They can build cathedrals, they can sculpt marble. Today they are masters of lifeless nature. Even though Raphael’s paintings of the Madonna are falling to dust, even though the external physical world is passing away, what the human being achieves in terms of art during the evolution of the earth will one day resurrect in a different form. The crystals we see today were once forms worked out by human beings during the old Moon embodiment of the earth, in a way similar to how we create and form artistically today. What the spirits once achieved in infinite ages of time now grows out of the earth; today it rises up. So, too, the matter of Raphael’s Madonnas will also rise up. In the distant future, everything that human beings now create will rise again with the brightness of crystals. The place that humanity has prepared and will find waiting is called the “New Jerusalem” by the writer of the Apocalypse. A new world will arise, inhabitable by human beings who will have achieved the requisite state of maturity. In a new state, in the Jupiter existence, they will find the place where, out of love and out of human work, peace will reign.

Notes:

[Note 1.](#) Through Ahriman.

LECTURE TWELVE

KRISTIANIA — May 21, 1909

WE CANNOT DISCUSS EVERYTHING that could be said in connection with the Apocalypse, for then we would have to speak for years. In these lectures we can only give a kind of sketch, and some explanations that can help us understand this mighty work. Today we would still like to point out some particularly important things. We begin by returning to a specific question of human evolution.

Every age between the Atlantean catastrophe and the great war of all against all has its own unique task for our development. In a new incarnation a human being never has the same task as in the last one. From incarnation to incarnation new tasks approach us, and so this post-Atlantean evolutionary age has worked on human beings in a special way. The whole epoch of earth evolution exists to make human beings fit particularly to develop the human I. In the last third of the Atlantean age, human beings were first equipped to draw the I toward the physical head. That is, the I, the spiritual basis for the experience of self that was only like a seed at the time, was pulled “down” toward the physical body, specifically, toward the human head. But the most significant impulse to have an effect on the I came through the event of Golgotha. All the

preceding epochs had already worked in that direction. When we look back at the last third of Atlantean evolution we see that a certain point in the etheric head and the physical head did not then coincide, whereas today the etheric body of the head is approximately the same as the physical head. Because of this, human beings gradually came to develop their I, their sense of self. The rest of Atlantean evolution was used to make the human being fit to be a proper bearer of the I. Even at the end of Atlantean culture the brain was entirely soft, more or less like that of a hydrocephalic today, as part of an atavistic inheritance. The physical brain could only become firm enough through the arrival of the etheric brain. Still, even when the etheric head had fully entered the physical head in the ancient Indian age, it was not yet possible for this head to be a perfect bearer of the I. For this reason the ancient Indians longed for the spiritual world and had to be educated so that the I could gradually develop in them.

To begin with, the human being consists of the four members: physical body, etheric body, astral body, and the I. However, if we wish to investigate post-Atlantean evolution more precisely, we must also consider the ninefold aspect of the human being. This is the difference between the oriental and the northern mystery teachings. The I works to transform the astral body into manas or spirit-self, the etheric body into budhi or life-spirit, and the physical body, through breathing, into atma. In other words, the I transforms the astral body, the etheric body, and the physical body. But before this can happen consciously, it must have taken place through higher beings.

Today the conscious transformation of these members occurs only in schools of initiation. For example, in the last third of the Atlantean age the physical body was transformed to the point that it could be a bearer of an I, but this occurred unconsciously. What was transformed in the astral body is called sentient soul, the etheric body transformed in this way is called the intellectual soul, and the physical body thus unconsciously transformed is the consciousness soul. And only when human beings have developed the consciousness soul can the spirit-self gradually — and at first, unconsciously — be woven into them.

In the cultural epochs of our earth evolution, manas is gradually being formed and slipped into the astral body. After it has been prepared in the last third of the Atlantean age, the consciousness soul must again be transformed by the Yahweh-Christ principle in the next cultural epoch.

In the ancient Indian age the etheric body was permeated by the I, which by then had moved into the human being. In the ancient Persian age the astral body was permeated by the I, in the Egyptian age the I permeated the sentient soul; in the Greco-Latin age the intellectual soul was permeated by the I, in our culture, the I permeates the consciousness soul. In the age of “Philadelphia” the I will permeate the spirit-self, or manas. Then the human beings who, through theosophical-spiritual teachings, have made themselves capable of recognizing Christ will be in a position to see him in a new form of existence — in his delicate etheric body — for he will come again.

The I will be educated through wisdom, through Theosophy, so that it receives manas or spirit-self and will be able to recognize Christ again. Theosophical teachings have been given to humankind not in order to agitate for Theosophy but rather because they were necessary.

In the age represented by the seven seals something like a shower of meteorites will occur, caused by increasing materialism, and some human beings will ascend to a spiritual state. What the spiritualized human beings have acquired through their efforts in our post-Atlantean age will completely permeate them within. When, in the age of the sixth seal, everything that the human being has in terms of sentient soul, intellectual soul, and consciousness soul has been worked into the other members, human beings will have achieved the ability to create an external imprint of their inner life in their gesture, features, in their whole life. Because they have worked on their development they will be able, in the fourth, fifth, and sixth ages in the epoch of the seals, to use

these three soul forces — the sentient, intellectual, and consciousness souls — to permeate and work on themselves in order to take in manas.

When the human being has gone through a cycle fully, so that nothing more remains to be done, this is characterized in occultism with a “0” or zero. Therefore, human beings will have permeated the three with four. For the next age, this permeation of the three with the four is expressed by multiplying three by four; they have gone through three cycles, that is through three zeros. This is expressed thus: twelve with three zeros: 12,000. “Then I saw another angel ascend from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, ‘Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of the sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed, out of every tribe of the sons of Israel, twelve thousand sealed out of the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand of the tribe of Reuben ...” ([Rev. 7:2–5](#)) Then the various groups of people who have matured will be united in the community of Philadelphia for mature brotherhood when every soul will feel for others. All those who have been separated out of the various groups can now be multiplied together because they will live within one another. Their life together will be such that they will not disturb one another, such that one soul will work into another soul in complete harmony. Twelve times 12,000 gives the number 144,000.

These are the people who will constitute human society in the age of the sixth seal. The writer of the Apocalypse knows the secrets of all evolution, and he tells them in a language generally little understood. He does this because human beings will be able to develop their consciousness soul precisely through the exertion of energy required to penetrate such riddles. What today is presented as Theosophy is appropriate for the present age. In later ages an entirely different form of wisdom will be given. The souls who are preparing themselves by taking in Theosophy will take in new forms of wisdom in the next age. What is exoteric culture today was mystery wisdom in ancient times.

In all the ancient mysteries there was a last stage wherein the student experienced the mystery of Golgotha. Therefore, the coffin in which the student experienced the crucifixion, the laying in the grave — and out of which, experienced the resurrection — this coffin was given the shape of the cross. Since the mystery of Golgotha, this fact has become exoteric.

The conservative attitude has always been opposed to making the esoteric exoteric. Hence, Christ was seen as someone who makes the esoteric manifest. But when the time for it has come, the esoteric must always be made manifest. Had we been able to follow the writer of the Apocalypse to the place where he spoke to his disciples, we would be able to hear what is spoken to us today.

In the age when the sixth seal is broken the “people of twelve” will appear. The salvation of the “great whore of Babylon” will also occur in the sixth age. In this sixth age the earth will have repeated the Saturn, Sun, and Moon stages, as well as the earth condition itself and Jupiter-Earth. On Venus-Earth the earth will finally have the five rounds behind it. Then the sixth state will have come. Nevertheless, the Vulcan state for the chosen will not be present yet. For this reason we read [“And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come ...”] “... five are fallen ...” and the remnant that has maintained itself: “... one is ...” and the seventh: “the other has not yet come.” ([Rev. 17:10](#)) We see how we again find the messages of the writer of the Apocalypse in Theosophy.

But those who have proven themselves to be immature in the age of Venus-Earth, who have placed themselves under the rulership of Sorat, must now isolate themselves on a special sphere of earth while the other seven proceed downward and again upward. Thus the colony of Sorat falls away. The black magicians inhabit this eighth sphere, which goes to the left and away, and the beast gives a home to all that thus falls away: that is the eighth state. In this way we can find all the teachings of Theosophy in the Apocalypse.

The more humanity advances, the more energy is necessary in order to spiritualize those who have been left behind. For this reason those who are the most deeply initiated, Moses and Elijah, are called. Powerful forces are needed. Because they were already deeply initiated, they will be able in that distant future to stand so high that they will be able to work in a very special way. However, karma is a law to which all are subject; therefore, those who were initiated before the event of Golgotha must make up for the following.

The three and a half days required for initiation in ancient times were lost days in the initiates' development. Initiates had to leave their bodies during these three and a half days. Therefore, the I could not work on the transformation of its physical body, its etheric body, and its astral body. For this reason, in the future they must leave their physical body to the external world for three and a half days. Hence, we read, "For three days and a half ... gaze at their dead bodies." ([Rev. 11:9](#)) Even the deeds that are sacrifices for humanity must find their cosmic compensation.

In this way spiritual seers have spoken to other spiritual seers through the millennia and we find all of this again even unto the names in the Apocalypse. As Paul said, "... it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." ([Gal. 2:20](#)) This, too, we find again in the Apocalypse. The I is permeated by Christ. The one who can fructify the I with his name is the Christ: "... and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but he himself." ([Rev. 19:12](#))

We are also told that the earth will be spiritualized in the New Jerusalem. There will be no external sun present then; the corresponding spiritual beings will provide the light. We read, "And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it ..." ([Rev. 21:23](#))

The writer of the Apocalypse always shows the evolution of humankind in pictures. He sees the leader who was first proclaimed as Vishva Karman, and then as Ahura Mazdao, and he points to him, to Christ.

In order to illuminate what is found in the Apocalypse, we must refer to the transformation of organs that are developed in human beings into other forms. They now have the ability to change their forms.

The heart muscle is distinguished from other muscles under our voluntary control by the fact that the heart is an involuntary muscle, and yet is striated in the same way as voluntary muscle. The heart is on the way to becoming an organ with entirely different functions. We see this indicated in the structure of the muscle.

What comes forth from the voice box will become increasingly powerful. What we speak forth in order to express our thoughts shapes the air — already now it forms it according to how we think. But the word will become increasingly powerful. One day the human being will create the human being's equal through the word that comes forth from the larynx. The one who has the sword coming forth from his mouth is an indication of the being who is the alpha and the omega.

The lamb, who will be the lord over the lower nature, forms one of the seals. Sorat is as if expelled in the eighth sphere by the woman who shows us another seal of the Rosicrucian. The seer can also see this in the spiritual world. In this way, these Rosicrucian seals have an awakening effect when we meditate upon them with understanding.

We have seen how we must understand ancient religious texts literally, taking them at their word. Theosophy is the only possible commentary for the Apocalypse and it should prepare the community of Philadelphia. It is therefore within the plan for the evolution of the earth that Theosophy exists. Therefore, at various locations on the earth, great individualities are at work to give Theosophy to those able to receive it.

APPENDIX

COSMOGONY

A Lecture held in Paris on June 14, 1906

IN THE COURSE OF THESE LECTURES we have said repeatedly that Christianity constitutes the decisive midpoint of human evolution. All religions have their right to exist — they were partial revelations of the Logos — but none has changed the face of the world as much as Christianity. One can feel this influence in the words of John's Gospel, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." ([John 20:29](#)) The words, "those who have not seen," refer to those people who had no knowledge of the mystery religions. An essential part of the ancient mysteries is made public through Christianity, for example, the most important commandments concerning morality, and the teaching concerning the immortality of the soul through resurrection or rebirth.

Before Christianity, one could see supersensible truth in the revelations, rites, and dramatic presentations of the mysteries. Now, however, one can believe in the supersensible thanks to the divine person of Christ. There had always been a difference between the esoteric truth known to initiates, and its exoteric form — appropriate for the great masses — which came to expression through the various religions. The same holds true for Christianity. What is found in the Gospels is the new good tidings, promulgated for all to hear. But there was a deeper teaching. It is contained in the Apocalypse in the form of symbols.

There is a way to read the Apocalypse that can be made public only in our time. It was cultivated in the Middle Ages in the occult schools of the Rosicrucians. At that time historical questions concerning the book were considered unimportant. These were questions concerning its composition and the identity of the author; in short, all that which occupies the sole interest of theologians today, who seek nothing more than historical facts in this book. Modern critical theology knows only the external shell of this book and ignores the kernel. The Rosicrucians stayed with the prophetic aspect, the eternal truth of the book.

Occultism is not usually concerned with the history of a single century or a single era, but rather with the inner history of human evolution as a whole. This is true when it delves into the first manifestations of our planetary system, when it looks into the distant past at the vegetative and animal conditions of humanity, and when its perspective expands over millions of years forward to a future when humanity will have become divine. The earth itself will have changed then both in form and substance. But how can the future be guessed? Is prophecy really possible? It is possible because all that is to take place physically in the future already exists in seed form in the womb of the archetypes whose thoughts form the plan for our evolution. Nothing appears on the physical plane that was not already planned and preformed in general outline in the region of devachan. Nothing happens in the depths that did not exist before in the heights. That is the way things are realized. They depend upon the freedom and initiative of the individual.

Esoteric Christianity is not based on vague and sentimental idealism but rather on a concrete ideal that originates in knowledge of higher worlds. This is the knowledge that the writer of the Apocalypse had, the great seer of Patmos, who sketched the future of humankind in Christian perspective.

Let us consider this future according to the laws of world creation just described. The Rosicrucians first revealed to their pupils some visions from the past and the future. Then the pupils were given the Apocalypse to interpret these visions. Let us do the same and observe how humanity has become what it is, and what future will open for it.

We have, for example, spoken of the ancient Atlantean continent and of the Atlanteans whose etheric body was far more developed than their physical body. Their preliminary consciousness of self, their I-consciousness, came to them only at the end of their culture. The successive post-Atlantean cultures were: First, the pre-Vedantic culture in southern Asia, in India. That was the beginning of the Aryan cultures; second, the epoch of Zarathustra, including the culture of ancient Persia; third, the Egyptian culture, the epoch of Hermes, to which are attached the Chaldean and Semitic cultures. The first seeds of Christianity were sown during this age in the womb of the Hebrew peoples; fourth, the Greco-Latin cultural epoch that experienced the birth of Christianity; and fifth, a new epoch was prepared at the time of the mass migrations and wars of conquest in the fourth through the sixth centuries.

The legacy of the Greco-Latin culture was taken over by the northern races: Celts, Germans, and Slavs. This is the epoch in which we are now still living. It is a slow transformation of the Greco-Latin cultural heritage brought about through the powerful element of the new peoples under the mighty impulse of Christianity. This impulse has also been mixed with the leaven of the East brought to Europe through the Arabs. The actual goal of this cultural epoch is to adapt the human being fully to the physical plane. This occurs when our reason, our practical commonsense is developed and our intellect delves into physical matter in order to understand and master it. In the course of this hard work, this astonishing achievement that has culminated in our time, human beings have momentarily forgotten the higher worlds of their origin. By comparing our spiritual soul constitution with that of the Chaldeans, for example, it is easy to see what we have won and what we have lost. When Chaldean magicians observed the heavens, which present for us nothing more than a problem in celestial mechanics, they had an entirely different idea, an entirely different feeling, one could say, a totally different experience than we. Where a modern astronomer sees nothing more than a soulless machine, the ancient magicians felt the harmony of the heavens depths as a divine, living being. When they observed Mercury, Venus, the moon, or the sun, they saw not only the physical light of these heavenly bodies, they perceived the planets' souls as belonging to living beings, and they felt their own souls in connection with these great beings of the firmament. They perceived the influence of heavenly bodies as attraction and repulsion, like a wonderful concert of streaming, flowing divine will; and the symphony of the cosmos sounded forth in the magicians like a harmonious echo of the human microcosm. In this way the music of the spheres was a reality that united human beings with heaven.

The superiority of the modern scholar is rooted in knowledge of the physical world, of matter. Spiritual science has descended to the physical plane we know so well. However, we must now be concerned with again achieving knowledge of the astral plane through clairvoyance.

This descent into matter was necessary for the fifth epoch to fulfill its mission. Astral and spiritual clairvoyance had to be veiled so that the intellect could develop itself on the field of the sense world through minute, mathematical observation of the physical world.

Now we must supplement natural science with spiritual science. Here is an example: Ptolemy's map of the heavens is usually placed next to that of Copernicus and then the former is declared to be false. This is, however, not true. They are equally justified. Ptolemy's map is concerned with the astral plane wherein the earth forms the center point of the planets and the sun is itself a planet. Copernicus's map is concerned with the physical plane where the sun is in the middle. All truths are relative according to time and place. Ptolemy's system will be rehabilitated in an epoch yet to come.

After our fifth epoch another will come, the sixth, which will be related to ours as a spiritually minded soul is related to a rationally inclined soul. This epoch will bring genius, clairvoyance, the creative spirit, to development. How will Christianity appear in the sixth epoch? There was a harmonious union of science and faith for the ancient priests of the pre-Christian age. Science and faith were one and the same thing. When the ancient priests observed the firmament they knew and felt that the soul was a drop of water that had fallen from the

heavenly ocean and had been led down to earth by immeasurable rivers of life that flow through space. Today, when our sight is directed only to the physical world, faith needs a free space, a religion. For this reason science and faith are separated. The faithful reverence of the person of Christ, the god of the human being on the earth, has for a certain time taken the place of occult science and the mysteries. But the two streams will be united in the sixth epoch. The mechanical science of the physical plane will be elevated to the heights of spiritual creative power. That will be gnosis or spiritual knowledge. This sixth epoch will be radically different from ours. Great, tumultuous catastrophes will precede it, for the sixth epoch will be just as spiritual as ours is materialistic, but such a transformation can only occur through great, physical upheavals. Everything that will be formed in the course of the sixth epoch will call into existence the possibility of a seventh epoch which itself will form the end of these post-Atlantean cultures and will know completely different conditions of life from our own. This seventh epoch will end with a revolution of the elements, similar to the one that brought an end to the Atlantean continent. The condition of the earth that will then appear will have a spirituality prepared through the last two post-Atlantean epochs.

The Aryan cultures encompass seven great epochs. We see the laws of evolution slowly unfolding. Human beings always carry within themselves what they will see around them in future times. All that presently exists around us actually came forth from us in preceding ages when our being was still united with the earth, the moon, and the sun. This cosmic being, from which the present human being together with all the kingdoms of nature have arisen, is called in the Kabbala, "Adam Kadmon." All of the manifold forms of men and women presently represented by ethnic groups and races were contained in this human archetype.

What human beings possess today as their inner soul life, their thoughts, their feelings, will similarly be revealed externally and become the environment in which people live. The future resides in the hearts of men and women. The choice is ours to decide for a future of good or of evil. Just as it is true that the human being once left behind something that then became the world of animals, so too, what is evil in the human being will one day form a kind of degenerate humanity. At the present time we can more or less hide the good or evil within us. A day will come when we can no longer do this, when the good or the evil will be written indelibly on our forehead, on our body, and even on the face of the earth. Humanity will then be split into two races. In the same way that we encounter boulders or animals today, in the future we will encounter beings of pure evil and ugliness. When a human being's facial features become an expression of that individual's karma, then people will separate themselves according to the stream in which they apparently belong. Everything depends on whether human beings have conquered the lower nature within them or whether this lower nature has triumphed over the spirit.

Beginning in the past we can see the lines of a future reality beginning to form. To the extent that we are prepared to understand the past and to work in the present we can realize the ideal of this future reality. A new race will be formed that will constitute the connecting link between present-day humanity and the spiritualized human being of the future. But one must distinguish between the evolution of races and the evolution of souls. It lies within the freedom of every single soul to develop itself toward this external form of a race, whose character corresponds to the good that it will incarnate. Individuals will belong to this race only through the exercise of their free will and through a great exertion of their soul forces. Membership in a race will no longer be forced upon a soul, but rather it will be the result of an individual's evolution.

The meaning of Manichean teaching is that, from now on, souls should prepare themselves to transform into good the evil that will appear in its full strength in the sixth epoch. Indeed, it will be necessary for human souls to become strong enough to protect, through a spiritual alchemy, the good from the evil that will come to light.

The evolution of our planet earth will lead it back through the former phases of its development in reversed order. First the earth will unite with the moon, then a union — a reunion

— of this mixed-world body with the sun will occur. The reuniting of the moon with the earth will coincide with a high tide of evil on the earth. In contrast to this, the union of the earth with the sun will mark the beginning of blessed happiness, the reign of the chosen people.

Human beings will bear the mark of the seven great phases of earth evolution. The book of the seven seals spoken of in the Apocalypse will be opened. The woman dressed in the sun and with the moon under her feet is related to the time when the earth will be united again with the sun and the moon. The trumpets of the last judgment will sound forth, for the earth will have arrived in a devachanic condition, where tone, not light, will rule. The end of earthly evolution will stand in the sign of the Christ principle that will permeate all of humankind. Human beings will have become similar to Christ; they will gather around Christ like a multitude around the lamb, and the New Jerusalem will arise as the fruit of this evolution. It represents the crowning of the world.