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PATHS OF
EXPERIENCE
BY: RUDOLF STEINER



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PATHS OF EXPERIENCE
(PFADE DER SEELEN ERLEBNISSE)



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BY

RUDOLF STEINER

EIGHT PUBLIC LECTURES

ON PRAYER, MYSTICISM, LAUGHING AND WEeping
AND OTHER EXPERIENCES OF THE SOUL

COMPILED FROM TRANSCRIPTS UNREVISED BY THE
AUTHOR

(Given at the Architektenhaus, Berlin, 14th
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PREFACE

This is the third of three companion volumes giving a series of public lectures on psychic and similar aspects of life delivered by Rudolf Steiner at the 'Architektenhaus', Berlin during 1909 and 1910.

The first volume, now in circulation, entitled 'Metamorphoses of the Soul' contains lectures on the Mission of Art, on Anger, on Truth, on Devotion, and on Human Character, on Human Conscience, and on Egoism. The second volume, the companion to these, has just appeared and is called 'Turning Points in Spiritual History'. It has an account of Dr. Steiner's literary work in Berlin and gives his lectures on the great spiritual leaders of Humanity at turning points of evolution from the point of view of spiritual research : Zarathustra, Hermes, Buddha, Moses, Elijah, Christ.

PATHS OF EXPERIENCE

I

THE MISSION OF SPIRITUAL SCIENCE : PAST AND PRESENT

THIS year as in many past years I shall give a series of lectures on subjects related to Spiritual Science. Those of my audience who have attended any of these lectures in the past, will have no doubt in what sense I use that word. For the benefit of those who have not, let me say that it will not be my task to discuss some abstract science, such as any current psychology or theory of the soul, or yet like what is associated sometimes with the word 'Geisteswissenschaft' as the description of various departments of cultural history ; but a science which treats the spirit as something actual and real. I shall be discussing a science whose fundamental premise is, first, that men are not limited to the sphere of physical reality (including all that is experienced by the human reason and other cognitive faculties, in so far as they are associated with physical perception) second, that, in addition to such knowledge, there exists the possibility for men to pierce behind the sphere of physical phenomena and to institute

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observations which are not thrown open to the forces subjected to reason.

In this introductory lecture to-day my task will be to show you what is the place of such a spiritual science, in the life of the present ; and my method will be to demonstrate this to you by the difference between the manner of appearance of this science—which is as old as humanity itself—in the past, and the only manner which is suited to the present. When I talk of the present you will realize that I do not mean the actual immediate present and nothing else, but include all that has been concerned with spiritual life for a relatively long time, and is seen to be in full development in the immediate present.

First, it is quite clear to even the most superficial student of the spiritual life of humanity that the term ' transition period ' is one which should be used with care. As soon as we think carefully we find that we can call every period, in reality, such a period of transition. Nevertheless, there are stages in humanity's progress which do represent a sort of leap in the progress of spiritual life. Men of the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries must have a quite different relation and attitude to the whole life of soul and spirit from men of earlier times. The further we go back in the evolution of humanity, the more we shall be struck by the fact that men have had different needs, different urges and impulses and that they have always given different answers in their own selves to the problems which face them as the deepest riddles of existence.

Thus we can discover for ourselves the nature

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of these transition periods if we study individuals living during them, who, in certain ways, still have qualities of feeling and knowing and willing inherited from earlier periods of the spiritual life, but who simultaneously feel the urge to inaugurate a new age. We can find such examples at the most diverse periods of human history.

Let us take to-day an interesting personality in order to see how he deals with the riddles of man's being and all those problems which must interest man most intensely ; a personality at the dawn of modern spiritual life endowed with the inner characteristics I have just described. I will choose a thinker of the seventeenth century, who is unknown in general circles, of an age when there were numbers of such individuals, who still had the traditional manner of feeling and thinking of the Middle Ages, who still tried to ' know ' in the manner that had survived for centuries, but who nevertheless thrust their way into the cognitive urges of the new age. This individual will then be one of whose external life in history we know almost nothing. For our purposes that is extraordinarily fortunate, for anyone who has lingered with impartial observation in the realm of spiritual science, will have noticed how disturbing it is to find attached to a personality all the petty details of ordinary life included by modern biographers. In this sense we ought to be thankful to history that it has retained so little, for instance about Shakespeare : the true picture is not thus spoiled, as it is in Goethe's case, by the many details which biographers love to collect. I will therefore discuss, for our purposes, an individual who is far

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more unknown even than Shakespeare, a thinker of the seventeenth century who is of great significance for anyone who can penetrate into the history of human thinking. In Francis Joseph Phillip, Count von Hoditz and Wolframitz, who lived a solitary thinker's life in the second half of the seventeenth century, in Bohemia, we have a thinker of outstanding importance. In a little work entitled *Libellus de hominis convenientia*—I have not inquired if it has since been published in its entirety—he wrote down what were to him the vital problems which occupied his soul and which, if we sink ourselves in his soul, can introduce us to all that agitated a man at that period. In this book he discusses the great problem of our existence which occupies the centre of all our lives, the problem of the being of man. He says with all the vigour which indicates the possession of a deep impulse to knowledge, that nothing can so disorder man as not to know what his being really is.

Now Count Hoditz refers to important figures in the history of thought, for instance to Aristotle, who lived long ago in the fourth century B.C., and asks what Aristotle says in answer to this question—what the essential being of man really is. He says : Aristotle's answer is that man is a rational animal. Then he refers to a later thinker, Descartes, and puts the same question : and there the answer is that a man is a thinking being. But when he pondered and thought over these questions, he felt that these two thinkers who are the representatives of complete schools of thought can give no answer to his question upon the real being of man. For in the answer of Aristotle and

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Descartes he wanted to know *what* man is and what he is to do. When Aristotle answers that man is a rational animal, that is no answer to what man is, for his answer gives no clue to what is meant by rationality. Nor does Descartes' answer of the seventeenth century, tell what man is to do in accordance with his nature as a thinking being. For even though we may know that man is a thinking being we do not know what he must think so as to take his proper part in life, or in order to relate his thought to life.

Thus our philosopher sought in vain for an answer to what was to him the vital question of life, the answer to which if man failed to find, he must lose his bearings.

At last he came upon a solution which must strike the modern reader very strangely, especially if he is a thinker of the orthodox scientific sort ; but for our solitary thinker it was the only possible answer of which his peculiar constitution of soul was capable. It was no help to him to know that man is a rational animal or that man is a thinking being. The true reply came to him from another thinker who in his turn had it from an old tradition. In the following words he gave his answer, to which he had come by his thinking : Man is in his essence an image of God. To-day we should say that man is in essence what his whole origin in the spiritual worlds makes him to be.

The remaining remarks of Count Hoditz need not occupy us. All that concerns us is that the needs of his soul drove him to an answer, which went right beyond what man can see or can comprehend in his environment by means of his reason.

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If we consider the book more closely we find that this man had no knowledge gained direct from the spiritual world. Now if its author had been troubled by the question of the relation between sun and earth, he could, even if he had not been an observer himself, have found the answer somewhere within the empirical world, given by experience from the material collected by the new form of scientific thought. With regard to external questions of the sense-world he could have used answers given by people who had themselves investigated the questions, in their own observations and experiences. But in the experiences of his time, no answer was available to provide satisfaction with regard to the question of man's spiritual life, of his real being in so far as he is spirit. Obviously, there was no means of finding men who had themselves had experiences within the spiritual world and could then by personal experience communicate to him the properties of the spiritual world in the same way as the scientists could communicate to him the knowledge they might have on any question of the external world. He was thus driven back upon the traditions and the information contained in religious tradition. He himself refashioned what he found as tradition ; but that is typical of his whole ' soul quality'. All he could do was to strain his reason to give a new form to what had been established in the course of time or had come to him in tradition or in writing.

I may now be asked if there are any individuals at all who can answer from observation, experience and personal knowledge the questions dealing with the spiritual world.

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This is exactly the truth which in our own times spiritual science is to restore to the consciousness of man ; that the possibility does exist, as it exists in the physical world, to investigate in a spiritual world where there is no external eye, no telescope and no microscope ; and that an answer can be given from immediate experience as to the conditions of such a world which lies beyond sensible perception. We shall then realize that there was once an age,—conditioned indeed by the whole evolution of humanity—which had to employ means of its own to publish what the spiritual seeker had found in the spiritual world; while to-day we are living in a period in which it is again possible to speak of the results of spiritual investigation and in which understanding of their meaning can be found. In the interval lies the time of our solitary thinker, during which humanity rested in the course of its development into a spiritual world and for the most part used traditions and legends as the source of its knowledge and began to doubt the possibility of men rising to a supersensible world by their own forces or by developing the powers of knowledge hidden and sleeping within them. Is there any reason which compels us to declare it ridiculous to speak of such a spiritual world, of a world lying beyond the sensible world? This idea is already suggested by the study of the development of scientific knowledge. And the impartial study of the progress which we have made, this miraculous advance in the deciphering of the external world and the secrets of nature, should prove to us that there is a higher supersensible knowledge. What does that mean?

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If we study human development impartially we shall see that knowledge of the external world has, more than any other kind, developed during the process of time. How proudly many of us, and, in a way justly, point to the fact that centuries ago there was no knowledge of these things, and that the vast progress since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, ever-increasing, has given us the knowledge of many things till then unknown. For example : the sun which rises every morning and passes during the day over the heavens, rose in the same way thousands of years ago as it does to-day. What men could see in the atmosphere of the earth and in relation to the sun's course was, in former ages, as far as external perception was concerned, the same as in the time of Galileo, Newton, Kepler, and Copernicus. But what did men in those days have to say about the external physical world ? Can we say that the knowledge we have achieved to-day and of which we are rightly proud, has been won from the mere contemplation of that world ? If it could in itself give us that knowledge, it would be quite unnecessary to go beyond the data of the sense-world. But then all this knowledge should have been acquired long ago ! How is it that we know more to-day, or enjoy a different conception of the sun's position ? It is because reason and human powers of knowledge in their relation to the external world, have passed through a development, have changed in the course of hundreds or thousands of years. You can see that these powers were not the same in Greece as they have been with us since the sixteenth century.

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Such an unbiassed study shows that men have developed something which they did not previously possess, and have learned to see the external world differently because they have developed something in addition to the faculties which have reference only to the external sense-world. Hence it became clear that the sun does not revolve round the earth ; the development of their faculties of knowledge forced them to think of the earth as going round the sun. Men have developed within our time other faculties than those possessed in earlier times.

No one who is proud of the achievements of physical science and hence studies its development impartially, can have any doubt that in his inner being man has been capable of development, and that in himself he is not restricted to what one sees of forces in the external world, that his powers have changed from stage to stage until he has become what he is to-day. We must develop not only our physical powers ; there is some inner quality which enables us to reproduce the world in the new reflection of our faculties. Among the most splendid words of Goethe, the great thinker and poet, are the following (in his book about Winckelmann) : ' If the healthy nature of man works as a unity, if man feels himself within the world as in a great, beautiful, noble and splendid whole, if harmonious ease offers him a pure and free delight : then the universe, if it could become self-conscious, would rise in exultation as having reached its goal and would stand in wonder at the climax of its own being and becoming.' And again : ' Man, placed at the summit of nature,

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sees himself as a whole, which must in its turn display its own height. Thither man ascends when he permeates himself with all perfection and virtue, summons forth order, selection, harmony and meaning, and attains in the end to the creation of a work of art.'

Man can thus feel himself born out of the forces which he can see with his eyes and grasp with his reason. If he applies to this the unbiassed observation we have mentioned, even external science will make him realize that in external nature forces develop until they can be seen by the human eye, heard by the human ear, grasped by the human reason. In the same way the study of mankind will prove that something evolves within man, that his faculties of knowledge were at first asleep to external nature, that these faculties have awakened more and more until our own day, when the faculties—as they existed in antiquity in sleeping form—appear now, fully developed. It is these fully-developed forces which are man's weapon to-day and have made possible for him the great progress of external physical science.

Is it necessary then that man must halt with his inner faculties as they are at present, capable therefore only of forces which can give us a reflection of what we see outside us? Or must there not rather be other faculties and powers still asleep in man which can be developed? Is it not perfectly reasonable to wonder whether man may have hidden faculties which can be awakened? May it not be that man is not restricted to the development within him of the forces only until

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they are the reflection of the external world? May he not rather be able to develop further so that what was hidden or asleep within him receives spiritual illumination—in what Goethe calls the 'spiritual eye and ear'—so that he can perceive a spiritual world which lies behind the physical?

The idea is not extreme, if followed out with clarity, to develop faculties leading us to a supersensible world which answers the question what man really is. And if man is an image of the spiritual world, what is this spiritual world?

If we define man as an external being and meditate on his instincts and gestures, and forces, we shall see in the world about us the gestures, instincts and forces of man, in imperfect form in lower creatures. We shall be able to grasp the external manifestation of the human being as an integration of instincts, gestures and forces which we find divided up among a number of lower creatures. We can understand it because we see around us the soil from which man has developed into man. Might it not be possible to use these further developed forces to penetrate in similar fashion into a spiritual world; to see beings, things and forces as we see stones, plants and animals in the physical world? Might we not observe spiritual processes which would enlighten us on the invisible processes in the inner part of man just as we can describe the external in its relation to man?

The last few centuries have been a sort of interlude between the old type of spiritual science and the new. It was a period of rest for the greater part of mankind. There was no new

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discovery and men had to be content with working over again and again old sources and traditions. For the period this was quite right : for each period has its peculiar fundamental characteristic. The fact is that we were living in such a period of interlude, and during it men had been spiritually otherwise constituted than before and after ; men in a sense lost the habit of looking at the hidden faculties of the human soul, whose development might have led to the vision of the spiritual world. The time approached when men lost their faith and understanding of the fact that such a development of inner qualities to a supersensible knowledge was possible. One fact even then hardly admitted of denial, that man has within himself a something which cannot be seen. Surely no rational thought could lay it down that the human reason was itself something which could be observed by the outer eye ! Consequently what impartial judgment would not admit that the human faculty of knowledge is something supersensible ?

Nor did this fact ever vanish as substance of knowledge : even in the period when men had lost the habit of believing that the supersensible faculties of the soul could be developed to a stage of supersensible observation. One thinker did reduce this vision into the supersensible world to its smallest limit, and said that there was no possibility for man to pierce, by supersensible intuition, into a world which faces us as a spiritual world, in the same way as we can see animals and plants and minerals in the physical world. Yet even he, when he judged impartially, had to

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recognize that a supersensible something did exist and could not be denied.

This thinker is Kant, who therefore stands, as it were, at the end of a 'prehistoric' age—for he brought an old period of human development to its final conclusion. What does he say about man's relation to a supersensible spiritual world? He does not deny that man sees something supersensible when he looks into himself, that for this purpose he employs faculties of knowledge which are inaccessible to a physical eye, however much we may refine our physical instruments. Kant then does point to one sphere of the supersensible, the human faculties which the soul employs when it creates a picture of the external world. But he went further and said that this was all that a man could know of a supersensible world, that the only part of that world, which man could know, was the means which he employs to produce a picture of the sense-world. His meaning is in short that wherever a man turns his gaze, he can find only one thing which he can designate as supersensible, namely, the something contained in his senses in order to perceive, to grasp and understand the fact of the sensible.

In the Kantian world, then, there is no path which can lead to the observation or experience of a spiritual world. The utmost limit is to admit that the sense-world cannot be observed with sensible but only with supersensible faculties. This is in fact the only experience available to man from the supersensible world. Otherwise there is no entrance into, no vision, no experience of that world. This is in the last resort the

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important thing about Kant's philosophy. But even Kant could not deny that men, when they consider anything connected with their practical activity and functioning, can find means to react on the physical world. Even Kant realized that man does not, like lower animals, follow only instinctive impulses, in any undertaking, but follows the impulses in his soul which can raise him high above what is mere instinct. Of course no impartial thinking could refuse to see that these impulses to external action exist, since there are countless examples of men being tempted to various actions by some seductive impulse, who do not follow the temptation, but on the contrary take as their guide in action a something which cannot come from external stimulus. We need only mention the great martyrs of life who died and sacrificed all that the external world could give, for the sake of something which should lead them beyond the sense-world ; or only draw attention to the experience of every human soul, even in a Kantian sense, to the conscience which speaks to man in opposition to the temptations of the world, and forbids him to follow what tempts him, but rather follow what speaks to him from spiritual depths, an irresistible voice within the soul. Indeed, Kant was sure that such a voice did exist in man's inner being, which speaks to him in words quite incommensurate with those of the external world. The categorical imperative is Kant's name for this. But he goes on to say that man can get no further than this instrument of his soul, in order to react from the super-physical on to the physical world : for man cannot rise beyond

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that world. Man feels that duty, categorical imperative, conscience speak from within him, but he cannot penetrate into the world from which they stream. Again it is only just to the verge of the supersensible that Kant's thought allows us to climb. Everything beyond, lying in these realms from which conscience and the like speak to us, being homogeneous with the nature of our soul, is to Kant inaccessible to observation. Into them man cannot penetrate, and at most he can draw conclusions about them. We may be able to say that duty speaks to us, but, since we are but weak, we cannot carry out in its fulness the bidding of duty and conscience ; and hence we must assume that our whole being is not exhausted in this physical world, rather that it has significance beyond this world. We may hold this before ourselves as a faith, but we cannot possibly penetrate to that world. In fact we cannot enter at all into this world which is the home of the moral consciousness, the categorical imperative, conscience and duty.

As the diametrically opposite type we have another individual, the exact antithesis of Kant in all that he said from the point of view we have just mentioned : none other than the thinker-poet, Goethe. If we can properly observe the quality of their souls, we shall realize how completely these two are opposed in their attitude to these vital problems of knowledge. Goethe after absorbing all that Kant had to say about them, maintained from the depths of his own inner experience, that Kant was wrong. Kant claimed that we had only an intellectual conceptual faculty of judgment, not

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an intuitive one which might have experiences in the spiritual world. But, said Goethe, anyone who has like myself, with the whole force of his personality, exercised himself so as to work from the sense-world into the supersensible, will know that we are not limited to conclusions about it but we can in actual fact raise ourselves into that world through an intuitive faculty of judgment. Such was Goethe's reply to Kant, built on personal experience. And he admits particularly that it is rationally a monstrosity to assert the existence of such intuitive judgment ; though he remarks that his own experience proves to him the existence of this monstrosity !

Yet in this recognition of what Goethe calls the intuitive judgment, lies the very essence and kernel of what we may call true spiritual science ; for as he says, it leads us into the spiritual world, and may be developed, raised ever higher and higher, so as to lead us to immediate intuition and actual experience within that world. The fruits of this sublimated intuition of man are the content of true spiritual science, and it is this which will occupy us in further lectures : the results of this science which takes its source from the development of the hidden faculties of the human soul, which enable man to gaze into a spiritual world, in the same way that his external instruments enable him to gaze into the world of chemistry and physics.

Hence there rises the further question whether this possibility of developing hidden slumbering forces of the soul has existed at all times or if it is a peculiarity of the present.

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A study, in the spiritual-scientific sense, of the range of human history teaches us that there have existed ancient stores of wisdom, which settled down in part into those traditions which survived in the middle period I have described. The same study shows us that it is again possible to-day, not merely to proclaim the old, but to speak of what the human soul can itself achieve by development of the forces and faculties slumbering within it ; so that a healthy judgment, even in cases where men cannot themselves see into the spiritual world, can understand the statements of the spiritual researcher. The idea before Goethe, when he spoke out against Kant, is in a certain sense the beginning of the upward path of a knowledge which is to-day by no means unknown. Spiritual science therefore is able, as we shall see, to show that there are hidden forces of knowledge which ascend by different stages and penetrate ever further.

When we speak of knowledge, we generally mean knowledge of the ordinary world, concrete knowledge ; but we can also speak of imaginative knowledge—(and this is as much a technical term as the other). We can also speak of inspired knowledge and finally of intuitive knowledge. These are stages of the soul's progress into the supersensible world. They are also stages which the soul passes through in the individual spiritual researcher. In days gone by they were also the paths of development. But spiritual research has no meaning if it is to be the possession of a few ; it cannot limit itself to a small circle. In everyday knowledge any statements about the nature of

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plants or about processes in the animal world can be put at the disposal of the whole world even if they are in themselves the possession of only a few botanists, zoologists and other scientists. But spiritual research is different ; it deals with questions that are the peculiar need of every individual soul, with questions that are related to the inmost joys and sorrows of the soul, by the knowledge of which man is enabled to endure his destiny, to endure it, too, in such a way that he is filled with inner contentment and bliss even if he is afflicted by sorrow and suffering. Spiritual science deals with those questions, failure to answer which leaves men desolate and empty. Its problems are not such as can be answered only for the narrowest circles, but concern us all, at whatever stage of development and culture we may be, because the answer is spiritual food for each and all.

This, too, has always been the case. If then spiritual science is to have a message of this sort, it must speak in terms which can be universally understood, understood by all who wish to understand it : that is, it must be directed to those forces which are fully developed at each stage of civilization, so that the spiritual researcher may arouse in his hearer a reflection of what he has to impart. Since humanity changes from age to age and is always acquiring new psychic qualities, it is natural that spiritual science once had very different opinions towards these burning psychic questions than it has now. In remotest antiquity it spoke to a humanity which would never have understood its message had that been delivered in terms suitable to-day ; since the psychic qualities

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which are developed to-day were then non-existent. If the terms appropriate to the present day had been used, it would have been as if we now talked to plants. Hence in those days other means had to be employed ; and if we look back to that past, spiritual science itself teaches us that in order to give an answer in a form which would be intelligible to men of the time, a different preparation was necessary even in those who trained themselves for vision in the spiritual world ; they had to develop in their own soul other qualities than are needed to-day, if the message is to be understood by men constituted as they now are.

Men who develop the forces which slumber within the soul, in order to observe the spiritual world and to see there the spiritual beings, as we can see stones, plants and animals in the physical world, are to-day and have always been called by spiritual science the ' Initiates ', and the path which the soul has to take in order to achieve this vision of the spiritual world is called ' initiation '. But the path to this initiation was different in days gone by from what it is to-day ; and it is different in this modern age because the mission of spiritual science is always different. The old process of initiation which men had to pass through in order to speak to the humanity of their age, led them also to immediate vision in the spiritual world. They could see into realms around man which are higher than those we can perceive with our senses. But what they saw had to be transformed and understood in a symbolic, concrete picture. The old initiates could only express what they saw in picture form ; but these pictures embraced

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everything of interest to people in their world. These concrete pictures of a real experience are preserved to us in the myths and legends which are handed down to us in the most varied forms and dealing with the most varied peoples. It is only by the superficial mind of the academic thinker and not by true research that they are regarded as having their origin in folk fantasy. To those who know the facts, myths and legends are taken from the visions of the spiritual researcher, and in every single genuine myth we have to see an external picture of what he has experienced in his spiritual observation: in Goethe's words, what he has seen with the spiritual eye or heard with the spiritual ear. We can only understand myths and legends when we grasp them as images of a real knowledge of the spiritual world.

They are in the first place the pictures by means of which the widest circles of the whole people were reached. For it is a mistake to imagine, as we do nowadays, that the human soul has always been what it happens to be in this century. The human soul has changed; and its methods of receptivity were formerly quite different. It was satisfied then if it received the picture given in the myth; for it was inspired by that picture to see what met it in the outer world in much more immediate fashion. To-day myths are regarded as fantasy; but in former times when the myth sank into the soul, it experienced something which could unravel the secret of human nature. When the soul looked to the clouds or the sun, the result was inevitably that there appeared before its eyes

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what the myth had given. For a limited number then, what might be called a higher knowledge was given in symbolic form. While to-day we talk and must talk in straightforward fashion, it would be impossible to express in our peculiar psychical forms what the soul of the old initiates experienced ; for neither the initiate nor the audience had these forms. These forces were only developed later. No expression was of use unless concrete pictures were employed. These pictures are preserved in a literature which strikes us to-day as very strange. Occasionally, especially if we have a certain curiosity as well as a desire for knowledge, we may come upon an old book in which are given remarkable pictures expressing for instance, the inter-relation of the planets, triangles, etc. Anyone who comes to these pictures with the forces of cognition as they are developed to-day, will be bound to wonder unless he has trained his own soul to take a certain pleasure in these things, what we are to do with all that stuff ; what we are to understand by the ' Key of Solomon '—that symbolic figure with its interlocking triangles—and others like it.

The spiritual researcher will agree, that from the point of view of our present-day culture these things really are meaningless. But at the time when they were first created, they aroused certain feelings in the soul. To-day the human soul is different ; for in an age, when our soul has had to develop, so that it may give the ordinary answer to the questions of nature and of life which we give nowadays, the soul cannot remain open to the inner impulse to observe the earlier type of thing,

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and to feel what in the past was felt in observing the two interlocking triangles, the one pointing upwards and the other downwards. In former times this picture could literally rouse a definite response in the soul. Just as nowadays the eye can look into a microscope and see the cells of a plant which are invisible without it, so these figures served as instruments of the soul. To hold the so-called 'Keys of Solomon' as an idea before the soul meant to have a glance into the spiritual world. But our souls are no longer capable of that ; and so the secrets of the spiritual world which are handed down in these old documents cannot be now in the same degree knowledge ; and if we try to publish it, in this or even in the past century, as knowledge—we are violating reality. That, too, is the reason why you will not be able to achieve anything with the writings, for instance, of Eliphas Levy ; for to our present age it is antiquated to explain the spiritual world by these symbols. In the past, however, it was the proper nature of spiritual science to speak to the human soul either in the mighty pictures of the myths, or in such symbols.

Then came a time in which other methods were needed ; the interval in which the knowledge of the spiritual world was handed from one generation to another in written or oral tradition. Even if we only study external life, we can show how it was handed down. There was, for instance, a certain sect in North Africa at the time of the beginning of Christianity, called the Therapeutæ. It was said of this sect by a man who was initiated into their doctrine that they possessed the

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primeval knowledge of their founders, who could themselves still see into the spiritual worlds ; what their successors could only read in the documents transmitted to them ; or at least what could be perceived by those who through their constitution of soul had developed spiritually. When we pass to the Middle Ages we find it emphasized that certain outstanding spirits have, in addition to the ordinary reason, other cognitive faculties, which can rise to the comprehension of certain problems of existence ; yet even then there remain certain secrets and mysteries which have to be revealed, and since they cannot be seen merely by such faculties, the answer has to be sought only in ancient writings.

Hence came the great gulf in medieval men between that which can be known by the reason and that which has to be known by faith because it is revealed in tradition. The division, moreover, quite in keeping with the times, was very definitely marked. Yet it was only for that period that it was justified, for the time had passed when mathematical signs could be used, and understood by the soul in concrete form, in order to create cognition in the soul. That period passed and until our own times the soul had only one means of grasping the supersensible, the vision turning inward : as was partially the case for instance with St. Augustine.

Man had lost the faculty of seeing in the outer world anything which could reveal deep inner secrets ; he could see no more in the symbols than fantasy. One thing did survive : that the supersensible world in its central essence corresponded

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with that which is supersensible in man himself. One could see that man had a power of thought which is limited in time and space, whereas in the supersensible world there is a being which is All-Thought ; that man has a limited love whereas in the spiritual world there is a being which is All-Love. When the vision of the spiritual world was realized in man by his inner experience, his inner being could expand to the vision of the god-inspired nature ; for he had divine consciousness. But as for details he had to look for information from written works, for he possessed nothing in himself which could lead into the spiritual world.

Then followed the age which accomplished the splendid work of natural science ; an age in which not merely those who could attain to scientific distinction but all humanity developed forces of knowledge which can produce an understanding which extends beyond the sensible. Something within the human soul came into being which saw that the concrete picture was not the real thing, but which as a faculty of perception realizes that truth and appearance are contradictory. This something in the soul by means of which it can observe nature in other form than it appears in the physical world, will be more and more understood by those who are to-day striving upwards into the spiritual world and tell us thereafter, that in that world it is just as possible to see a spiritual world and beings as it is to see animals, plants and minerals in the physical.

The spiritual researcher has therefore to speak of spheres of thought which lie very near to present-day intelligence. We shall see how the

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symbols which formerly were means to a perception of the spiritual world, have to-day become means for spiritual development. Thus, while for instance the Key of Solomon in earlier times called forth a real spiritual perception, nowadays if the soul allows itself to be roused by what the researcher tells us, something begins to stir in the soul which develops step by step into the spiritual world. If this Something sees the spiritual world, it can speak of what it has seen in terms which are applicable to the logic of external reality. Hence present-day spiritual science or occultism must speak in language which is comprehensible to anyone who has a broad enough understanding. Anything which a spiritual scientist has to impart must be expressed in the same sort of concepts in which other sciences find expression. Otherwise due regard would not be paid to the needs of the time. It is not open to everyone of us to see immediately into the spiritual world ; but seeing that the proper forces of reason and feeling are now existent in every soul, spiritual science if it is appropriately handled can be comprehended by every one of us with our ordinary reason. We have come to a time in which it is again possible to use the words of our solitary thinker, that man is in his essence an image of the Godhead. If we want to know man in his physical nature, we observe him with reference to the realm of physical research. If we want to understand what man is in his inner being, spiritually, we observe relatively to the world in which the spiritual scientist works. We see then that man is not something which comes into existence at conception

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or birth and passes out of existence at death ; but that on the contrary man in addition to his physical existence has a supersensible one. If we understand the nature of these supersensible parts we come to a realm where there is not only faith but knowledge. So when Kant at the end of a passing age said that we can know the categorical imperative, but cannot penetrate into the realm of freedom, of divine being and immortality, he was saying what was applicable only to his own time. Spiritual science will show that we can pass into a spiritual world ; it can prove that just as the eye, reinforced by the microscope can penetrate into a world which is closed to the eye in itself, the soul when reinforced with the weapons of spiritual science, can penetrate into an otherwise closed spiritual world ; a world in which love, conscience, freedom and immortality can be known as we know animals, plants and minerals in the physical world. That is a fact and it will be expounded in the following lectures.

If we look once more to the relation between the spiritual researcher and his public and the difference in that relation in the past and present, we shall see that in the past the concrete pictures which the spiritual researcher employed acted immediately on the human soul, since what we call *to-day* the faculties of the reason and intelligence were not in existence. The pictures had an immediate effect and gave a direct vision of the spiritual world ; and the ordinary man could not use his ordinary reason to test what was told him about these pictures. There was a sort of suggestion, even an inspiration about these pictures

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which carried man along in a sort of ecstasy against which no resistance was possible. The effect was immediate, and so anyone who received some falsehood in such a picture was at the mercy of those who gave it to him. Hence it was of vital importance for anyone who rose to the spiritual world to inspire the fullest confidence and firmest faith in his reliability ; if he misused the power, he had in his hands an instrument of which he could take full advantage in the worst possible way. Thus in spiritual science there are periods of degeneration as well as of splendour during which these unreliable initiates abused their power and might. In the past the relation between the initiate and his public concerned chiefly himself. In the present—one might almost say thank God for it—it is not so. Since the change does not come at once, it is still very necessary that the initiate should be a reliable man : and in such a case we are quite justified in giving him every confidence. But men are already in a different relation to the spiritual scientist ; he has to speak, if he is to be in keeping with the demands of our age, in such a way that every unbiassed thinker is able, if he is willing, to understand what is said. We may be far from the goal when everyone who could thus understand must understand ; but reason is now for the first time the judge of what one is to perceive ; so that whoever devotes himself to spiritual science must always apply his impartial judgment.

That is the mission of spiritual science from now onwards : to rise by the development of hidden powers to the spiritual world, in the same way as

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the physiologist can use the microscope to descend into the world of the infinitesimal which the ordinary eye cannot see. Reason will be able to test the results of spiritual science as it can those of botany or physiology. A healthily functioning reason will admit that all that it says is consistent : and man to-day can realize that his reason tells him it may indeed be so and that if the reason is rightly used, he can get a glimpse of what the spiritual scientist tells him. That too is the way in which the spiritual researcher should speak if he really feels himself within the domain of his science in the present age. But there will be a transition also ; for since the means to rise to the the spiritual world are at our disposal and may be used wrongly, it is possible for many people to experience themselves in a spiritual world whose soul is not pure, whose sense of duty is not sacred and whose conscience is not infallible. But then instead of being real spiritual researchers they will be visionaries of the spiritual, thanks to their penetration into the spiritual world, but they cannot know by their own experience if their facts really are facts ; and they will necessarily impart information in keeping with their position. Since, moreover, people can only mount slowly and gradually in the practice of their reason to the understanding of what the spiritual researcher tells them, charlatanry, humbug and superstition will flourish. Yet our general situation is changing, and in a sense man has himself to blame if a mere curiosity unaccompanied by intelligent criticism leads him to follow blindly the men who pretend to be spiritually advanced. Just because

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men are too comfortable to apply their own reason and prefer a blind faith to thinking for themselves, there is the likelihood that in place of the initiate who misused his power, we may have the modern charlatan who, consciously or not, imposes on humanity not the truth but something which he himself may take to be the truth. It is possible just because we are still at the beginning of a phase of development.

Yet it is to the proclamations of spiritual science that man should apply his reason most intensely. To some extent the blame lies within ourselves if we fall victims to charlatanry and humbug : and there will be visible very lurid fruits of this, as there have already been. And of this we must take full notice when we are discussing the mission of spiritual science.

When however in these days we listen to the spiritual researcher not with a wilful, negative and sceptical judgment, but with common-sense reason, we shall soon gain an understanding how spiritual science can give people hope and consolation in difficult times and can throw light on the hardest problems of our existence. We shall begin to feel that it can solve the most difficult riddles of our being and our destiny ; we shall learn what part of ourselves is born and dies, and what is the eternal core of our being. It will most certainly be possible as we shall show in the following lectures, that given goodwill and desire to develop in themselves by taking up and working out and elaborating in themselves [*in-sich-Verarbeiten*] the information of spiritual science, people will know from their own deepest feeling

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what Goethe's words, written in youth and contained in every line which he set down in maturity, try to convey in the words of Faust, spoken in wisdom :

' The Spirit-world shuts not its portal,
Thine heart is dead, thy senses sleep ;
Up ! in the crimson day-spring, mortal,
All undismayed, thy bosom steep ! '

(1st Scene. Latham's translation.)

In the crimson dawn of the Spirit !

II

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MAN'S life swings between work and idleness. The *activity* which we are to discuss to-day and which I call asceticism or askesis is regarded, according to the preconceptions of one side or the other, either as work or as idleness. An objective unbiassed study, such as spiritual science demands, is impossible if we do not observe how what is called asceticism—in the highest sense which permits of no misuse of words—influences human life, and either furthers or damages it.

It is quite natural that most people have a wrong conception as to what asceticism really should mean. The Greek derivation of the word might designate an athlete as well as an ascetic. But in our days the word has acquired a definite connotation owing to the peculiar colouring which this manner of life obtained in the course of the Middle Ages ; and the general idea of an ascetic is that which Schopenhauer gave it. To-day, however, the term is receiving other implications through the manifold influences of oriental philosophy and religion, particularly through what we usually call Buddhism. Our task in this lecture is to find the true origin in human nature of

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asceticism ; and spiritual science, particularly as we know it from other lectures, is bound to clear up this field of discussion, the more because its fundamental idea links up with that which found expression in the Greek word ' *askesis* '.

Spiritual science and investigation, as it has been carried on here for some years, adopts a quite definite attitude to human nature. It starts with the postulate that it is never permissible in the development of mankind to say that here or there is the limit of human knowledge. The usual way of putting the question, 'What can man know, and what can he not know?' is for spiritual science misdirected. We do not ask what man can know at a certain stage for such a phase of development ; what the bounds of knowledge are for that phase of development ; what remains hidden because the capacity of human cognition does not extend thither. All these matters do not in their immediate sense concern us ; for spiritual science takes its stand on the fact of evolution, and in particular that of the human soul-forces. It maintains that the human soul can develop ; like in the seed of a plant the future plant sleeps and is called forth by the forces within the seed and those which work on it from without, thus secret forces and capacities are ever sleeping in the human soul. What we cannot know at one stage of development we may know later when we have advanced a little in the development of our hitherto hidden faculties.

Spiritual science, therefore, asks what forces for the deeper understanding of the world and the attainment of an ever wider horizon we can

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acquire for ourselves. It does not ask where the boundaries of our knowledge are, but how man can surpass the bounds of any given period by the development of his capacities. It does not, therefore, circumscribe human knowledge with a wall, but is concerned with the extension of the horizon of knowledge, in all its methods and all its ideals. Not in any vague forms of speech, but in definite terms, spiritual science shows how man can surpass the limits of knowledge which are for the moment laid down by a process in which his own consciousness has not participated. These capacities for knowledge deal in the first place only with the physical world grasped by our senses, by our reason. By means of the forces latent in the soul man is able to penetrate further into the worlds from which the senses are debarred and which reason attached to those senses cannot attain. Simply that we may from the beginning avoid the charge of vagueness I will describe quite briefly what you will find in full in *Knowledge of Higher Worlds and its Attainment*.

When we talk of passing beyond the ordinary bounds of knowledge, we must be careful not to wander off into the blue, but rather to find our way from the solid ground where we stand, into a new world. How is it to be done ?

In the normal man of to-day we have an alternation of the two conditions which we call 'waking' and 'sleeping'. Without going into details of the two conditions, we may say that for ordinary knowledge the difference lies in this, that, while he is awake man receives the stimulus to his senses and the sense-bound intellect. It

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is this stimulus which wakens his external cognition, and during waking hours he is totally given up to the external sense-world. In sleep we are removed from that world. A simple logical consideration shows that it is not irrational for spiritual science to maintain that there is a something in human nature which separates itself during sleep, from what we usually call the physical body. Attention has been already drawn in these lectures to the fact that for spiritual science the physical body, which can be seen with the eyes and touched with the hand, is only part of man. There is a second part in human nature, and this is the so-called etheric or life-body. When we are asleep, the physical and the etheric body remain in the bed ; and we separate from them what we call the consciousness body or—never mind the term—the astral body, the bearer of desire and pain, pleasure and sorrow, of impulse, and passion. In addition we have a fourth part of man, one which makes man the crown of creation : the ego. These last two parts split off during sleep from the physical and the etheric body. A simple consideration, as I said, teaches us that it is not irrational for spiritual science to declare that what we have as pleasure and pain, or the ego's power of judgment, cannot vanish during the night and be reborn anew every morning, but must remain in existence. Think, if you will, of this withdrawal of the astral body and the ego as a mere picture ; in any case it is undeniable that the ego and the astral body withdraw from what we call the physical and the etheric body.

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Now the peculiar thing is that these inmost parts of the human being, the astral body and the ego within which we experience what we call the soul experiences, sink down in sleep into an indefinite obscurity. But that is simply to say that this inmost part of the human being—of human life as we live it to-day—needs the stimulus of the external world if it is to be conscious of itself and of the external world. We may say, then, at the moment of falling asleep, when this stimulus ceases, and when the force ceases which keeps consciousness active, man cannot develop consciousness in himself. But if, in the normal course of his existence, man were able so to stimulate the inner parts of his being, so to fill them with energy and inner life that he had a consciousness of them even when there were no sense-impressions and the sense-bound intellect was inactive and free from the stimulus of the external world, he would in that case be able to perceive other things than those which come ordinarily through the senses. However strange and paradoxical it sounds, it is yet true that if we could reproduce a condition which on the one hand resembles sleep and yet on the other is essentially different from it, we could reach supersensible knowledge. The resemblance to sleep would be in the fact that we should not be dependent on external stimulus, the difference on the other hand is that we should not then sink into unconsciousness but, in spite of all absence of stimulus from the external world, should evolve a vivid inner life.

Man can, as may be shown from spiritual

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experience, come to such a condition, to a condition, if the word is rightly used, of clairvoyance. I will give you an example out of the countless practices possible by which that condition can be attained.

If we wish to experience this condition safely we must always start from the external world. That world gives us ideas through the senses, which we call the truth, if we find that these ideas correspond with external objects and with reality. But such a truth cannot raise us above external reality. Our task, therefore, is to bridge the gulf between external perception and a perception which is independent of the senses, and yet can give us the truth. One of the first stages to be practised in order to attain this form of knowledge is the so-called symbolic or picture idea. Let us examine as an example a symbol which is of use for spiritual development, and let us expound it in the form of a conversation between a teacher and his pupil.

In order to make his pupil understand such a symbolic idea the teacher might speak as follows : 'Think of the plant, how it is rooted in the earth and grows from it, sends forth green leaf after leaf and develops to flower and fruit.' (I may say that we are not concerned here with any ordinary scientific ideas, for as we shall see we are not discussing the essential difference between man and plant, but trying to attain a useful concrete idea.) The teacher may say, 'And now look at man as he stands in life before us. He has certainly much which the plant has not got. He can produce in himself impulses, desires, emotions, a whole life

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of ideas, which can lead him up the ladder from blind sensation and instinct to the highest moral concepts. If we compare man and plant, only a fantastic natural science could attribute a similar consciousness to plant and man. But to balance this dissimilarity the plant has on a lower level certain advantages over man. The plant has a certainty of growth, without possibility of error, whereas with man at any moment we can see the possibility of deviation from his proper place in the world. We can see how man in his whole structure is permeated with instincts, desires and passions which may bring him into error, delusion and falsehood. The plant, on the contrary, is in its substance untouched by these things ; it is a pure, chaste being. Nor can man hope to be as pure on his higher level as the plant is in its certainty and security on the lower, until he has purified his whole life of instinct and desire.' Then we can pass to a further picture. The plant is permeated with the green colouring matter which we call chlorophyll, which steeps the leaves in green colour. Man is permeated with the vehicle of instincts and emotions, his red blood. That is a sort of evolution upwards, and in its course man has had to accept things with which the plant is not troubled. Man must then, as it were, set before himself the high ideal of attaining some day, on the corresponding level, the supreme ideal of inner purity, certainty and self-control of which we have a picture at a lower level in the plant. So we may ask what we must do in order to rise to that level. Man must become lord and master of all the turmoil of instinct and passion and emotion

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within him. He must rise beyond himself, kill within him what normally dominates him and raise to a higher level what is dominated by the lower. That is how man has developed from the plant, and all that has been added to him since the plant stage he must regard as something to be conquered, even to be killed. That is the process of man's future which Goethe described in the splendid lines :

*' . . . Und so lang du das nicht hast,
Dieses : Stirb und werde !
Bist du nur ein trüber Gast
Auf der dunklen erde ! '*

*'As long as thou has not got this,
Die and be born anew !
Thou art but a sad guest
On our dark earth ! '*

This does not mean that man must kill his instincts and emotions, but that he cleanses and purifies them by removing their mastery over him. Thus as he looks at the plant he can say that there is something in him which is higher than the plant, but which has to be conquered and destroyed within himself.

As a picture of what we have to overcome in ourselves let us take the part of the plant which is no longer capable of life, the dead wood ; and let us set this wood in the form of a cross. The next task is so to purify and cleanse the red blood which is the vehicle of our instincts, impulses and emotions that it may be a pure expression of our higher

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being, of what Schiller meant when he spoke of 'the higher man in man'. This blood, then, becomes the symbol of the pure sap which pours through the plant.

Thereupon (thus would the teacher continue), 'Let us look at a flower in which this sap, rising unceasingly from step to step through the leaves, finally forms itself into the colour of the flower, in the red rose. Picture the red rose as being an image of your blood when it is cleansed and purified : the sap of the plant pulses through the red rose but leaves it without desire or passion ; but your passions must become the expression of your purified ego.' We fill in the picture of the wood of the cross which symbolizes what we must overcome by a garland of red roses which we hang upon this cross. This gives us a picture, a symbol, which appeals not only to our abstract reason, but, together with the stirring of all our feelings, gives us an idea of human life as it may be sublimated into higher forms.

I shall, of course, be told that this is an invention which does not correspond to any real truth ; all this that you conjure up, the black cross and the red roses, is a mere illusion and fancy. I admit it ; undoubtedly this picture as it is put before the eye of anyone who is trying to rise to spiritual worlds, is an illusion. The purpose of the picture is not put before us a sense-impression of what exists externally. If that were all its function it would not be worth our while ; we should be satisfied with the impressions which come to us from without, the images of which we need only create. But the other picture, though

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it contains elements from the external world, is based on certain feelings and ideas of our own inner being. The most important thing is that we should be fully conscious of each step so that in all we do we may keep firm hold of the threads of our inner processes ; otherwise we should be lost in illusion. If we want to rise to higher worlds by inner meditation and contemplation, we shall not live in abstract pictures, but in a world of ideas and feelings which comes into existence while we make these pictures real before us. These then arouse a series of psychic processes, and by the exclusion of any external stimulus the observation of them becomes the focus of all our activities. These pictures are not meant to reflect outside conditions, but to awaken forces which are at present asleep within us. We shall notice, if we persevere and are patient enough—for it is a long business before the result is attained—that quiet surrender to such pictures can give us a something which needs to be developed. We shall see that our inner being really is transformed and that a condition does arise which actually is akin to sleep. But while sleep is associated with the complete submerging of all ideas and life in the soul, the kind of surrender I have mentioned, through meditation, arouses the activity of inner forces. We feel quite soon that an inner transformation takes place, that an inner life is stirred, even though there are no impressions from the external world. Thus it is possible by means of these wholly unreal symbols to awaken inner forces, and we realize very soon that we can use these forces for concrete purposes.

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You may object again : that is all very well, but even if we do develop these forces and really penetrate into the spiritual world, how can we be sure that what we perceive is reality? Nothing can prove this except experience, just as the external world can only be proved to exist by experience. Mere concepts are very rigidly distinguished from perception, and we shall never confuse the one with the other, if we keep ourselves on the firm ground of reality. For particularly in philosophical circles there is much lack of clearness. Schopenhauer, for instance, in the first part of his philosophy starts with the assumption that the world of man is a concept. Now you can see the difference between a percept and concept by looking at your watch. As long as you are in contact with your watch, that is percept ; if you turn round you have a picture of the watch within yourself ; that is concept. In practical life we shall very soon learn to distinguish between percept and concept ; if we could not, we should go badly astray. You have heard of the other example before : if you imagine a red-hot iron, however hot it is, you will not be burned, but if you touch it, you will soon realize that percept is something more than a mere concept. It is the same with the Kantian example, which is in some ways a valid one, but in the last century has been a source of much error. Kant tried to upset a certain concept of God by showing that between the idea of a hundred shillings and a hundred real shillings, there is in content no difference. All the same, we must not maintain that there is no difference in the content, however easy it is to

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confuse the actual perception and immediate contact with the mere idea. Anyone who has to pay a debt of a hundred shillings will soon enough find out the difference.

It is the same with the spiritual world. When we rouse the forces and faculties which are latent within us, and when a world is around us which we have not known before, which shines from out a dark spiritual depth, it is conceivable that the mere amateur should say that this is all illusion and auto-suggestion. But if we have real experiences on this level, we shall easily be able to decide between what is reality and what is mere imagination : indeed in exactly the same way as in ordinary life we can distinguish between real and an imaginary hot steel.

It is possible then to call forth another sort of consciousness ; and it is only in a very summarized form that I have given you an example of how inner exercises can bring out the sleeping faculties of the soul. Of course while we are still practising towards this end, we do not actually see any spiritual world ; we are too preoccupied with bringing out those capacities which we are training. In some circumstances this lasts not merely years but a whole life or lives. But in the end these exercises do lead to the awakening of the sleeping forces to the spiritual world, in the same way as we have learned to adapt the eye, with the help of unknown spiritual forces, to the observation of the external world. This training of the soul, this evolution of the soul into a world in which we are not yet living, which is to be perceived by the developed faculties, to which one

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gains access by what one brings to it, this training of one's own soul may be most justly called '*askesis*'. For in Greek the word means 'training oneself', to make oneself fit for something to transform latent forces into real ones. That is the original meaning of the word '*askesis*' and it may still be the meaning to-day if we refuse to place a mist before our eyes and be led astray by the false use of the term which has become common in the last centuries. Yet we shall only understand the word properly if we remember that the purpose of the training is the unfolding of these forces.

Now that we have discussed *askesis* in relation to the spiritual world only, it will help to a further understanding if we apply it to certain external conditions of our life. Then it can lead to the development of these forces in such a way that they are not yet entirely applicable to their immediate object, but are called forth so as to be only later used in relation to their true object. There is an example close at hand for the real use of the word ; and this will also help us to see why the word falsely used can have a harmful result. It would be a true use of the word to apply it to military activity during manœuvres ; that is wholly in keeping with the Greek usage. The way in which military measures are carried through in order to test if they would be available in real war, and to see if they are available in the right degree, is a form of *askesis*, of exercise. As long as forces are not used for the immediate object for which they exist but to test their efficiency and reliability in advance, we have

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askesis ; manœuvres bear the same relation to real warfare as askesis does to life in general.

Human life, I said, swings from work to idleness. But there are intermediate stages : for instance, play. Play is in all cases, when it really is play, the opposite of what we call askesis. And from its contrary we can learn something of the true quality of askesis. Play is the setting into action of certain faculties with immediate satisfaction in the outer world. The material of our play is not the hard surface of the ordinary world in which we work as a general rule ; it is a soft, malleable material, which is amenable to our capacities. Play is only play as long as we do not knock up against the resistance of outer forces as we do in work. Play is concerned with an immediate relation to forces which are thereby transformed, and in the functioning of these forces lies the satisfaction of the play. Play does not prepare us for something, it rather finds its fulfilment in itself. Exactly the opposite is the case with askesis if taken in the right sense. Here there is no satisfaction with an outer world. Whenever we combine things in the course of askesis, even if it is only the combination of the cross and the red rose, the significance does not lie in the thing itself, but in what we call forth in the living play of our faculties : what occurs within us and can find its proper application only when it is complete in ourselves. The renunciation comes because we put into motion an inner activity, with the consciousness, not that we are not to be stimulated by the external world, but are to work upon ourselves with the object of

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bringing forces into play which may later be applied in that world. Thus play and askesis are definite contraries.

Now how does this which we call askesis show itself practically in human life? Let us keep to a sphere where the word may be used in both the good and the bad sense, and take an instance from the intrusion of a supersensible world, when a man has set it before himself to ascend into a spiritual world. Then if a supersensible world, through some means or other, comes within his purview, whether through another person or through some historical document, he may maintain at first that these are statements and traditions about the supersensible world, but that they are not immediately comprehensible to him, for he has no power to see their meaning. Another may say that he will not accept these assertions; he will have nothing to do with them. He rejects askesis in the fullest sense, and does it because he feels no power in his soul which can use the means I have described in order to develop the highest in himself. He feels too weak for it.

I have again and again emphasized that it is not at all necessary to be clairvoyant in order to understand the results of such clairvoyance in a spiritual seer. It is necessary to have clairvoyance in order to find out spiritual facts, but when once the facts are discovered, we can understand what is told, by the free use of reason. Impartial reason and healthy intelligence are the best instruments for judging anything we are told of as coming from the spiritual world. A true spiritual scientist would be honest in saying that there is nothing he

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fears so much as to have an audience who accept what he says without examining it most carefully with their reason, but he is never afraid of those who use an unwarped intelligence. For it is the use of the intelligence which makes all the results of spiritual science comprehensible.

Still, a man may feel too weak to call out of himself the forces necessary for the understanding of what he is told from the spiritual world. If that is really the case he rejects what he is told through an instinct of self-preservation which is wholly suited to him ; and it would be wrong for him to accept any such communications. He feels this unconsciously. And in all cases when people reject what they are told by spiritual science, it is the instinct for self-preservation which is acting through them, a knowledge that they are incapable of doing these exercises—that is, of askesis in the true sense. This instinct works more or less as follows ; it feels that if these things are true, they would throw everything into confusion, and if they entered the consciousness, they would swamp and incapacitate it ; and for this reason they are rejected. This is the case with materialistic thinking which refuses to advance an inch beyond the doctrines of a science which is imagined to be firmly rooted in reality.

But there are other possibilities : And here we come to a dangerous corner along the path of askesis. People may have a sort of avidity for information about the spiritual world, without having the inner urge and conscience to test everything by reason and logic. They may have a passion for sensationalism that drives them on.

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They accept what they are told ; and in this case it is not the instinct for self-preservation which works, but its opposite, a sort of instinct of self-annihilation. For if we take anything into our souls without full understanding and if we do not apply our reason fully to it, it will swamp us ; and such is the case with any statements about the spiritual world which we accept only on another man's authority. This acceptance on authority corresponds to a form of askesis which has its source not in a healthy instinct of self-preservation but in a morbid instinct of self-annihilation, a desire to drown in the swirl of all that is told. There is, moreover, a significant counterpart to this in the human soul : the wrong form of askesis, when a man throws up the sponge, renounces all effort and prefers to live in faith and reliance on others. This attitude has existed in many forms and at different epochs. Still we must not assume that everything which looks like blind faith is so ; for instance, when we are told that in the Pythagorean schools it was a standing phrase, ' The master said it ', the meaning was not that he had said it and therefore it must be believed ; but that the master says it and therefore, for his pupils, the demand is made that they should think, and see how far they can follow if they exert all their forces. Faith need not always be a blind belief based on the instincts of self-annihilation. It is not of necessity blind faith when we accept statements about the spiritual world trusting the word of some individual. We may, for instance, have experienced that the man who tells us them takes his duty seriously, that he

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expresses what he says in the strictest logical form, that in other spheres where we can test his words, we find him logical and never illogical. Thus as a result of the observation of what we can follow we may have the just conviction that even when he is discussing what we ourselves do not know he is on equally sure ground. We can use our own minds, so as to realize that what we have been told by a man in whom we have confidence, may be a guide to raise us to the faculties which will explain themselves to us, when we have worked our way to them.

If this healthy foundation of trust is lacking and we renounce the will to comprehend, and allow ourselves to be stirred by communications from unseen worlds without really trying to understand them, the result is a very wretched condition. This is an evil which we cannot reconcile with askesis. Whenever we accept something in blind faith in another's word without making the effort to understand it and to grope our way through it, if, that is, we accept blindly another's will in place of our own, we shall gradually lose the healthy faculties which form a sound centre for our inner life and which build up a foundation for all our feeling as to right life. Lies and error arise in those of us who refuse to test things for ourselves or to allow reason to decide for us ; we tend to be drowned, to sink, to lose the ego in what we take as given. If we do not allow the sound sense for truth to direct us, we shall very soon notice how we fall victims to lies and deception even in the real world. We need to ponder very seriously that, when we approach spiritual

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worlds, we may by this surrender fall into a life which has lost all real sense of truth and reality. If we take this exercise seriously, and train our faculties, we must always put before our souls the sort of knowledge which I have been describing.

We can now penetrate further into what we may call the ascetic training of the soul in a deeper sense. So far, we have only considered people who are not incapable of developing these inner forces in a healthy manner. In the one case it was a sound instinct of self-preservation which made him refuse to develop these forces because he did not want to develop them ; in the other case he did not absolutely refuse to develop these forces, but he refused to use judgment and intelligence. In both cases the impulse is to remain on the old level, at the old standpoint. But let us assume another case where a man really does try to develop these inner faculties, and uses such forms of training as have been described. Again there may be a double result. In the first place there may be the result which we aim at in spiritual science where it is taken seriously and worthily. We can then only be guided to the unfolding of these forces in proportion as we are capable of making some use of them, and indeed of making right and proper use of them. That is, we have on the one side, as I have described at greater length in my *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*, the training of a man himself, of the activity necessary to create the faculties which will open the spiritual world to his gaze. But simultaneously there must be the possibility to discipline the faculties and establish an equilibrium between

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what we develop within ourselves and what we take from the outer world. If we do not apply to the handling of the external world the forces which we develop within us, but give way to an uncontrollable desire to develop all possible movement in the soul, which gives birth to spirit-eyes and spirit-ears, and if yet we are too lazy to give adequate and careful attention in calm and thoughtful effort to the facts of spiritual science which lie before us, askesis may well have harmful results. We may develop all sorts of capacities and faculties and not know what to do with them, or how to apply them in the external world. This is, in fact, the consequence of many forms of training, and particularly that which develops faculties without learning how to apply them. That is true, too, for men who are not careful to use in their training the methods which have been described, so that the soul may be increasingly strengthened. There are other methods with a different object, easier perhaps, but they may lead to all sorts of mischief. Such methods aim at the removal of obstacles which press upon the soul through the body, in order that we may thus reach an inner life. The removal of these obstacles was indeed the only object of medieval askesis, which still survives to-day. Instead of the true askesis which aims at giving the soul an ever richer content, false askesis leaves the soul as it is and simply sets out to weaken the body and lessen the effects of bodily activity. There are indeed means of damping down the activity of the body so that its functioning is less vigorous than in ordinary life. The result then may be

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that the soul which has remained weak does gain the upper hand of the already weakened body. Thus while with a proper askesis the body remains what it is, and the soul becomes master of the body, the other sort leaves the soul as it is, but by means of all sorts of fasts or mortification weakens the body in its normal processes, so that the soul is then stronger and can attain a sort of consciousness although it has not increased its own powers. That is the common attitude of asceticism in the Middle Ages ; it kills off the vigour of the body, lowers its vitality, leaves the soul as it is and raises it to a condition of expectation in which it is to receive, from outside, without its own co-operation, the content of the spiritual worlds.

That is the easier method, but it is not the one which can strengthen us. A true method demands that we should cleanse and purify our thinking, feeling and willing, that we should strengthen them so as to be victorious over our body. The other method lowers the pitch of the body, and the soul is to wait till, without any addition of new capacities, the god-filled world streams into it.

It is this which leads to estrangement and separation from the world, and it cannot help doing so : you will find references enough in the Middle Ages to this sort of ' *askesis* ' (asceticism). In our present stage of development there is a relation between our forces of perception and the external world ; and if we want to rise beyond the present conditions of mankind, we can only do it by raising the forces within us, so that with these

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enhanced powers we may grasp the external world more deeply and significantly. If, however, we lower our normal forces and make ourselves incapable of the ordinary relations to the external world, especially if we make the effort to damp down our thinking and feeling and willing, so that the soul passes into a state of expectation, then the soul is given something which is out of touch with the present world, which makes us strangers, useless for the ordinary work of the world. While the true askesis makes us always more and more useful to the world because we see always deeper and deeper into the world, the other sort which is associated with the suppression of bodily functioning, tends to withdraw us from the world, to make us hermits and to isolate us ; and in this isolation on our little soul island, we may see many spiritual psychic things—that need not be denied—but such askesis is of no use to the world. Askesis is work, training for the world, and not a withdrawal into isolation from the world. This does not, of course, mean that we must at once go to the other extreme ; we may meet the other half-way. Even if it is generally true that in the present period of humanity there is a normal relation between the external world and the forces of our soul, yet on the other hand it is true that each age, as it were, drives the 'normal' to extremes, and that if we want to develop higher faculties than the normal, we need take no notice of the opposition which comes from abnormal currents. Just because the opposition is found to a certain extent even within ourselves, we can under some conditions go further than

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would be legitimate if our age were not on its side also sometimes in the wrong.

One of the reasons for my saying this is that you have probably heard that followers of spiritual science lay much stress on a certain diet. This does not in the least imply that such a mode of life can achieve anything for the attainment or understanding of higher levels of life and higher worlds ; it can be no more than an external instrument and should not be taken as anything else, than that those who want to win an understanding of higher worlds do find resistance in the manners and conventions of the time in which they live. Because these conventions have dragged us too far down into the material world, we must, in order to make the exercises easier, go beyond what would be necessary in 'normal' circumstances. But it would be quite wrong to regard this as a form of askesis which can be of service in leading us to higher worlds. Vegetarianism will never lead anyone to higher worlds ; it can only help us when we take it as being of some assistance if we want to open certain gates to the spiritual world ; for since we have an obstacle in our own body, the exercises are prevented from attaining their due effect ; and therefore we, as it were, lighten the corporeality by a special diet. But vegetarianism is no dogma ; it is only a means, in certain cases, of facilitating an understanding of spiritual worlds. It is quite wrong to imagine that in itself it can give us any such understanding. It leaves the soul as it is and only weakens the body. But if the soul on its side is strengthened, it will in its turn, by means of vegetarianism, be

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able to strengthen the weaker body from its enhanced centre of forces. Hence anyone who develops spiritually by means of vegetarianism, will be stronger, more efficient and more capable of dealing with life, and will be able not merely to equal any meat-eater but be his superior in real efficiency. But this comes from the opposite result to that which is imagined by those who criticize vegetarians within the spiritual movement, and pity these poor people for not enjoying their little bit of meat.

If we kept to that attitude, there would not be the slightest advantage in vegetarianism. As long as we have a desire for meat, the result is nil, and it is only when we get to a certain attitude, which I will illustrate by a short story that we can expect results. Some time ago someone was asked why he did not eat meat, and he retorted with a counter-question why his questioner did not eat cat's or dog's meat. The obvious reply was that we cannot do that. 'But why?' 'Oh, because it is disgusting.' 'Well, that is the feeling I have about all meat.'

That is the attitude necessary. When the pleasure in eating meat has ceased, there may be some use, for the purposes of the spiritual world, in abstention. Until then, to get out of the habit of eating meat can only be of help towards getting rid of the desire for it. If the desire for it does not decrease, it may be better to start eating it again ; for continual worrying about it is by no means the way to get to an understanding of spiritual science.

This will show what distinguishes true from

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false askesis. False askesis very often attracts people who have nothing but the wish to develop the forces and faculties of soul ; for they are not worried to know the reality of the external world. Their object is really no more than to develop these faculties and then wait and see. This is supposed to be best if the body is harassed as much as possible, for that makes it weak ; so that the soul, though it too remains weak, can see into some spiritual world—however useless the soul may be for the actual understanding of a spiritual world. This is, however, the path of deception ; for at the moment when we bar our return to the physical world, it is no real spiritual world which we see, but only what we may call the delusive pictures of our own selves. It is these that confront us because we leave the soul as it is. In fact, since the ego remains at the point where it always stood, it does not ascend to higher powers ; and we bar the proper connection with the world by repressing the functions which put us into relation with it. Nor is it merely that this askesis makes us strangers to the world ; far worse: we see pictures which our own soul can place before it, at the present stage of its advancement, but in place of a true spiritual world we see a picture which is obscured by our own self. And there is a worse consequence, of a moral sort. Anyone who fancies that he is unfolding a right form of life by humility and surrender to the spiritual world, cannot see that he is involving himself in an appalling fashion in his own self, that he is an egoist in the worst sense of the term, and that he has no desire to develop to anything

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beyond what he already is. This egoism which often degenerates into the most fearful ambition and vanity, is the more dangerous because the victim of it can never perceive it himself. Generally he regards himself as a man who sinks in deep humility at the feet of his God, while it is really the devil of his own megalomania who is tossing him about. What he should really develop in humility he rejects ; for a genuine humility would tell him that it is not where he is at the moment that he can find the forces of the spiritual world ; he must develop them and ascend to them ; nor may he rest with the forces which he already has.

So we see how this false askesis which rests on a killing-off of the external instead of a strengthening of the inner, leads to delusion, to error, vanity and self-seeking, and to all kinds of mania. In our times it would be a great evil if this course were followed as a means for entering the spiritual world. The only result of this is to involve a man in himself. Hence it is no use for us to look for our model of askesis in those who in their own times sought access to the spiritual world in some isolation of their own. To-day the only true askesis can be found in modern spiritual science which is firmly founded on the basis of reality, and so enables man to develop his own faculties and rise to a comprehension of a spiritual world, which is also itself a world of reality, and not a world in which man merely involves himself.

There is a further evil in this one-sided askesis. If you observe external nature, you will find that, as you rise from plants through the animal kingdom to that of man, the conditions of life assume

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again and again different types. If you consider the diseases of plants, you will notice that these have a completely different character from those to which animals, and also men, are subject. Diseases of plants can come only from without, through some abnormal conditions of wind and weather, of light and sunshine. These outside conditions can affect the plant. If we rise to the consideration of animals we see that they also, if left to themselves, have a far greater store of health than mankind. Man on the contrary may fall ill not only through the life in which he lives or the circumstances which come to him from without, but through everything which pours into his inner being or thence outwards. Hence if the soul is not properly adapted to the body, if what we possess as our spiritual condition from past incarnations cannot completely suit itself to the external bodily conditions, inner causes of illness may arise which are so often misjudged. So we see that inner illness may occur as a symptom that body and soul do not fit as they should. We can often see that people in whom these symptoms of maladaptation are found, have a habit of trying to rise to higher worlds, by killing off the body. The reason is that their illness in itself induces them to separate the soul from the body which has never been properly permeated by the soul. Then in these cases the body is hardened in the most various ways ; it forms itself in itself ; and since they have not strengthened their soul but on the other hand have used its weakness in order to escape the impressions of the body, thus they take from the body the health-giving, strengthening

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forces of the soul ; hence again the body has a disposition to all sorts of illness. While a true askesis will produce a reinforced strengthened soul, which reacts on the body and gives it resistance against external illness, a false askesis will make a man liable to illness coming from without.

Such is the dangerous relationship between false askesis and illness in these modern times; and it is this which gives rise in wide circles where misunderstandings easily arise on these subjects, to manifold errors about what a spiritual scientific outlook can give the world. All those who want to reach a knowledge of spiritual worlds by a false askesis offer a terrifying picture to outsiders who observe them. Their false askesis offers a wide field for the dangerous influences of the external world ; instead of being strengthened against the errors of our time they become doubly exposed to them.

We have an instance of this in many of the theosophical tendencies of the day. Merely to call oneself a theosophist is not a valid document for elevating the doctrine to the level of a spiritual impulse which is to cope with opposing influences of our time. When we have a materialism dominant in the external world, it to a certain extent conforms to the external ideas, which have to be created in the sense-world, of what is observed by the eye of the senses. Thus the materialism which has no knowledge of a spiritual world is in a way justified. But when a philosophy arises which claims to give knowledge of the spiritual world, but which, because it does not rest on a real strengthening of the spiritual forces, absorbs the

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materialistic prejudices of the time in caricature, the result is far more dangerous. Such a theosophical theory which has absorbed the error of the times may in some circumstances be more fatal than real materialism ; I might perhaps remark that materialistic ideas have penetrated most deeply into theosophical circles. In these cases spirit is spoken of not as spirit but as if it were no more than a form of nebulous matter, infinitely refined. In talking of the etheric body these people picture the physical as refined beyond a certain degree, and they talk also of an etheric 'vibration'. In the astral body these vibrations are still finer, in the mental still more refined and so on. Thus no access is ever attained into the spiritual world, and they get no further than the conceptions of the physical world. Thus it happens that materialistic phantoms rise before us even in simplest phenomena of everyday life. For instance, if we are in a situation where we feel that there is a pleasant atmosphere, and if someone present says that there is an harmonious atmosphere in the circle, it may be an everyday way of expressing it but it is true ; and it leads to a better comprehension than when in a company of theosophists one remarks on the 'fineness of the vibrations'. For this, one needs first to be a theosophical materialist and to imagine a solid sort of matter. Then if we have the right feeling, the whole atmosphere is broken up and befogged, when these vibrations start dancing about. We can see in these instances how the introduction of materialistic ideas into a spiritual philosophy produces a horrifying picture for those outsiders, who

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may then say quite justifiably : 'here are people who talk of a spiritual world, but they are really no different from us ; for in our case there dances the light-ether and in their case the spiritual-ether.' It is one and the same materialism.

We have to see all this in its proper light ; and this would prevent wrong ideas about the service which spiritual science in modern times can render. We should then see that askesis may itself be a means of strengthening the soul and leading us to the spiritual world, and inversely give us renewed strength for dealing with the physical sensible world. These forces are then not weakening forces but forces of health, for they bring health-giving forces to our physical body. It is, however, more difficult to decide if a philosophy gives health or illness, for the latter is usually obvious whereas the former escapes notice. If we are able to observe clearly we shall see how those people who stand in the stream of true spiritual science and are fertilized by it, draw health therefrom, affecting even their physical condition. We shall see too that illnesses can only appear if something from the external world which is not part of any spiritual stream is poured into that stream. Then the results are worse than when it remains outside and one is shielded by conventions from the violent effects of error.

If we take this view, we shall regard true askesis or asceticism as a preliminary training for a higher life, as a development of forces, and we shall take the old Greek word in its true sense. For askesis means training oneself, making oneself strong even adorning oneself so that one's true humanity

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can reveal itself in relation to the world. But if we take it in the sense of leaving the soul as it is and then trying to achieve something by the lowering of the physical, the soul is split off from the body, so that the body becomes liable to all sorts of harmful influences ; and then askesis becomes the source of all kinds of illnesses in the body.

The good and bad of egoism will appear before us when we come to consider 'The Nature of Egoism'.¹ To-day I hope I have shown how true asceticism depends on its working and its fruit, on its relation to the world, so that it is never an end in itself, but only a means to the attainment of a higher human aim, to a living into a higher world. Hence, if we are to approach this asceticism we must be sure that we have our feet firmly planted on the earth. We must not become strangers to the world in which we live, but must always take full cognition of that world. Then what we bring back from higher worlds to this, must be measured and judged in relation to this world ; otherwise it might be true to say that asceticism is not work but idleness : which may indeed often be the occasion of a false asceticism—and more than ever in our present world. If we are firmly established and do not lose our footing on the earth, we shall always take asceticism as our highest ideal in relation to our higher human faculties. Our ideas can mount high indeed if we have an ideal before us of the way in which human faculties should work in this world.

Let us take for a moment the opening of the Old Testament : ' And God said ; Let there be

¹ Now published in *Metamorphoses of the Soul*.

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light' ; and then further note how from day to day God makes the physical sense-world arise from the spiritual ; and at the close of each day how God is pleased when he looks at the physical world created out of the spiritual, so that he can say : It is good. 'And God saw that it was good.' From the solid ground of our healthy thinking, our solid character, our unerring feelings keep us firm, so that we can rise to higher worlds and explore the facts which have given birth to the physical world. Then when we apply the forces we have gained to the physical world and see how they fit to it, it is clear that when we, as spirit-seekers and knowers and observers, take our stand towards the physical world and see how the forces we have developed fit into that world, we too can see that it is good. If we test our forces, which we have gained as a result of true asceticism, in relation to the physical world, we acquire the right to say when we employ them, that indeed they are good.

III

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SINCE its first foundation the spiritual science movement has suffered from being confused with many other tendencies and strivings of the present day. Particularly it is accused of trying to transplant certain eastern spiritual currents, Buddhism among others, into the culture of the West. Our subject to-day must therefore prove intensely interesting, for we are to discuss the significance of the religion of Buddha on the one side and of Christianity on the other—from the standpoint of spiritual science. Any of those present who have attended my lectures in the past will know that this will be a study in the scientific sense, embracing the phenomena of the world from the point of view of spiritual science.

If we have thought at all seriously about Buddhism, we shall know that its founder, Gautama Buddha, almost always declined any question dealing with the development of the world and the foundations of our being; he refused to speak of them. He always dealt only with that by means of which man could come to an existence satisfying in itself. Thus even from this point of view no real confusion is possible

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between spiritual science and Buddhism, since the former by no means declines to consider the origins of our being on earth and the great facts of its development. And if one particular point in spiritual science is being more and more confused with Buddhism—the notion of the repeated earth-lives of man and the effect in later lives of the spiritual causation of earlier lives—it is very strange that spiritual science should be reproached with being Buddhism for copying this notion of repeated lives or reincarnations. It is strange above all because it is no concern of spiritual science to associate itself with a name but simply to deal with truth as it is accessible to-day regardless of names. If the doctrine of reincarnation and repeated earth lives is to be found among the ideas of Gautama Buddha, even if it is in quite a different form, that is just as significant for theosophy or for the spiritual science of our time as it is that the elementary foundations of geometry are to be found in Euclid. Spiritual science should be as exempt from any charge of Buddhism because it makes reincarnation one of its important ideas, as a teacher of geometry from the charge of Euclidism. Nevertheless we should emphasize that it is the task of spiritual science to test every religion—Christianity which is at the basis of our Western culture as much as Buddhism—in a spiritual scientific sense and according to its sources.

Nor is it a charge brought only by the ignorant, that spiritual science is Buddhism ; even the great orientalist, Max Müller, could not get rid of the idea—a man who played a most notable part in

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spreading the knowledge of oriental religions ; and he used the following parallel in discussing it with another writer. ' If a man were to be seen somewhere with a pig which was a good grunter, no one would be surprised at seeing a man with a grunting pig ; but if a man appeared by himself who could mimic the grunting to perfection, people would flock to him and regard him as a wonder.' In choosing this simile, he meant by the pig which grunted naturally, the real Buddhism which had then become known in Europe. This doctrine he implied attracted no attention in Europe. False Buddhism on the other hand, or as he called it, the swindle of Madam Blavatsky, met with every acceptance. This parallel is not particularly happy. Apart from the fact that it is not very happy to use the simile of a pig for the true doctrine of Buddhism which came to birth with such travail, he really meant that Madam Blavatsky had produced but a poor imitation of Buddhism. The parallel is not sound—that someone had produced a wonderful imitation of a grunting pig—for this would mean that she had created a good imitation. Very few intelligent theosophists do really think that Madam Blavatsky, who certainly deserves the credit for having set the ball rolling once more, did succeed in reproducing the true and genuine Buddhism. But that is quite unnecessary ; for it is no more necessary for a teacher of theosophy to reproduce Buddhism exactly, than it is for the teacher of Euclid to give an exact replica of Euclid.

If we want to immerse ourselves in a spiritual scientific sense in the spirit of Buddhism so that

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we may then compare its spirit with that of Christianity, it is best not to pass at once to the deepest doctrines which easily admit of varying interpretations, but to try to get an idea of its importance and significance from its symptoms, that is, from its whole attitude and general manner of thinking. It will be best for us if we keep to a document which enjoys the highest regard among Buddhists themselves, the questions of the king Milinda to the Buddhist philosopher, Nagasena.

We may recall a conversation which can give us at once, in its inner sense, the spirit of Buddhist thought. In it Milinda, the wise and powerful king, who has never been beaten by a philosopher because he could always refute any objection to his own ideas, wants to argue with the wise Nagasena about the meaning of the eternal and immortal in man, which passes from one incarnation to the next.

Nagasena asks the king : How did you come here? on foot or in a chariot? In a chariot. Now, says Nagasena, let us examine this question of the chariot ; what it is. Is the axle the chariot? No. Is it the wheel? No. Is it the yoke? No. And so, says Nagasena, we may go through all the parts of the chariot ; none of the parts is the chariot. Yet all that we have before us is the chariot, but made up of various parts. It is only a name for what is made up out of the various parts. If we except the parts, we have nothing left but the name.

The point and object of what Nagasena says in all this is, to divert the eye from what can be seen in the physical world. He wants to show that

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actually there is nothing in the physical world to constitute the thing described by a name, that thus he may prove the worthlessness and meaninglessness of the physical and sensible as far as its parts are concerned. To make the point of the whole quite clear : Nagasena means that it is the same with what constitutes man and passes from one life on earth to another. Is it head or legs which pass from one earth-life to the next ? No. Is it what you do to-day or to-morrow that goes from one earth-life to the next ? No. What is it then which we include in man ? His name and form ; just as the name and form of the chariot. If we exclude all the parts we have nothing but name ; nothing except the parts.

To bring the thing still more clearly before us let us take another comparison which Nagasena expounded to King Milinda. The king said : You say, wise Nagasena, that what passes from one incarnation to another is the name and form of what stands before me as man. Is it, then, name and form of the same being which reappear in a new incarnation, a new earth-life ? Then Nagasena said : Behold : your mango tree bears fruit. There comes a thief and steals that fruit. The owner of the tree cries : You have stolen my fruit. But the thief replies : That is not your fruit. Your fruit was sunk in the earth, and is dissolved. What grows on the mango tree, only has the same name ; but it is not your fruit. Then Nagasena continued : it is true, it has the same name and form ; it is not the same fruit. Yet one may still punish the thief when he has stolen. Thus also—said the philosopher—is it

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with what appears later in an earth-life compared with what appeared in an earlier. It is as with the fruit of the mango tree which has been planted in the earth. It is only because the owner has planted it in the earth, that the fruit grows on the tree. So we must regard the fruit as his property.

And so it is with man, with the deeds and destiny of his new life ; we must regard them as the effect and fruit of a previous life. Yet what appears is something new, just as is the fruit on the tree.

Nagasena's object therefore was to break up all that is in one earth-life, in order to show how only the effects can pass over into a later life.

This sort of thing can give us a better idea of the whole spirit of Buddhism than can the great principles which, as I said, admit of various interpretations. If we allow the spirit of such similes to work upon us, we can see plainly enough that the Buddhist wants to draw his disciple from all that stands before us as a separate ego, a definite personality ; and turn our attention to the fact that what appears in the new incarnation is indeed an effect of this personality, but that we have no right to speak of a complete and undivided ego in any true sense which can pass from one life on earth to the next.

If we pass now from Buddhism to Christianity, we can, though it has never actually been done, rewrite the simile of Nagasena in a Christian sense and put it somewhat in the following form. Say that Milinda might have arisen from death, and come back as a Christian ; then the conversation would continue, in Christian fashion, more or less

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in this way. Nagasena would say : Here is the hand ; is the hand the man ? No. For if there were only a hand there would be no man. If there were nothing but a hand, there would be no man. But if we cut the hand from the man, it decays and within three weeks would no longer be a hand. What is it, then, that makes a hand a hand ? It is the man that makes the hand a hand. Is the heart the man ? Is the heart something that exists by itself ? No ; for if we separate the heart from man, it is soon no more heart—and man is no longer a man. Thus it is man which makes the heart a heart, and through the heart man is man ; and man again is only man on earth because he has the heart as his instrument. So we have in the living organism of man various parts which as parts are nothing, and are something only in relation to us. If we then consider what the separate parts are not, we see that we must come to something which exists behind them, which keeps them together and uses them as instruments. However much we observe all the separate parts, we have still no grasp of the man, if we simply regard him as a combination of the parts. Nagasena might then return to his simile of the chariot and might say—now indeed in the Christian sense ; true it is that the axle is not the chariot, for you cannot drive with the axle. True it is, the yoke is not the chariot for you cannot drive with the yoke. True it is the seat is not the chariot for you cannot drive with the seat. Even though the chariot is but a name for the parts taken together, yet you do not drive with the parts, but with something which is not the parts with which

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you cannot drive. The name, after all, stands for something, which is in none of the parts.

Buddhistic thinking thus tries to avert the gaze from what we see in order to attain something which we do not see ; and it denies the possibility of anything significant in what is seen. The Christian attitude takes the single parts of a chariot or of anything else, and directs the mind beyond the parts to the whole. In keeping then with the manner of thought and of conception, the Buddhistic view and the Christian view have definite consequences. The Buddhist's view we can see if we carry the argument to its final conclusion. ' A man stands before us, made up of certain parts, and acting in the world, performing various deeds. To him as man, according to his Buddhist creed all that he can see is worthless. The nothingness and non-existence of all the visible is put before him. He is therefore urged to free himself from all dependence on the nothingness, that he may attain a higher and a real being. He must avert his eyes from what is visible and from all that human faculties of knowledge applied to the sense-world can tell him ; away from the sense-world. All that we see, if it passes under some name and form, is displayed in its nothingness. There is thus no truth in what lies before us in the sense-world.

What of the Christian conception ? It takes the part not as a separate part, but as something in which there is a real unity acting. The hand is only a hand because man uses it. Here things seen by us are something which points immediately to something behind them. The results

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therefore are quite different from the Buddhist ones. In this case, then, we say that when a man stands before us, he in all his parts and deeds only exists as a man because there is a spiritual being which achieves and accomplishes what he does : which both moves the separate parts and accomplishes the separate actions. What is seen and what acts in the parts, has combined into what we see, and this experiences the results and the fruits of action ; and from an experience in the sense-world it extracts what we may call a result, and this is transferred into the next incarnation, the next life. Behind the external there is an actor, an active something which does not reject the external world, but handles it in such a way that its fruits are taken from it and transferred to the next life.

As spiritual scientists in our attitude to this question on a series of earth-lives, we see that Buddhism does not concern itself with what keeps man together in one life ; only his actions have an effect in the next existence. For Christianity what holds man together in one life is a full ego, which itself carries over into the next life all the fruits of the previous one. Thus a very definite configuration of thought keeps these two philosophies apart, which is far more important than theories or principles. If in our times men were not so inclined to see theory in everything, they would more easily grasp the character of a spiritual movement from its symptoms and its attitude.

What has just been said, is connected also with the ultimates of Buddhist and Christian outlook. We have expressed the core of Buddhistic thought

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in the significant words of its founder. Now this lecture is not given in order to develop any opposition to the great Buddha ; I mean to describe the Buddhistic outlook quite objectively. It is spiritual science above all others which must show itself to be the instrument for penetrating without sympathy or antipathy into the kernel of various spiritual movements.

The Buddha legend describes clearly enough, even if in legendary form, what the founder of Buddhism meant. The story goes that Gautama Buddha was born the son of King Suddhodana, and was educated in a royal palace, surrounded only by all that can raise the level of human life. He learned nothing in his youth of human suffering or sorrow ; he was surrounded only by happiness, leisure and distraction. One day he left the palace, and for the first time all the pains and sorrows, all the dark side of human life met him face to face. He saw a diseased, plague stricken man, he saw a man withered with age ; above all he saw a corpse. Hence he thought that human life must be different from what he had been told inside the palace, where he had seen only happiness and joy, but had never seen illness and death, where he had never attained the view that life may wither and die. From what he then saw he formed the idea that the true life includes pain and suffering. It weighed heavily on Buddha's soul that life held pain and death, as he had seen them in the sick man, the old man and the corpse.

For, he thought, what is the value of life, as it has shown itself to me, if it holds in itself old age, illness and death ? This then gave birth to the

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monumental doctrine of Buddha, of the suffering of life which he put into the words : Birth is suffering ; old age is suffering ; illness is suffering ; death is suffering. All existence is full of suffering. That we cannot always be united—this is how Buddha himself later developed his teaching—with those we love, is suffering. That we must be united with what we do not love is suffering. That we cannot attain in every sphere of life what we want and what we desire, is suffering. Thus there is suffering everywhere. Even if the word suffering has not quite the same meaning as it has in our times, yet it does mean that everywhere man is exposed to things which come upon him from without, against which he can unfold no active force. Life is suffering ; and thus we must inquire what is the cause of suffering.

Then there arose before his soul the manifestation which he called the thirst for existence, for being. If, wherever we look there is suffering in the world, then it is clear that man must meet with suffering as soon as he enters this world. What is the reason that man must suffer. The reason is that he has a thirst, a desire for incarnation in this world. The passion to come from a spiritual world into a physical corporeal existence, and to know the outer world of the physical ; there lies the reason for the suffering of human existence. Thus there is only one way of redemption, to fight the thirst for existence. This is possible if we develop in ourselves, in the sense of the great Buddha, the eight-fold path, which is usually declared to mean right views, right aspiration, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood,

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right effort, right mindfulness and right meditation. This, the right grasp of life, a right placing of oneself in life, produces something which after a time leads man to kill off the desire for existence, and in the end brings him so far that he no longer needs to descend into a physical incarnation, and is saved from an existence which contains suffering everywhere. This is what Buddha calls the four holy truths :

- 1 the knowledge of suffering ;
- 2 the knowledge of the causes of suffering ;
- 3 the knowledge of the need to end suffering,
and
- 4 the knowledge of the means to end suffering.

These are the four holy truths which, after his illumination under the Bodhi tree, he proclaimed in his great sermon at Benares in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.

Release from the sufferings of existence ; this is what Buddhism puts in the forefront. This is what allows us to call it a religion of redemption, in the truest sense, from the sufferings of existence ; and because all being is associated with suffering, release from existence, that is, from the cycle of rebirth.

This is quite in keeping with the conceptions I described in the first part of this lecture. For if a thought which is tied to the external world sees only nothingness, if what keeps the parts together is only name and form, if nothing passes over which transfers the effects of one incarnation to the next, then we may say that true existence can

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only be attained, if man passes beyond all that he sees in the outer sense-world.

It is not right, however, as would be obvious, to call Christianity a religion of redemption in the same sense as Buddhism. If we wanted to put Christianity from this standpoint in its right relation to Buddhism, we should call it a religion of rebirth. For Christianity starts with the assumption that everything which we see in the individual human life, bears fruits which are of importance and value for the inmost being of man, and which are carried over into a new life and there lived out on a higher level of perfection. All that we experience and extract from an individual life, becomes more and more perfect and at last appears in spiritualized form. The apparently least significant in our life, if it is taken up by the spiritual and revived at a higher level, can be included in the spiritual. Nothing is null and void in existence because it undergoes a resurrection when the spirit has properly transformed it. It is as a religion of rebirth, of the resurrection of the best that we have experienced, that we should regard Christianity, from its own point of view—for which nothing that stands before us is worthless, but is a brick for the great edifice which is to be built by the union of all the spiritual which we have in the sense-world. Buddhism is a religion of release from existence, while Christianity is a religion of rebirth upon a spiritual level.

This is shown by its attitude both in great things and small and in its final principles. If we look for the reason of this difference, we see that it lies in the different character of eastern and western

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culture. There is a fundamental difference in the manner of thought of the two civilizations, which we can describe quite simply. All genuine eastern culture so far as it has not been fertilized by the west is non-historical, while all western culture is historical. And that is ultimately the difference between the Buddhist and the Christian outlook. Christianity recognizes that there are not merely repeated earth-lives but that they contain history, which means that what is experienced first on an imperfect level can develop upwards in the course of further incarnations to ever higher and more perfect levels. While Buddhism sees the release from earth existence in the raising to Nirvana, Christianity puts the aim of its development in this : that all the manifestations and achievements of separate lives shine forth in ever higher stages of perfection and when spiritualized they experience resurrection at the end of earth-existence.

Buddhism is non-historical, in the same sense as the cultural background in which it is born ; it opposes to the outer world, man as he acts within it. It turns its gaze to earlier and later incarnations of man, in which he stands face to face with the external world. It never asks if man perhaps stood in earlier incarnations in a different fashion, or if he will stand differently in the future. But that is the question for Christianity. So Buddhism comes to the view that the relation of man to the world in which he is incarnated is always the same; that man, driven by his thirst for existence to incarnation enters a world of suffering, quite regardless of the fact whether it

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drove man in the past to that thirst or if it will so drive him in the future. It is always suffering which the external world must bring him. So the earth-lives are repeated, and Buddhism never associated evolution with an historical idea. This will make it clear and evident to us why Buddhism in essence could find its Nirvana, its condition of happiness, only in the rejection of this ever-repeated cycle of existences, and why it was forced to see the source of its suffering in the outer world. For it says that if we ever enter the physical world, we must suffer, for the sense-world cannot but bring us suffering.

That is not Christian ; for the Christian attitude is through and through historical. It never asks simply about a timeless and non-historical anti-thesis to the external world. It admits that man, in being born again and again, faces an external world, but if that world brings suffering or anything which cannot satisfy him or fill him with an inner harmonious being, it is not because the existence is in general such that man must suffer, but because man has put himself into a wrong relation to the outer world. A definite fact is at the basis of both Christianity and the Old Testament, as a result of which man has developed his inner being in such a way that he can make his existence in the external world a source of suffering. Suffering is brought to us, not by the world which impresses itself on our eyes or ears, the world in which we are incarnated ; humanity itself once developed within itself something which put it out of right relation to the world. And as this is inherited from generation to generation, it is still

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the cause of our suffering to-day. In the Christian sense then we may say that from the beginning of their earth-existence men have not achieved the right relation to the outer world.

This can be extended to the fundamental doctrines of both religions. Buddhism again and again emphasizes that the external world is Maya, illusion. Christianity on the contrary may admit that what man sees in the outer world may make him think that it is illusion ; but this is because man is so constituted in his organs that he cannot pierce through the outer veil to the spiritual world. The illusion lies not in the world but in human outlook. The Buddhist bids us look at what we see as rocks or the fork of lightning : he says it is Maya, illusion. The roll of the thunder, too, is illusion ; for the external world as it lies about us is the great illusion. Christian thought would retort that it is wrong to call the external world, as such, an illusion. It is because man is an imperfect being who has not yet reached the point of being able to see the external world in its true form. Christianity therefore seeks an event in pre-historical times which has brought the human heart to a point where it now has a wrong view of the world. In a process of development, through various incarnations, we have to see in the Christian sense the re-conquest of what I may call spirit-eyes and spirit-ears, so as to see the spirit-world in its true form. Repeated earth-lives are therefore not meaningless, but are the path which enables man to see in its spiritual form that from which Buddhism tries to release man ; to see spirit in the outer world. The conquest of the world

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which appears to us to-day as physical, by means which we do not yet possess, but which we have to win as something spiritual ; victory over human error, as if the external world really were only Maya : This is the kernel of Christianity.

In Christianity therefore, there is not a great teacher who, as in Buddhism, tells us that the world is the source of our suffering ; and that we must get away from this world into another, quite different, the world of Nirvana. Christianity gives us a vast impulse which is to lead the world onwards, in the figure of the Christ, who has given us the strongest proof of our inner being ; and out of this we can develop the proper forces, so that every incarnation on earth may be of use to us in carrying the fruits of one existence into every later one—by our own powers. The incarnations are not to cease that we may enter Nirvana, but all that we can acquire in them is to be used and developed so that we may experience the resurrection in the spiritual sense.

This is the deepest distinction between Buddhism on the one side as a non-historical philosophy, and Christianity on the other as historical. Christian thought seeks in a ' Fall ' of man the source of pain and suffering and in a resurrection the healing of that pain and suffering. We cannot be healed of the pain by passing out of existence, but only if we make good the error which has put man in the wrong relation to the world. In ourselves is the reason why the world is the source of suffering. If we make right that attitude to the world, we shall indeed see that the external world is in truth, taken as sense-world, as a cloud

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vanishing before the sun, but that all our actions and experiences within it can be resurrected on the spiritual plane.

Thus Christianity is a teaching of reincarnation, of resurrection ; and in this light alone may we put it alongside the Buddhistic doctrine. That is, however, to put the two faiths side by side in a spiritual scientific sense, to study both teachings in their deepest impulses.

All that I have so far said in general can be substantiated in the smallest detail. Thus in Buddhism we have something like the Sermon on the Mount. 'He who hears the law, i.e., that which the Buddha lays down as law, is blessed and happy. He who rises above the passions is happy. He who can live in loneliness is happy. He who can live with the creatures of the world and do no ill, is happy.' Thus the Buddhistic beatitudes may be regarded as a counterpart to those in the Sermon on the Mount in St. Matthew. But we have to view them in the right way.

Let us compare them with what stands in St. Matthew. There we hear first : Blessed are they who are beggars for the spirit ; for they will find within themselves the kingdom of heaven. There we hear not only that 'blessed are they who hear the law' ; we have an addition. We are told : Blessed are the poor in spirit, 'for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'. What does this mean ? We shall never understand it unless we keep before our eyes the whole historical quality of the Christian outlook.

In the first place, we must remember that all human faculties of soul have passed through a

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history, that they have developed. Spiritual science takes the word development very seriously, so that what now is, was not always. It tells us that what we call to-day our reason, our scientific thought, did not exist in primitive times, but that in place of it there was a something which we might call a dim, obscure sort of clairvoyance. The way in which we now achieve knowledge of the external world was not known then. In early days there lived in man a 'primitive wisdom' which went far beyond what we have in modern times been able to establish. All who understand history know that such a primitive wisdom did exist. In earliest times people did not know how to make machines or railways, or to dominate the world by the help of natural forces ; but they did have views of the divine spiritual foundations of the world which go far beyond our present knowledge.

But these views did not come through thinking things out. That would be a wholly wrong view of them. Men did not then proceed as modern science does. They were given, as it were, inspirations which arose in the soul ; revelations dim and dark ; and people were not actively present when they arose, but yet could recognize that they were there. There existed in them real pictures of the spiritual world, the result of a really existing primitive wisdom. Human evolution consisted in man's advance from life to life, having ever less of this original clairvoyance, of this original wisdom. It was man's destiny that he should lose the old clairvoyance and learn to grasp things by the activity of the reason. In the future man will unite the two ; he will be able to look

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clairvoyantly into the spiritual world and at the same time retain the forms of modern knowledge. We are living to-day in a transition stage. The old clairvoyance is lost, and our peculiar qualities of the present have developed only in the course of time. How then has man reached the point of recognizing, from his own self-consciousness, the sense-world by means of his reason? When did self-consciousness come to man?

It was at the time—though human evolution is not usually interpreted so exactly—when the Christ Jesus appeared upon earth. Men were then at a turning-point of their development where the old dim clairvoyance had been lost and the starting-point given for what has produced our finest achievements of to-day. The coming of the Christ into human evolution marked the turn from the old to the new. What man then experienced, when he began to know the world, no longer through the old inspirations but by his own self-consciousness, has but its technical expression in John the Baptist's proclamation that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. That means the knowledge of the world in ideas and concepts. In other words men are no longer dependent on the old clairvoyance, but can know and investigate the world from out of themselves. And the strongest impulse for this method of knowledge was given by the Christ Jesus.

Therefore there is a deep meaning in the very first words of the Sermon on the Mount, which might be interpreted: Men are now at the point where they are beggars for the spirit. Till then, men had clairvoyant inspirations and could see

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into the spiritual world. That time has gone. But the time will come when man, through the inner forces of his ego, through the Word which reveals itself in him, can find a substitute. Thus blessed are not only those who in olden times had gained the spirit through dim and obscure inspiration, but those also who have no more clairvoyance since their development has brought them to that stage. They are not unblest, those who are beggars for the spirit, because they are poor in spirit. Blessed are they, for theirs is that which reveals itself through their ego, what they can achieve through their own self-consciousness.

Further we read : 'Blessed are they that suffer' ; for even though the sense-world is the source of suffering through the way in which we stand within that world, yet the time has come when man, if he will grasp his own self-consciousness and unfold the forces which lie within his own ego, will recognize the means to heal his suffering. Within himself he will find the possibility for finding consolation ; the time has come when consolation from without loses its unique meaning, because the ego is to find the remedy against suffering and the power against it within itself. Blessed are they who do not any more find in the outer world all that was previously found in it. This, too, gives us the deepest sense of the beatitude : Blessed are they who thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Within the ego will be found a source which will yield the righteousness that shall compensate for the unrighteousness of the world.

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Thus the Christ-Jesus is the indication for the human ego of the divine in man, urging us to take up in our own inner being what lives in the Christ ; for then we shall find the force to take from incarnation to incarnation the fruits of our life on earth. For it is important for the life of man in the spiritual world that he should overcome what may be experienced in earth-existence.

In this connection there falls a further, a bitter experience within Christianity. The death of Christ-Jesus, the Mystery of Golgotha. This death has not the ordinary significance of death ; Christ establishes the ordinary significance of death as the starting-point of an immortal, invincible life. This death is not just as if Christ-Jesus wished to free Himself from life, but He suffers it because from His death a force works upwards and from it there is to flow eternal life.

This too was felt by those who lived in the first centuries of Christianity, and it will be more and more understood when the realization of the Christ-impulse is greater than it is to-day. Then we shall understand how it was that six centuries before the Christ one of the greatest of men could leave his palace, and seeing a dead body, could proclaim as his doctrine : Death is suffering ; release from death is salvation ; and that he refused all dealing with what was subject to death. Six centuries pass till the Christ ; and another six centuries had to be experienced before a symbol was raised which will be recognized only by men of the future. What is this symbol ?

This time, no Buddha, no chosen man ; but simple folk went and saw the symbol, saw the

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cross raised and the dead body upon it. To them death was not suffering, nor did they turn from it, but saw in the body what was to them a token of eternal life, of that which conquered death and pointed far beyond the sense-world. The noble Buddha saw a corpse, and he turned from the sense-world and judged that death was suffering. But those simple folk that looked upon the cross and the body did not turn away ; they looked because it was evidence to them that from this death on earth sprang eternal life.

Thus, six hundred years before the foundation of Christianity we have the Buddha before the corpse—six hundred years after the coming of the Christ simple folk saw the symbol which expressed what had happened through the foundation of Christianity. Never has there been such a revolution in the development of man. If we look at things objectively we can see still more clearly wherein lay the greatness and significance of Buddhism.

Man, as we said, passed from a primitive wisdom, and in the course of various incarnations this wisdom was gradually lost. The appearance of the great Buddha indicates the end of a period of evolution ; it is the great evidence in world history that men have lost the old knowledge and wisdom ; and that explains the turning away from life. The Christ marks the starting-point of a new development which sees in this life the source of eternal life. Our own times have failed to reach a clear appreciation of this important fact in man's history. Hence just because there is no clearness, it happens that in these days men of

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fine and noble nature, unable to find in ordinary theories what they need for the richness of their own inner life, turn to other things and find salvation in what Buddhism can to-day give them. Buddhism does in a way show how man can be raised from the sense-world and how through a development of inner forces he can rise above himself. But this is only made possible because the greatest impulse and truest source of Christianity have been as yet so little comprehended.

Spiritual science is to be the instrument for penetrating deeper and deeper into the attitude of Christianity. The idea of evolution, which it takes very seriously, will help to lead men to an exact and intimate understanding of Christianity. Thus it nurses the hope that the true aspect of Christianity will appear more and more distinct from the falsely-understood form of it, without transplanting Buddhism into our own age. It would be a short-sighted view to attempt this. Anyone who has grasped the conditions of European spiritual life knows that even the movements which are apparently opposed to Christianity have taken their whole armoury of weapons from Christianity. No Darwin or Haeckel would be possible, however absurd it sounds, if Christian education had not made it possible to think as they thought, if the forms of thought did not exist which these men employ to attack—so to speak—their own mother. What they say is often apparently directed against Christianity ; but it is their Christian education that has taught them to think thus. It would be hopeless to try to graft oriental things into our culture, for it

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would be in opposition to all the conditions of spiritual life in the west. We need only get clear in our minds about the fundamentals of the two religions.

A more detailed study of western thought may indeed show that there is so little clarity of thinking that men of highest philosophical eminence are driven to teach the rejection of life and feel sympathetically towards the thoughts of Buddhism. An example of this is Schopenhauer, whose whole life-tone has something Buddhistic. For instance : he says that the highest type of man is he whom we call a saint, who has overcome everything in his life which the outer world can give, who, finally, exists now merely in the body, containing within himself nothing but ideals of the world ; who has no desires, but waits only till his body dissolves, and every trace has vanished of what has connected him with the sense-world, so that by rejection of sense-existence he annihilates his own existence, and nothing remains in him which leads in life only from desire to suffering, from fear to terror, from passion to pain.

This is simply the intrusion of Buddhistic feeling into the west. In this case we must admit this, because we have so little real understanding of the deepest impulse within the life and form of Christianity. What is it that we have won through Christianity? In its purest sense, it is what just in these respects separates one of the most significant personalities of recent times from Schopenhauer. While Schopenhauer sees his ideal in a man who has overcome all that

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external existence can give him of pain and desire, and who only waits till the last traces of his association with the body dissolve, Goethe puts before us in Faust a man striving, and passing from desire to satisfaction and from satisfaction to desire, and who in the end is so changed that the holiest which pours into our life becomes a passion in him : who does not stand and wait until the last traces of his earth-existence are obliterated, but speaks the great words : ' The traces of mine earthly being not countless æons can out-wear.'

All this is expressed in Faust in sense and spirit, as it is described by Goethe in old age to his secretary Eckermann : ' At least you will admit that the close, when the soul, now saved, is borne aloft was very difficult of achievement, and that in such supersensible, hardly imaginable things I might easily have lost myself in vagueness if I had not given a definite form and solidity to my poetic intentions by the clearly outlined figures and ideas of the Christian church.' Thus Faust mounts the ladder of existence, which is taken from Christian symbolism, from mortal to immortal, from death to life.

Schopenhauer introduced Buddhistic elements into our western thought, in which his ideal waits to achieve perfection, having extinguished in his body the last traces of his earth-existence. And this idea, he thought, interpreted the figures which Raphael and Correggio had created in their pictures. But Goethe depicted a striving individual, well aware that all earthly achievement must be lasting and interwoven in eternity. ' The

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traces of mine earthly being not countless æons can outwear.'

This is the true and real Christian impulse which leads to the re-awakening of our earthly deeds in their spiritualization. That is the religion of the resurrection. That is the awakening of the best which has been achieved on earth ; in the true sense a realistic philosophy which can draw down from the greatest heights the deepest meaning for our existence in the sense-world. Thus it is true to say that Goethe appears, as a dawning light, a pattern of the Christianity of the future which has learned to understand itself, which can admit all the greatness and significance of Buddhism, but which in contrast with the turning-away from incarnations will lead to the recognition of the value of each existence from stage to stage. Thus Goethe, in the true sense of the modern Christian, looks to a past which gave birth to us from out of a world ; and he looks at a present in which what we achieve, if only it is grasped in the right way, cannot pass away. When therefore he joins man in the true spiritual scientific sense to the universe he cannot but join him on the other side to the true content of Christianity. Therefore in his "Urworte-Orphisch" he says :

*, Wie an dem Tag, der dich der Welt verliehen,
Die Sonne stand zum Grusse der Planeten,
Bist alsobald und fort und fort gediehen,
Nach dem Gesetz, wonach du angetreten.
So musst du sein, dir kannst du nicht entfliehen,
So sagten schon Sibyllen, so Propheten.'*

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Even as, upon that day which lent thee being,
The sun took salutation of the planets,
So didst thou start thy course and so hast sped it,
According to the law of thy first sending.
Thus must thou be : *thyself* there is no fleeing ;
Thus have the Sibyls, thus the Prophets spoken.

Goethe cannot write thus, describing the union of man and the whole world, without adding that man as he is born out of the constellations of existence, is in the world a something which cannot pass away, but must celebrate its resurrection in spiritualized form. Hence he had to add these words to the others :

*, Und keine Zeit und keine Macht zerstückelt
Geprägte Form, die lebend sich entwickelt.'*

No time can break, no power of dissolution,
The form once cast in living evolution.

We may add that no power or time can destroy what is achieved in time and ripens as fruit for eternity.

IV

THE MOON ACCORDING TO SPIRITUAL SCIENCE

TO-DAY'S lecture of this winter session puts me into a difficult position. I want to make some remarks falling outside the line of thought and conception which generally pass as scientific ; and since our views are created through the normal ideas current in scientific and popular circles, the subject-matter of this lecture, being so far removed from them, the general public will probably be disposed to take my statements as mere fancies, having their origin in some arbitrary thought or idea rather than as what they are : the consequences of spiritual scientific research. I would ask you, therefore, to take this lecture as a sort of episode in this winter's series of lectures, intended to act as a pointer in a direction in which I shall hardly return this year, but which may occupy us in more detail next winter. But I must give these hints so as to show that what we are dealing with just now as science of the soul, branches out in many ways leading us from the immediate sphere of human soul-life to the great connections of the whole cosmos. Finally, I would ask you to remember that I am

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taking only one short chapter from a vast subject, and that you must judge the lecture entirely in relation to its title: 'A few remarks about' [Einiges über den Mond.] What I am to say will not aim at being in any way exhaustive.

You will find in popular scientific books of all kinds the most varied statements about the moon. But all you learn there, all that you can get from lectures or from popular or scientific literature, will leave you quite unsatisfied about the real questions concerning this strange companion of the earth which we call the moon. As the nineteenth century advanced, the statements of science about the moon became more and more cautious, but also more rare, and to-day we shall be dealing with anything rather than with what we usually hear about the moon. The picture of the moon's surface as given us by the telescope and astronomical photography, the description of what we see on its surface as crater-like formations, furrows, plains and valleys, the conclusions we may reach as to the appearance of the actual face of the moon, will not concern us to-day. The question before us is the truly spiritual-scientific question, whether the moon has any special influence or special significance for our life on earth.

Such a significance of the moon for earth-life has been assumed in different directions in past centuries ; and since all that happens on the earth must be brought into connection with the position of the earth relative to the sun, and associated with its movement round the sun, the question was always raised whether perhaps,



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apart from the vast effects of the sun's light, heat and other influences, the other luminary of heaven, the moon, might not have some importance for life on earth, and especially for human life. In a comparatively recent past it was still customary to admit a fairly powerful influence of the moon on earth-life. Apart from the fact that it has long been customary to attribute the phenomena, which we call the ebb and flow of the sea to the moon's attraction, the moon has always been regarded as affecting weather conditions on the earth. Moreover even in the first half of the nineteenth century, serious scientists and doctors collated observations of how the moon in its various phases had a definite influence on certain illnesses, and even on the course of human life as a whole. It was then by no means merely a matter of popular superstition or belief to consider the influence of the moon in relation to the ups and downs of fever, of asthma, of goitre, and the like ; there still existed doctors and investigators who registered such cases because they felt compelled to believe that the phases of the moon had some influence on the course of human life in general and of health and disease in particular.

With the rise of that scientific thought which quite clearly enjoyed its morning-splendour in the middle of the nineteenth century, the tendency to admit any influence of the moon on human life continually diminished. There survived only the belief that the moon caused the tides of the sea. On the other hand, it became less and less common to attribute to the moon any influence either on weather or on the phenomena of human life I

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have mentioned. There was in particular, one very important thinker, who marked an epoch in one sphere of scientific research, in the nineteenth century, who poured the whole vials of his wrath out upon those who were still so foolish as to admit any influence of the moon, even if they only referred to such things as weather conditions. This great scientist was the man who discovered the importance of the plant-cell, Schleiden ; and he, who in his own sphere had done such notable service, took up the cudgels with all his vigour against another German natural scientist, whose chief importance lies in his grasp of the subtler or marginal spheres of research—Gustav Theodore Fechner. It is about half a century since the famous ‘moon-dispute’ was fought out between the great discoverer of the plant-cell and Fechner, who tried in his *Zend-Avesta* to prove that plant-life is soul-endowed, and in his preliminary æsthetic, in his *Psycho-physics* achieved positive results in the sphere of more subtle scientific knowledge. It would perhaps be wiser not to talk of this dispute without an attempt to describe, however shortly, the man, Gustav Theodore Fechner.

Fechner was an investigator who tried, with enormous assiduity and great care and accuracy, to harmonize the various facts of research ; but he also used a method, the method of analogy, in order to show, for instance, that all phenomena, not only in human life but in plant-life, somehow contain a soul. Starting with the phenomena of human life, and showing how this life runs its course ; then taking similar facts as they appear

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to our observation, whether as life of the earth or of a whole solar system or of the plant-world ; then comparing such phenomena with human life, he found one analogy after another, and he concluded—more or less—that, since when we study human life with its soul conditions, we see certain things occur ; if we can establish certain similarities with human life in dealing with other phenomena there is no reason why we should not admit that these also are endowed with soul-life.

If we take our stand on spiritual science and as usual observe everything which relates to the spiritual in as strictly scientific a sense as the ordinary scientist with his external phenomena, we shall feel a good deal of what Fechner discussed so brilliantly, to be only an ingenious game ; and however stimulating that sort of game may be, we must be very careful indeed in handling these analogies. Thus we may admit that if a stimulating thinker like Fechner uses this method, it is highly interesting ; but if to-day people who may be justly said to be trying to solve the riddles of the world with as little knowledge and as much comfort as possible, fall back on Fechner and make his method their own, we must remember that an imitator, a second-comer, by no means calls forth in us the same feeling and satisfaction as a man who is first in his own sphere, whom we recognize as ingenious but cannot admit to be anything more.

Schleiden we need not describe any further than to say that he is the important discoverer of the plant-cell. Clearly such a man, who directed all his perception and his cognitive faculties

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towards the real, that is, what we can perceive with external instruments, will tend to limit his view to the externally real, and will have little sympathy with analogies and the refinements which Fechner talked of and used in order to endow with a soul what according to Schleiden is made up of single 'plants' and what seemed to him, its first discoverer, quite wonderful. Schleiden felt very resentful about speculations which, starting with so brilliant a method, dealt with still subtler relations in nature. It was particularly with Fechner's method of analogy that he joined issue; and parenthetically he touched on this question of the moon. With regard not only to Fechner but to all who were still accustomed, as had been the case through centuries, to ascribe to the moon all kinds of influence on the weather, etc., he declared that the moon was like a cat in a house, to which one ascribes everything which cannot otherwise be explained. When in nature we find anything, weather conditions, for instance, which we cannot refer to the influence of the sun, we say it is the moon interfering and producing effects which we cannot explain from other sources. Thus Schleiden called the moon the cat of science because this science when it could not explain a thing by other means, dragged in the moon. This was the type of thinking he threw in the teeth of the so-called 'moon-believers'.

Fechner naturally felt himself to be aimed at, for indeed the point was directed especially against him; and he began a work which, whether we agree or disagree with it, is extraordinarily suggestive; for although details have been in many

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cases corrected, the pamphlet of his, written in 1856 and called *Schleiden and the Moon*, is extraordinarily interesting. The ebb and flow of the tides he did not require to handle in detail. Even Schleiden admitted these ; it was the other weather conditions which made the moon for him the cat of science. Fechner began, therefore, to investigate the very facts which his opponent had brought up against 'the cat', and from these materials he drew remarkable conclusions. Any one who likes to test his method in this connection will find that here anyhow Fechner is an extremely careful worker, who proceeded in a thoroughly scientific fashion, and in a more detailed form. His first result from a mass of facts, which I need not here repeat—for anyone can read them for himself—was that the quantity and frequency of rain was in many cases shown to be greater with the waxing than the waning moon : greater when the moon approached the earth, less when it receded ; and the proportion of the rainfall during the waxing moon to that during the wane was 107 : 100. Fechner was very cautious in his method. His results were not taken from two or three years, but some of them at least extended over many decades and concerned not a single place, but many parts of Europe. Fechner, in order to exclude the effect of chance, assumed first that it was mere coincidence, and that other conditions affecting the weather produced this proportion of 107 : 100. He then studied in addition the weather conditions on the odd and even days of the moon's phases ; for he said that if the waning and waxing

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moon was not the cause, the odd and even days of the month would produce similar results. This was by no means the case. Very different figures resulted : there was not a constant, but a varying relation, which might perhaps be the result of chance. Fechner himself knew that he had not in this achieved any world-shaking results ; for he realized that the moon had not a tremendous influence on the weather, yet the facts did indicate that there was some influence. As you see, Fechner proceeded quite scientifically, for he took account only of the strict figures obtained by careful scientists for definite places. He made similar experiments in relation to fever and other phenomena, and there also was a positive, if small result. In any case, it could not be denied, that as popular belief runs, these things take a different course with the waxing and waning moon. Thus the old view of the moon fought its last fight, in the middle of the nineteenth century, in a brilliant scientist like Fechner.

This is a typical example to show that it is quite wrong to admit the more and more commonly stated assertion that science has compelled us or is compelling us to cut out all assumptions about the spiritual background of things, because—if I may take an instance from the most recent achievements of science—because science, as we are told, is at the very gate where she will be able to unite simple elements, somehow or other, into living substance. It may be admitted that we have far to go before we can make albumen from its constituents, carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, etc. ; but in any case the whole tendency of science

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makes us admit that some day it will happen. When it does—at least so we are told by those who make these assertions—the only possible philosophical position will be that which compounds certain material elements, and unites them into what we then recognize as a spiritual or living entity. The latest achievements of science do appear to show that we can no longer claim to see something spiritual behind what we see with the senses and what external science can tell us, for, fortunately, we are past the time when one could picture any vague wisdom of life behind what we perceive with the senses.

Here we may well ask if it really is science that compels us to reject spiritual research ; is it, for instance, a scientific conclusion. I want to remain here entirely on the ground of those who believe that in the not too distant future it will be possible to construct albumen from its simple elements—is there anything which forces us to say that life is materially constituted and that we must not look anywhere for the spirit ?

A simple historical observation will show us how unnecessary it is. There was a time when it was not only believed that carbon, etc., could help us to build up living albumen, but—it does not matter what value the belief had, its poetical representation you can read in the second part of *Faust*—that a whole man could be built up from the substances in a retort. There were indeed times, however mad they seem to us to be, when men believed they could really produce Homunculus and not only albumen in a retort. Yet at that time no one doubted that behind the physical

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there was the spirit. Thus you can prove historically that no 'science' can compel us to reject the spirit, that rejection depends on something quite different, the capacity of man to perceive it or not. Science, whether as it is to-day or to-morrow, can never force us to reject spirit. We can be perfectly scientific, but it is not science which will decide whether we are to accept or reject spirit, only our *capacity* to feel or not to feel it can settle that.

So, without agreeing from the spiritual scientific point of view, with either Schleiden or Fechner, we can see that the former with his view centred on the sense-world rejected everything which might be sought behind the phenomena as soul or spirit. But it was not scientific reason which made him do so ; simply his general attitude was out of sympathy with the spirit which we seek behind the appearances ; he had accustomed himself too completely to the visible only. Fechner was quite different ; he looked upon the spirit, and though he made error after error, he was a man of different quality, a man directed towards the spirit. So his tendency is to explain and not to reject all the subtler interactions of the heavenly bodies. Fechner felt quite obviously that the moon, to which he looked up, was not the mere scoriaceous body which the telescope showed to him, but that it possessed a soul like every other body ; and that therefore there must be actions of the moon soul on the earth soul, which show themselves beneath the surface of ordinary life or in weather conditions.

Now you are often asked to realize that the

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method of spiritual science is directed to the practical, and always maintains that the best test of what it has to say can be found in actual life. That is, notably enough, the method of Fechner also, when he defended his view by the appeal to practical test and proof in everyday life. He said that the dispute between himself and Schleiden might perhaps be best settled by their wives, and he suggested the following : ' We need water for washing, so let us collect it according to the weather conditions. Now since Schleiden and I live under one roof, and we can collect the water at definite times, I suggest that my wife collects it during the waxing moon and Schleiden's wife (who, I am sure in order not to refute her husband's theory, will agree, the more since she does not set any store by it) collects it during the wane. The result will be that my wife will have an extra can for every fourteen collected by Frau Schleiden, but Frau Schleiden will surely make the sacrifice in order to overcome a prejudice.

Here then we have an example in the history of thought, how quite a short time ago, during the last century, the moon and its influence on the earth were still understood. To-day I suppose it would be true to say that mankind has advanced a stage beyond Schleiden's attitude as a result of the scientific outlook, as it is called : and everyone would be regarded as a superstitious dreamer who held in any way to the belief that the moon could have anything to do with the weather, etc. Even with the best people to-day you will find no other view than that the moon's influence is limited to the tides, all other views being superseded.

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When we adopt spiritual science, we do not, of course, swear allegiance to everything that has once been popular belief ; that is to confuse superstition with spiritual science. Yet we are frequently confronted with a bit of superstition, which is misunderstood popular belief, and told it is spiritual science. It is easy, for instance, to refer to the moon superstition which can be seen at every street corner ; you will all know that in our barbers' shops there is the sign of the moon. Why ? Once it was a general belief that the sharpness of the razor was connected with the waxing of the moon. In fact, there were times when nobody dared to shear a sheep during the waning moon. If he wanted growth to stop, then he would have done the shearing at that time. This sort of superstition can be easily overcome, for everyone who shaves knows that the beard grows even during the wane. It is thus just as easy to sneer on the one side, as it is hard on the other to see clearly. For we are now coming to a question where we really are for the first time touching the realm of spiritual science ; the ebb and flow of the tides.

That is universally admitted to belong to the effects of the moon. The flood is ' obviously ' connected with the attraction of the moon and the attraction comes as the moon reaches its meridian, and in its movement from that position, the change of flood to ebb. But we need only refer to the fact that ebb and flow occur in many places twice while the moon stands at the meridian only once. And there are other facts. You will discover from many travellers that in many parts

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of the earth the flood by no means coincides with the meridian of the moon, that in some places it is as much as two to two and a half hours later. It is true that science has her ways out and says that 'the tides have been retarded'. But there are springs which show an ebb and flow, in which the facts admit of no denial : and in some cases, when the sea is in flood, there is ebb in the spring, and vice versa. Here, too, we are told that this is retarded ebb or flood ; and in some cases it has been so far retarded that it has appeared at the other phase. Of course this sort of explanation will explain everything.

The question has been rightly asked whence does the moon get this power of attraction over the sea. Since the moon is much smaller than the earth—it has only about a seventieth part of the earth's attraction ; it needs millions of horsepower to set the vast masses of the sea in motion. J. R. Mayer made interesting calculations as to whence the force of the moon's attraction comes ; and his calculations lead to other problems. This, then, which to-day is regarded as scientifically irrefutable, is, although no objections are raised, a thoroughly vulnerable position. Still one significant fact remains. Even though the position and influence of the moon, and the course of ebb and flow are such that it is hard to talk of an immediate relation of cause and effect, yet if we take everything into consideration, it does still hold true that a definite flood occurs each day, about fifty minutes later than the previous day in relation to the moon's meridian. The phenomenon of ebb and flow in their regular succession

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does then *correspond* to the course of the moon ; and this is the most important thing of all. Thus we have the remarkable fact that, taking the moon at its meridian, we cannot talk of its influence on ebb and flow ; but we can say that the course of the moon's orbit, and ebb and flow, do stand in a certain harmonious relation.

Now, to take you a little into the method of spiritual science, I should like to refer to a similar fact within our earth phenomena which worried Goethe. Most of us know very little indeed about what agitated this great genius of our modern age ; but those who, like myself, have spent many years over his scientific works and have seen his own manuscripts in the Goethe-Schiller archives at Weimar, will be fully aware, for instance, that there exist preliminary studies to what he later issued in a very few pages as his *Meteorology*. These studies he carried through with amazing energy and enthusiasm. Over and over again he got his friends to collect facts, which he himself tabulated. The object of these extended studies was to show that the level of barometric pressure at various parts of the earth is not due to chance, but varies regularly, the rise and fall of the mercury occurring regularly at the most diverse parts of the earth. In fact, his studies did show that the changes are not a matter of chance, but subject to a law which extends over the whole globe. He hoped to prove that it is a false assumption that pressure of the air depends on external influences. He knew, of course, that condensation and rarefaction, and thus a change in pressure, were generally attri-

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buted to the moon, sun and other cosmic influences. But he wanted to prove that whatever the position of the constellations, whatever the effect of sun and moon on the atmosphere, there is a constant regularity in air pressure over the whole globe. He therefore sought to prove that in the earth itself lay the causes of the rise and fall of the barometer ; for he wanted to show that the earth is not the dead body as it is usually regarded, and that it is permeated by invisible parts from which all life flows, just as man has in addition to his physical being the invisible parts, which permeate him. Just as man shows an in-and-out breathing, according as he absorbs or releases the air, the earth also as a living entity can show the same process. These processes of breathing, the manifestation of an inner life, show themselves outwardly in the rise and fall of the mercury in the barometer. Modern science knows nothing about the reasons for this rise and fall ; so that it is quite unnecessary to say anything here about the relation of spiritual to natural science. All we must do is to note that in Goethe we have a man who was convinced that the earth was a being endowed with soul which showed manifestations, comparable with the breathing process in man. Moreover on one occasion Goethe told Eckermann that he regarded the ebb and flow of the tides as an expression of the inner vitality, the life processes in the earth.

Goethe was by no means the only great man who has turned his eye to such things, or given expression to such an opinion. Materialistically-minded men will, of course, find it laughable ;

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but among men who have a feeling for life, even where it does not apply in detail, but in broad outline, there have always been men with similar ideas to Goethe : for instance Leonardo da Vinci. In his magnificent book where he set forth his great scientific views, showing the height of achievement, at the time we find the remark—and not merely as a comparison—that he really regarded the rocks as the skeleton of the earth, and that the streams, rivers and springs are really something which can be compared to the blood circulation in man. There you will also find it stated that ebb and flow are connected with an inner regular life of the earth. Kepler, too, once said the same when he expressed his view as follows : ‘ The earth is in a certain sense to be looked at as a gigantic whale, and ebb and flow are the breathing in and out of this huge fish.’

Now let us compare these facts with the attitude adopted by Goethe as regards ebb and flow, and use for this purpose the results of a spiritual science, and put into relation with what Goethe said, our previous conclusions about ebb and flow and the phases of the moon : that is, in relation to the inner life of the earth, its in-and-out breathing. For this we must build on the foundations of spiritual science ; which indeed we can only establish if we search with those methods. This brings us to that dangerous ground where all those who fancy themselves on a basis of modern science will talk of the fancies of spiritual science. Well, let it be so. Still, it would be better if they took what is given, as a stimulus, for the proofs

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would then appear in a more detailed observation of life.

That we may have a right view of what the spiritual scientist does mean, let us study man himself in relation to his world. We know that from this point of view man does not originate only in the sense-world but from the spiritual foundations of the world which lie at the back of the external physical world. Thus man, as a sense-being, is born for the sense-world only. But in so far as he is permeated with soul and spirit, he is born from the soul and spirit of the cosmos. And it is only when we think of the spirit and soul of the cosmos in relation to man's soul and spirit that we can get a real insight into the connection between the two.

In past lectures we have discussed some of the phenomena of the inner soul-life of man. We found man's soul to be not merely that nebulous thing which it is to modern psychology ; and we separated first what we might call the sentient-soul. In this soul the human ego, dimly and without proper consciousness of itself, borrows and experiences the impulses of pleasure and pain, and everything which comes through the sentient-soul in the form of experience of the outer world. The ego exists within the life of the sentient-soul, but knows nothing of itself. It then develops further and advances to the second part, the rational or mind-soul ; and when it has still more worked upon the soul, that develops into the spirit- or consciousness-soul. Thus, in the human soul structure we distinguish three parts : sentient-, rational- and consciousness-soul. The ego works

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on these three and brings man to greater and greater perfection. But these three parts, since they live in the world, in man, and accomplish their work through man, must live in the external corporeality of man ; in that way alone can they fulfil their function. The sentient-soul uses as its instrument the sentient body, the rational-soul uses as its instrument that part which in past lectures we have called the etheric or life body ; and it is not till we come to the consciousness-soul or spirit-soul that the physical body of man is used as its instrument. We thus distinguish in man's corporeal structure first, the physical body which he shares with all the mineral world. At the same time this physical body is the bearer of the consciousness-soul, not that soul itself, but only the instrument of it. Next in man, we have a higher part which he has in common with the plant-world and everything that lives. What appears in plants as the process of growth, reproduction and nutrition, is active in man also ; but in man it is connected with the rational-soul. The plant has an etheric body which is not permeated by the rational-soul which in man acts through that body. What is at work in the outer world and makes the crystal in the mineral is permeated in man by the consciousness-soul. What exists in animals as the astral body, as the intermediary of the animal impulses and emotions is deep in the inner being of man, and is the bearer of what we call the sentient-soul. Thus man's soul—the sentient-, rational- and consciousness-soul, lives in the threefold corporeality, in the sentient, the etheric and the physical body.

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This is man's waking condition. It is different when he is asleep. Then he leaves the physical and etheric body and with the astral body and the ego, and all the parts of his soul—that is those parts which permeate the etheric and physical bodies as rational- and consciousness-soul—and he breaks out of the etheric and physical bodies. Thus during sleep he lives in a spiritual world which he cannot usually perceive, only because on earth he is forced to perceive by means of the instruments of the physical and etheric bodies. As soon as he lays aside these instruments in sleep he can perceive nothing of this spiritual world because in normal life he has no organs to do so. Now there is something noteworthy in these conditions of waking and sleeping. When we are awake—this is indeed no longer true for men nowadays, especially in the towns—we are directly under the influence of the sun on the earth. We have only to observe the simple life of the country where man still retains this relation, to some extent, between Nature and his own life ; there he is awake while the sun shines and on the whole, sleeps when the sun has set. The regular alternation of sleeping and waking corresponds to the regular working of sunshine on earth and all that is connected with it. Nor is it merely a picture but a deep truth when we say that the sun recalls, in the morning, the astral body and the ego with the sentient-soul, etc., into the physical body, and while he is awake, man sees everything which is round about him in the world, by means of the sun, and its action. It is the sun which summons man to his ordinary life, when he has once again

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on waking united all the parts of his being. We shall easily see, if we do not look at things too superficially, how the sun adjusts this effect on man.

There are three things, which will help to show how man stands in a definite relation to earth and sun. With regard to his soul, the sentient-, rational- and consciousness-soul, man is inwardly a self-dependent being, but not in regard to the bearers of these souls, the physical, etheric and astral bodies, These three sheaths are built up from the outer universe. That they may serve man in his waking state, they are built up through the relation of sun to earth.

The 'sentient-soul' lives in the sentient body ; which depends in essence on the point of the earth which is man's home :—if we wish to call it so. Man after all has a home at some spot on the earth; and something depends on whether he is born in Europe or America or Australia. From the immediate point of view of the physical and 'life body', there is no significance, but there is in relation to the sentient body. Though man is continually becoming inwardly freer in relation to these outer effects on his astral body, yet it is true that, especially with men who are tied to the soil, in whom the feeling for home is very strongly developed, who have not yet overcome by means of the soul the power of the physical, this feeling for home, the dependence on the spot where they were born, expresses itself in such a way that if they are moved to other areas they not only become gloomy and sullen, but often fall ill as a result of their unaccustomed surroundings ; and sometimes

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the mere prospect of a return home is enough to restore them to health, because the origin of their illness does not lie in the physical or etheric or 'life' body, but in the 'sentient' body which centres its feelings, desires and emotions on what comes directly from the physical environment to which he belongs. Through his higher development, which makes man freer and freer, he will overcome these influences which tie him to the soil ; but a comprehensive view will show us that man's relation to the earth varies with the relation of his particular place on it to the sun. The sun's rays hit the earth everywhere at a different angle. If we look at things broadly enough, we shall see how much in man, in the relation I have mentioned depends on the spot where he lives. We can trace various instincts and activities which have become elements of culture and have depended on the place on earth where man in each case lived.

Let us take two examples : the use of iron and the custom of obtaining nourishment by the milking of certain animals. We shall find that it is only in areas belonging to Europe, Asia and Africa that these two things developed. In other areas nothing of the sort existed in early times ; and it is only European emigrants who introduced these two cultural elements. We can trace exactly how, though over all Siberia the milking of animals goes back to remote antiquity, it stops completely at the Behring Sea ; and there is no trace of it among the original inhabitants of America. The same is true of iron.

We can thus see how certain instincts—which exist in the sentient body—or 'feeling body'—

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are tied to the soil on which man depends, and therefore in the first place depend on the relation of sun to earth.

There is a second connection. The etheric body of man, as bearer of the rational-soul, shows itself to be dependent in its activity on the seasons of the year : that is on the relation of sun to earth expressing itself in the change of the seasons. The actual proof of this can of course come only through spiritual science, but you can convince yourselves by the external facts of earth evolution, that this assertion is true. You know that it is only where there is a balanced alternation of seasons that the inner activity of the soul, as rational-soul, can develop ; that is, only in such districts where there is regular alteration of the seasons, can an instrument or bearer of the rational-soul evolve in the etheric body or ' life body ' of man. In the far north we find that the soul experiences great difficulty when it borrows culture from other areas, to struggle with the etheric body which lives in conditions of abnormally long winters, and short summers. The rational-soul then finds it difficult to forge itself an instrument out of the etheric body which it can easily handle. If we go to the tropics, we find again that unregulated change in the seasons produces a sort of apathy. Just as the forces of plant-life vary in the different seasons, the forces do really change in man, during the seasons, which find expression in the joy of spring, the longing for the summer, the melancholy of autumn and the desolation of winter. This regulated change is necessary, if a proper instrument is to be created

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for the rational-soul out of the etheric body. Thus we see again how the sun affects men by its relation to the earth.

Now let us take the physical body. That the consciousness-soul may work properly in the physical body, we must conform to a similar course in relation to our ordinary life, as exists in the outer world in day and night. If we never slept, we should soon notice that we could not control our thoughts about our environment effectively. The regular alternation of sleeping and waking, which corresponds in man to the change of day and night in the outer world, builds up our physical body in such a way that it can be an instrument of the consciousness-soul. Thus the sun builds up man's external sheaths in this way ; and we have shown it from a threefold point of view.

But the conditions vary when man is asleep. It is not surprising that external science knows little of this; for it deals only with what can be seen. Only spiritual research deals with what departs at night to exist in the spiritual world, invisible, of course, to the sense-world. If we pass now to what is to be developed beyond the etheric and physical body of man, what influences are now active ?

Spiritual science shows in the most varied ways how during man's waking hours the influences, which have just been described and which are in the main sun-influences, are the dominant ones, but that with sleeping man there is a remarkable change. Sleep of course has its effect even on our experiences of the day, for it restores to us the

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forces we have used up. During sleep we get from another world something to replace what we used during the day. Is it possible then to point to an external influence in the same way as we did for day conditions? It is; and what we find, coincides in remarkable fashion with the phases of the moon. I am not maintaining that this external influence coincides exactly with these phases of the moon or that the phases have a direct influence; but only that the course of these effects during the night runs in a sense similar to the lunar phases. You can get some idea of it from the following and I will show by two examples what the facts are. The external evidence for it, and for what is the result of spiritual research you will only find if you look for the evidence in the more intimate details of this or that individual's life.

You know that people, who have creative thoughts and let their fancy play, are not always equally productive. You must have heard how poets, if they are honest with themselves, have to admit occasionally that the inspiration is gone and they are therefore silent. We know it, but we cannot follow it out, because it takes place in the inmost depths of our being. Those who observe these things in themselves, know that the periods of productivity for which a certain frame of mind, or liveliness of emotion, is necessary, alternate in a wonderful way with others in which these pictures can be set on paper or lived out in thought. They know, too, that the soul has a fourteen day period of productivity, and when that is over, anyone who has to do with creative thought, suffers a period of exhaustion. If artists and

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authors would take note, they would see how true this is and how they cannot extract anything out of themselves when this period is past. They are like a squeezed lemon. But they can then work over deliberately what they have written. Poets and artists will naturally not always notice it, but they will know that, when the right atmosphere is present, they will be able to sing or speak, or paint, but that at other times nothing works because they have reached a period of unproductivity. This is not influenced by day conditions but by the time when the soul and the ego are outside the physical and etheric bodies. During fourteen days the part of man which is independent of the physical and etheric body is filled with productive forces, and during the next fourteen days, these forces work themselves out. That is the rhythm ; which exists for all various inner soul forces in all men but finds clearer expression in the type of whom we have just spoken.

There is far clearer evidence in what may be called true and genuine spiritual research. This is not a research which can be undertaken at any moment but depends on a rhythmic course. This has indeed hardly been asserted elsewhere. During spiritual research one is not in a sleep condition ; for the world-spirit does not give its gifts in sleep. The physical body is inactive in face of what usually comes from the sense-world ; yet one is not asleep, although the physical and etheric bodies have been abandoned. Meditation, concentration, etc., have so strengthened the faculties that the consciousness does not die when it passes from the physical body ; sleep therefore

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does not supervene but it is possible to perceive in the spiritual world. There are then for the spiritual investigator in modern times again two separate periods : one, of fourteen days, when observations may be made, when one feels strong and receives the experiences of the spiritual world from all sides ; the other, in which through the forces just received, it is possible to penetrate with one's thought into the illuminations from the spiritual world, its imaginations and inspirations, so that they assume a strictly scientific form. Inspiration and the technique of thought pass through a rhythmical course. The spiritual investigator is not concerned with registering external facts ; he sees clearly how these periods occur in alternation like full and new moon. But only their rhythmical course may be paralleled with the full and new moon ; the inspired period does not coincide with the full moon or the working-out period with the new moon. It is only that a comparison is possible between the two periods and the full and new moon and the intervening quarters. Why is this ?

When we study our earth, we find that it has evolved out of an earlier condition. Just as each one of us passes in soul and spirit from a former incarnation, so the earth has passed through a former planetary incarnation. But our earth retains relics of events which occurred in earlier conditions, in former planetary incarnations of our earth. These survivals are to be found in what we see to-day, as the course of the moon round the earth. From the spiritual scientific point of view the moon is reckoned as part of the earth ; for

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what is it which keeps the moon revolving round the earth? It is the earth itself; and here spiritual and external science are at one. External science also regards the moon as having once split off from the earth, and it has retained its rotatory force from the fact that it was once part of the earth. Hence the orbit of the moon represents simply an earlier condition of the earth; and if we look up at the moon we see the relic of an earlier earth condition. The earth itself has retained in its satellite these earlier conditions, because it requires that earlier stages of development should still shine into present ones. Can we find any conditions on earth which make this necessity clear?

Let us take man himself and observe how he lives, as soul in his body, and how he is exposed to the course of the sun. We shall have to say that between birth and death for our present normal consciousness everything is fully used up, which is associated with the sun. Test for yourselves, if it is not true that what normal consciousness experiences during its waking condition in its triple dependence on birthplace, change of seasons and change of day and night, is fully used in the life between birth and death. Man would have nothing else in his consciousness, nothing further would stream into his consciousness if there were only this action of the sun on the earth and only this relation between the two. What is active in man from one incarnation to the next, what always appears in a new life must be sought in what permeates the outer body, and passes in sleep as astral body and ego out of the physical and etheric

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bodies. At death it also leaves the body and reappears at a new incarnation in a new form. In this there is a rhythm which directs our attention to the similar rhythm in the moon. When we look at the evolution of man we see that the activity of the ego in the form of sentient-soul, rational-soul and consciousness-soul, has only been developed on earth, under conditions such as exist between the earth and sun. But the earth's relation to the moon is one which it has preserved from a former condition of its own evolution ; and thus the earth in its relation to the moon which it draws along with itself, points to a former condition. In his present phase of evolution, in his sentient-, rational- and consciousness-soul man points to a period in which the bearers of these parts, the physical, etheric and astral bodies were being prepared. Then just as the activity of the sun is now necessary in order that these three bearers should be duly developed, the moon forces had once in similar fashion to work on man so that these bearers might be prepared. The moon forces are to-day rhythmic in their course ; so is the ordering of the inner man. In earlier times the moon forces were in harmony with man and prepared man as he is now ; likewise the earth during its moon condition prepared the present earth. Therefore the lower nature of man, on which are built the sentient-, rational- and consciousness-soul, points to earlier earth conditions which the earth has preserved in what still appears to us in the orbit of the moon. We can see too how man's inner being as it passes from one incarnation to the next, must have a rhythm corresponding to the moon's.

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At earlier stages of the earth's evolution, it was not the transitory physical which was associated with the moon, but what was then active from within on this physical :—as the external physical is nowadays associated with the sun. The earth has preserved something of its former stage in the moon ; and in his inner eternal being man, too, preserves something of earlier conditions. In this inner being he develops the higher qualities which previously came from external influence—but now by the force of his own inner capacities.

What we have to emphasize is that man grows out of external influences. Man becomes ever more independent—e.g., he can sleep in the day and be awake at night. But he has still to order the change of sleeping and waking according to the sun's rhythm ; he has to preserve the rhythm within himself. In earlier days inner day and inner night corresponded closely to the sun's day and night; then man was more fettered to the soil. Man gains freedom by setting free the inner rhythm under whose spell he lives, and by retaining it as a rhythm independent of the external world. It is as if we had a clock marked for the twenty-four hours but set in such a way that it does not correspond with external time ; so that it is not twelve o'clock when the external clock says so. The clock is thus *dependent* on the external rhythm, but it does not give the same hour as sun-time. Man thus frees himself by making the external rhythm into an inner one. From the rhythm, which connected his inner being with the moon, he has long since freed himself. It is for this reason that we have emphasized the fact that man

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experiences the phases of the moon inwardly, but that the phases are not caused by the moon in the sky. The moon runs a similar course in the heavens because man has retained the inner rhythm, though outwardly he has made himself free and independent.

In the same way as we have been able to establish for man, the earth must be regarded as a living being ; but since it shows us only its physical body, without living, feeling and knowledge, its condition is nearer to the moon. Now we shall understand why it is wrong even taking the external facts to speak of the influence of the moon on the tides and why we can only say that the course of the tides corresponds to that of the moon. We must not talk of a direct influence of the moon because as a fact it does not produce the tides. The tides, as well as the course of the moon, are produced by deeper spiritual forces in the living earth. The moon's orbit and the tides correspond ; but there is as little immediate dependence between them as there is between man and the moon in the rhythm which I described to you in man's creative and clairvoyant activity.

We see then how the attitude of spiritual science helps us to clear up external facts in a wonderful way : the tides are related to an inner process in our earth which produces not only them but the orbit of the moon. They correspond in the same way as the movement of a clock's hands corresponds to the course of the sun—though we could hardly say that the sun turned the wheels. The relations point to a common origin

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but are not produced by each other. If you take the principles of spiritual science and then read through all the books in which the phenomena of moon and earth are registered, and of the tides, you will understand the true relation between moon and earth and also between man and moon.

It is quite comprehensible that man, when he loses his independence, when he is thrust from a fully conscious to a less conscious state, should fall back into an earlier stage of evolution. Man progressed from unconsciousness to his present state of consciousness ; from his earlier dependence on the moon and its influence to his present independence of the moon—and to his dependence on the sun. Because man was once immediately dependent on the moon, it happens that when his consciousness is damped down, its functioning will be controlled by the course of the moon. This is an atavistic reversion which shows man's connection with the moon's phases. In mediums, in whom the proper ego-consciousness is so repressed that they show as an inheritance from the past what existed in the course of evolution, we find the earlier influence of the moon ; and similarly in cases of illness when the consciousness is repressed.

All these phenomena will become clear to you when you know the principles of spiritual science ; in all its spheres life will give you evidence of the truth of the statements of spiritual science.

One thing more. When man is born from the dark depths of nature, after he has passed through the spiritual world between death and a new birth

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and reappears in a new bodily form, he recalls to us, in the conditions from which he passes to the light of day, a former earth state. The embryonic period is still calculated by science as being ten lunar months, there we have a rhythm which takes its course in ten successive moon periods. Before he comes to the light of day, man develops under conditions which can only be explained by reference to the course of the moon. The earth has retained in the moon and its rhythm, what it passed through itself before it entered its present state ; and nowadays man's embryonic development shows how during that period, in ten lunar months, each week, that is each phase of the moon, corresponds to a particular condition in the evolution of the embryo. Again man retains what we may call the moon rhythm.

And there is a whole series of other phenomena connected with the existence of man, before he passes from obscure depths to the light of day : which are of course not the effects of the moon, nor even coincide exactly with the moon's phases but reflect the same rhythm because they go back to origins which the earth once displayed in previous conditions of existence.

I have thrown light on a subject which can not be further illuminated in public. But anyone, who can think, will see that a vast perspective is here opened into departments of life, where spiritual science can really point the way to a great clearing up of all in man, which cannot be viewed in the outer light of the sun, of what lies behind the sunlight. It is a sphere which has to be studied in another light than that which we

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have acquired as the light of knowledge by means of the sun's light, namely by faculties of perception which do not depend on the services performed, under the sun's influence, by the sentient-, rational- and consciousness-soul. Clairvoyant faculty can make itself independent of these three bodies, can sink itself in the inner being, look into the spiritual world and open up knowledge of what lies behind the external sunlight and is yet no less full of light and illumination. You have seen how, by this method, spiritual science can give the most varied suggestions. But I must again emphasize directly that in relation to this question of the moon a still more intimate light is needed if we are really to penetrate into things.

I am reminded of a poem by the German lyrical poet, Wilhelm Müller, of which we are only concerned with the last stanza. The poem is addressed to the moon and all sorts of secrets pass between a man and the moon ; then, because the soul has spoken in a wonderful way to the moon :

*, Dies Liedchen ist ein Abendreih'n
Ein Wanderer sang's im Vollmondschein ;
Und die es lesen bei Kerzenlicht,
Die Leute verstehen das Liedchen nicht,
Und ist doch kinderleicht.'*

' This ditty is an evening Round
Sung by a wanderer in full Moonshine ;
Those who read by candle-light
This ditty will not understand,
Though childishly so easy.'

This is the way in which we must understand

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what spiritual science has to say, as we have touched on that past which concerns the moon and its significance for human life. The song of spiritual science about the moon is really only to be sung if we have a more intimate knowledge of the ideas of spiritual science. Men who try to read the lesson by candle-light—by which I mean the telescope—by means of moon photography and what is generally regarded nowadays as the study of the moon, will hardly understand the song of the moon. Yet if we are willing to penetrate but a little into what opens out to us from all sides, we shall have to admit that after all it is not so hard to understand. If we are willing to understand the song which spiritual science sings of the moon, not by the candle-light of the telescope but by the living light of the spirit, which shines even when there are no external sense-impressions, we shall find that this song of the moon, and therewith of a considerable part of our life, is easy, even if not 'childishly so easy'.

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THE subject of to-day's lecture might very well appear insignificant in a series devoted to spiritual science. But it is one of the common mistakes in discussions which rise to the highest spheres of being, that they omit all notice of the details of life and its immediate realities. Generally such lectures as these, are expected to deal with infinite or finite life, with the great questions of human or world evolution—or even with higher things ; and there is a reluctance to discuss what are called matters of everyday life, such as we are dealing with to-day. Yet we shall get the most benefit, if we follow the path adopted here for penetrating to spiritual worlds, and advance quietly, step by step, from the best-known to the less-known. Besides, a casual recollection will show us that celebrated men have by no means considered as commonplace what we usually call laughter and tears. After all, that consciousness which works in the legends and great traditions of mankind—so often far wiser than the individual consciousness—has endowed Zarathustra, who became of such vast importance for eastern culture, with the famous Zarathustra smile ; and this

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legendary consciousness finds particular significance in the fact that he entered the world with a smile. And with a deep understanding of world history it adds to this fact of the Zarathustra smile the further remark that 'with it exulted all the creatures of the earth and before it fled all the evil spirits and adversaries of the world.' If we pass from the consciousness working thus in traditional legends to the creations of a single great genius, we might call to mind the figure of Faust into whom Goethe poured most of his own feelings and ideas. When Faust, in deepest despair at all existence, came near to destroying himself, Goethe makes him cry, as he hears the Easter bells : 'The tears pour forth, the earth holds me again.' [, *Die Träne quillt, die Erde hat mich wieder !*] Tears are here the symbol of that state of the soul which enables Faust, after the cruellest, bitterest despair to return, as it were, to the earth. Here Goethe, as poet, uses tears to symbolize the return of man to earth conditions.

Thus if we will only think, we can see that laughter and tears, apparently of little import, can be related to things of great significance. But it is easier to ponder upon the entity of the spirit than to seek that spirit in the forms in which we can find it, if we study the world as it lies around us. In truth we may find the spirit, the spirit of man, in its essence, just in the expression of the human soul which comes in laughter and tears. We cannot understand what is here put before our eyes unless we take these two expressions of man as expressions of his inner spiritual life. We must, however, not merely recognize

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but understand man as such a spiritual being. To this purpose all this winter's lectures have been devoted. So we need but take a hasty glance at the way in which spiritual science regards man. Moreover, to enable us to understand laughter and tears, we have to use as basis man in the sense of spiritual science.

We have seen how man, when we observe him in his totality, appears as consisting of a physical body, which he has in common with all mineral nature, of an etheric body or life body, which he has in common with the whole plant-world, of the astral body which he shares with the animal-world, and which is the bearer of pleasure and pain, joy and suffering, of fear and wonder and of all the ideas which surge within his soul from waking up to falling asleep. Thus in the first place man consists of these three external sheaths, and it is only within them that the ego lives which makes man the crown of creation. This ego works in the soul-life which is built up from the three parts, the sentient-soul as the lowest part, then the rational- or mind-soul and then the consciousness-soul ; and we have seen how the ego acts on these parts so as to make man more and more perfect.

What is then at the basis of the ego's activity within the soul of man ?

Let us observe this ego in some of its manifestations. Suppose that this ego, this deepest centre of man's spiritual life, is faced by some object or being in the external world. The ego does not remain indifferent in face of it but expresses itself in a definite manner : it experiences

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something inwardly. The thing pleases or displeases the ego, which may exult at some occurrence or may fall into deepest despair ; it may draw back in fear and alarm, or it may lovingly observe and encompass the event or the being ; it may have the inner experience, that it understands or fails to understand the event that meets it.

In our observation of the ego in its activity from waking up to falling asleep, we see how it seeks to put itself in harmony with the external world. If some object pleases it and produces the feeling that here we have something that warms us, we weave a bond between ourselves and the thing ; something leaps from us to the thing. This is what we do really with the whole of our environment. Our whole waking life appears, in relation to the inner soul processes, as the creation of a harmony between the ego and the rest of the world. What we experience through the objects and beings of the external world and is then reflected in the processes of our soul-life, works not only on the three parts of the soul, since the ego dwells in them, but also on the astral body, the etheric body and the physical. We have already given several examples how that relation, produced by the ego between itself and any object or being, stirs not only the emotions of the astral body and the currents and movements of the etheric body, but affects the physical body too. Have we not noticed how people grow pale when something terrible approaches them ? What else is this but that the relation established by the ego between itself and the terrible something, the bond

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it has forged between itself and the object, affects the physical body and sets the blood running differently from the normal? The blood likewise withdraws from the external body and produces the pallor. We have also noted the contrary, the blush of shame. When we feel that we must set up such a relation between ourselves and the particular object of our environment that we desire momentarily to disappear, the blood rises to the face. Here we have two examples of a definite influence on the blood through the relation between the ego and the external world. There are many more such instances of how the ego expresses itself in the astral, etheric and physical bodies.

In this search of the ego for a harmony or a definite relation between itself and its environment, the most diverse consequences may follow. In some cases, in relation to our environment, we may feel we have established a proper relationship between the ego and the object or being. Even when we have justification for fear, still if the relationship is regarded in the right way, we see that it has stood in harmony with its environment even in fear itself. The ego particularly feels in harmony when it strives to understand some object in the external world, and by its ideas, its feelings, and sensations really does acquire clarity about the particular objects with which it is trying to deal. The ego then feels at one with its environment; it feels as if it passed beyond itself and were immersed in the objects, so that the bond appears to it the right one. Or it may be that the ego lives with other people to whom it stands in a

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relation of affection ; then it feels satisfied and happy towards everyone of them in the relation which it has instituted, feels that an harmonious relation exists between itself and its environment ; and this expresses itself in the ego's feelings of ease which is then transferred to its sheaths, the astral and etheric body.

It may, however, happen that the ego fails to establish this harmony, fails, that is, to produce what we may in a sense call the normal. If it does not at once achieve this relation, the ego finds itself in an awkward position. Suppose the ego has found in the external world some object or being towards which it cannot acquire the relation enabling it to understand the thing, to recognize the existence of the fact or being in its ideas and concepts ; suppose, further, that it is seeking for this right relationship but fails to discover the one that forms the true bond between itself and the world. In such a case it is still necessary for the ego to achieve some definite relation to this thing. A concrete instance : we meet a being in the outer world which we do not want to understand because it does not seem worth our ego's while to penetrate into its meaning ; we feel, as it were, that if we did thus penetrate we should surrender something of our own forces of knowledge and understanding. In this case we feel it is not worth while to immerse ourselves in this being whereas with another we may feel that we must make every effort to understand, to immerse ourselves in, to unite with it. When we feel that to plunge into the thing would be a waste of our understanding, we have to establish a very definite

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relation, to set up a sort of barrier. To such a being we refuse to surrender or to immerse ourselves in it : that is, we want to keep ourselves free from this being outside us ; we want to find ourselves, in ourselves, but not by immersing ourselves ; rather through turning our forces away from this being and thus become conscious of them, while we raise ourselves in our own self-consciousness. If this is the relation we establish, the feeling which comes over us is one of liberation. With a being which we understand, in which we are immersed—whether by knowledge or by love or by sympathy—we do not feel this withdrawal of the ego : on the contrary, we feel drawn towards the thing. In the case I have been talking about, however, we feel that the ego would lose something if it immersed itself in the other being and that it must therefore hold aloof.

When this occurs, clairvoyant observation can see how the ego as it were withdraws the astral body from the impressions which the environment or the being might make on it. The impression will, of course, be made on our physical body unless we close the eyes or stop up the ears. Now the physical body is less under our control than the astral, and we can thus for a moment withdraw the astral from the physical and so save it from being touched by the being. This withdrawal of the astral body, which would otherwise use up its energy in the physical body, appears to clairvoyant observation as an expansion of the astral : the astral at the moment of this freeing simultaneously diffuses. When we raise ourselves above a being, we allow the astral body to

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expand like an elastic substance, we relax what was otherwise tense. In the expansion of the astral body we free ourselves from any bond with the particular being ; we, as it were, withdraw within ourselves and raise ourselves above the whole situation. Since everything which occurs within the astral expresses itself in the physical, this withdrawal finds expression in the physical : and this expansion of the astral in the physical is expressed by laughing or smiling ; so that with every laugh or smile which must have its source in the feeling I have been describing, there is connected an elastic expansion of the astral body.

Therefore : what occurs through the extension of the astral, and its physiognomic expression as laughter or smile, is the raising of oneself above what takes place in one's environment, since we do not want to waste our understanding upon it, and, by reason of our standpoint, ought not to do so. In the end, everything not to be understood by us must cause such an expansion of the astral and thus call forth our laughter. Comic papers often depict public men with enormous heads and tiny bodies, which is a way of expressing grotesquely the significance of these men for their age. To try to understand this would be nonsense, for there is no law which could unite such a head and such a body. If then we applied our understanding to such an object it would be a waste of effort and also a waste of understanding. The only satisfaction can be to rise above the object, or the impression made on the physical body, to become free in the ego and to expand the astral. The experience of the ego is continued into the

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most intimate sheath, the astral body ; and the physiognomic expression of this is laughter.

It may happen, however, that we cannot find the relationship to our environment which we seek, and by our whole constitution are justified in seeking. Suppose we have for a long time loved someone who does not only stand in close contact with our actions, but is associated with definite soul-experiences, because of our own attachment. Suppose, then, this person is torn from us. With it a part of our own soul-experiences is torn from us, something which is a bond between us and another being in the external world. Our soul is justified, because of the soul condition which it has created by its relation with this person, in looking for this bond, because it has trained itself to this bond, which is now broken. Something is torn from this ego ; and this produces a result which is again transferred to the astral body. Because in this case something is taken from the astral, because it seeks a relationship which it cannot find, it contracts : or to put it better, the ego presses the astral body together.

This can always be clairvoyantly observed when a man suffers pain or grief from some loss—how the ego, being deprived, presses the astral body together. Just as the expanded astral becomes slack and then creates for itself the physiognomic expression in the body, which we call laughing or smiling, so an astral body which is contracted penetrates more deeply into all the forces of the physical. (That is indeed the case : when the astral body contracts, it contracts the physical

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with it.) The physical expression of this contraction of the ego, and with it of the astral body, is the flow of tears. The astral body which has been also pierced with holes and wants to fill these holes by contraction and by drawing in the substance from its environment, contracts the physical body and drives its substance out in the form of tears. What are these tears then? The ego has lost something in sorrow and in deprivation! It draws itself together, for it is impoverished, feels its selfhood less keenly than before; and this fact is accentuated, in proportion as the experiences in the physical world are richer. We not only give something to what we love: we enrich our own souls by this love; when, then, the experiences of this love are taken from us, and the astral body is filled with gaps, and contracts, it seeks to regain its lost forces by the pressure it exercises on itself. By drawing together it seeks to make itself richer because it has become poorer through its loss. What appears in the tears is not merely a flow of tears, not only an opening outwards, but a sort of compensation for the impoverished ego. Formerly the ego felt itself enriched by the outer world; now it feels strengthened by what produces itself, by the tears pressed forth. What a personality loses spiritually in self-consciousness, it seeks to replace by urging itself to an inward creation, the production of tears. Tears are a sort of compensation, a substitute for the impoverishment of the ego. Therefore, when the ego which has suffered loss can achieve tears, can raise its consciousness by the perception of its loss in tears, weeping gives

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the ego a sub-conscious feeling of pleasure. Tears do thus in a way give rise to inner pleasure ; and a balance is produced by them. We all know how people, when in the depths of misery, feel a consolation in tears, because tears are something which affords a kind of compensation. We know, too, how for people who cannot weep, it is much harder to endure sorrow and pain than for those who can create this inner pleasure on every occasion by tears. The ego, then, if it cannot find a satisfying relationship to the external world, either raises itself to inner freedom by laughter, or sinks into itself in weeping that it may strengthen itself in its loss by inner creative activity. It is the ego, the centre of man, which is expressed in laughter and tears ; and it is therefore comprehensible that the ego, which constitutes man, is in a way the pre-condition of true laughing and weeping.

If we observe a new-born child, we find that in its first days it can neither laugh nor weep. True laughing or weeping only begins with the thirty-sixth or fortieth day. The reason is that, though it is decided what sort of ego lives in the child from a former incarnation, this ego does not at once work creatively in the child ; it does not immediately seek a relationship to the external world. Man's condition in the world is built up out of two sources which give all that is in and about him. On the one side he has all the qualities and activities inherited from father and mother, that is to say, the qualities and activities of the line of inheritance. But this is worked on by the individuality, the ego which goes on from

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life to life with its own soul qualities. When we see a child passing into existence at birth, we see at first the undefined physiognomy of the human being, and quite undefined also all that will some day stand out as talents, capacities and special qualities. But we can see too, how the creative ego which has brought with it its powers of development from former lives, more and more definitely works on the undefined features and modifies what is given by inheritance. So the inherited qualities unite with those which pass from one incarnation to another. (You can find more definite statements about the process of human evolution in my recently published book, *Occult Science*, in which in the first parts these matters are discussed in the way most suited to present-day consciousness.)

In the child, then, the ego works itself into shape, but it takes some time for the ego to transform body and soul. Hence man enters into existence in such a way that, during the first few days, he displays none but inherited characteristics. During the first days the ego remains deep-hidden, waiting till it can work into the undefined physiognomy, that which it has itself taken from earlier lives, and what it can now develop from day to day and year to year. Before the child assumes the individual character which is its property alone it is impossible for it to express any relationship to the outer world, in laughing or crying; for, for this, the ego is needed, the individuality which seeks a bond and tries to put itself in harmony with its environment. It is the ego which in laughter or tears

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seeks to release itself from the objects, or, in a relation which it seeks, and cannot find, draws together its inmost being in its loss. Only the ego can express itself in laughter or tears. Thus we are dealing with the deepest spirituality of man when we study the revelations of man in tears or laughter.

A person who is disposed to confuse things, and therefore is unwilling to admit any real distinction between man and animal, will, of course, seek analogies for these things in the animal world. But if we see things aright, we shall agree with the poet who said that animals can attain only to howling, never to tears ; never to laughter, but only to grinning. This contains a deep truth ; for the animal does not raise itself to that individual selfhood existent in the essential being, but is ruled by laws, appearing to resemble the human selfhood, but so appertaining to the animal that they remain something external throughout its life. The animal does not bring this to individual expression—does not become individualized. This significant distinction between man and animal has already been mentioned. What interests us above all in the animal is comprised in the sort or species. There are, for example, not such marked distinctions between a lion and its progeny as there are between human beings. What appears to us in the animal, merges with and disappears into the sort or kind—the species. But in the human kingdom every person is a specific sort or kind. Whereas with the animal we are interested in and concerned with the species, with mankind we must be interested in

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and concerned about individuals. For, as regards human beings, every person has his own life-story, which is as interesting as the life-history of any particular species of the animal kingdom. Of course there are many cases in which it is claimed to be possible to write the biography of a cat or dog ; I have known schoolmasters who asked their children to write the biography of a steel pen. The fact is : it does not matter if an idea can be applied anywhere, but it does matter that we should penetrate, with our understanding, to what is essential in any thing or being. Up to the level of the animal individual biography is unessential, whereas with man it becomes the essential. In man the essential is what develops from incarnation to incarnation as individuality, while in the animal, evolution is from species to species. If the significance of such a biographical element is denied, the reason is not that its significance is less valuable than that of the natural laws of the external world, but that he who refuses to admit it fails to understand the real importance of the phenomenon.

In spiritual science what passes with animals from type to type and continues from species to species, is called the group-soul or group-ego of the animal : which, however, is regarded as something real. And we say that the animal has its ego, not within itself, but outside itself. We do not deny, in spiritual science, the animal ego, but speak of the group-ego by which the animal is externally controlled. With man, on the other hand, we speak of an individual ego penetrating right into the inmost part of the human being,

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and, as the fundamental individuality, controlling each one of us from within in such a way that we can stand in a personal relation to the beings in our environment. The general relation which an animal can establish through the external guidance of the group-ego, has also a typical and general character. What different animals love or hate, or fear, has a general, a type-character and is modified only in small degree, for instance, in domestic animals or in those which live with men. But what human beings feel in relation to the environment as hate or love, as fear or terror, sympathy or antipathy, they each develop individually in the ego, which goes from one incarnation to another. Thus the special relation by which man liberates himself from some object in his environment and then finds expression in laughter or the other relation in which he seeks but cannot find, which then has its physiognomic expression in tears, this is something which can exist in him alone. The more, then, that a child unfolds itself from the merely animal, the more does it show its humanity by laughter or tears. In order to have a true view of life we must not see the most important thing in the coarse facts of life, i.e., in similarity of bone and muscle between man and animal, or in the considerable resemblance in other organs. If we really want to establish the superiority of man over other earth-beings, we must look for the essentially human characteristics in the more subtle facts. If people cannot see the significance for a proper judgment of man and animals in such facts as laughter and tears, we can only regret that they

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cannot rise to the facts which matter most if we wish to understand man in his spirituality.

These facts which we are discussing through spiritual science, can throw light, moreover, on certain scientific discoveries : but only if these facts are placed within a great and spiritual whole. Laughter and tears are connected in man with something else. If we observe a person laughing or weeping we find that in these expressions of the human being there is not only the physiognomic expression, but that there is also a change and modification of the breathing process. If a man's sorrow goes as deep as tears and leads to the contraction of the astral body, so that the physical body contracts also, we can see that the in-breathing becomes shorter and shorter and the out-breathing longer and longer. In laughing the opposite is the case ; there is a long in- and short out-breathing. There really is a deep truth in the fact that when in a man his astral body is relaxed and with it the physical body in its finer parts, the position is like that of a hollow sphere vacuum, from which all the air has been pumped and which is exposed to the outer air, and the air rushes in. This liberation of the outer corporeality occurs in laughter and the air rushes in, in long draughts. In weeping we have the opposite : we press the astral together, and with it the physical, and the consequence is that the long breathing-out is produced by the contraction at one stretch.

Again, we have an instance where, what is experienced in the soul of man, through the presence of the ego, is connected with physical

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phenomena and those effects can be seen right into the physical body.

If we take these physiological results, we shall have a wonderful illumination of a spiritual fact, which has had pictorial expression in religious records—for the facts of spiritual science are regularly expressed in pictures. Remember the passage in the Old Testament where there is represented the raising of man to true humanity, when Jahve or Jehovah breathes into him the living breath and thereby makes him a living soul. That is the moment when stress is laid on, and our attention drawn to, the birth of the selfhood.

In the Old Testament the manner of the breathing is set up as being the expression of the real ego ; and the breath is brought into relation with the inner soul-quality of man. If then we note man's peculiar form of self-expression in laughter and tears, we see at once the close connection between the breathing process and the inner soul of man ; and we shall then regard the knowledge of this in religious records with the humility which only a true and deep understanding can give.

For spiritual science itself these records are of little importance. Even if all of them were lost in a catastrophe, spiritual research has the means to find for itself all that is at the root of them. Spiritual research is never dependent on records. But when the facts have been found which are recognized later in their indubitable pictorial expression our understanding of these records is very much deepened. We feel that these records could not contain all this, except through beings

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who knew what the spiritual investigator has found : spiritual eyes meet across the years. Then we gain the right attitude to these records. So when we are told how God breathed into man his own living breath, through which man would find the ego that dwells in him, we can see from this study of laughter and tears how true such a pictorial representation of human nature is.

There is one other thing to which I can make only a short reference, for otherwise it would lead us too far afield. I may be told that I have begun at the wrong end ; that I ought to have started with the external facts ; that the spiritual element should be sought where it appears as a purely natural occurrence, e.g., when one is tickled : which is the really elementary fact about laughter. That, I shall be told, will test all these absurdities about the expansion of the astral body and so on.

As a matter of fact, it is just in such a case that we really do find this expansion ; and everything that I have mentioned above does occur, even if on a lower level. When we are tickled on the sole of the foot, we meet a fact which we cannot, as it were, absorb with our understanding ; we reject it, want nothing to do with it. But when we tickle ourselves, we grasp it ; and then we do not laugh, for we know the origin. It is only when someone else does it that we meet something incomprehensible. The ego then tries to rise above it and to liberate itself, to set the astral body free. This freeing of the astral from an inappropriate contact expresses itself in laughter without motive. That is exactly a liberation of

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the ego, on a elementary level, from the attack made on us by the tickling of the foot, in which case we cannot reach any real understanding of the matter.

Laughing at a joke or at something comic stands at the same level. We laugh at a joke because the laugh brings us into right relationship with it. A joke associates things which in ordinary life are kept apart ; if they could be logically grasped they would not be comical. A joke associates relations which, unless we are more or less topsy-turvy-minded, are not called for by our understanding, but demand only that we should bring them together in a sort of play of the spiritual life. The moment we feel masters of this play, we free ourselves and rise above the content of the joke. This fact of liberation, of raising ourselves above something, we shall find in all cases where there is laughter. In the same way you will see that man's seeking for what he cannot find, with the consequent contraction in himself, is at the root of all cases of weeping.

But this relationship to the external world may or may not be justified. We may wish to liberate ourselves by laughter, with some justification ; or our own peculiarities may make us unwilling or unable to understand the particular process. Laughter then depends on our own shortcomings and not on the nature of things. This is what happens when a less highly-developed type of man laughs at a more highly developed one because he cannot understand him. If a man at a low stage of development fails to find the commonplace that he is looking for, he may think it unnecessary to

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attain to an understanding ; and thus he tries to free himself—just because perhaps he does not want to understand. So the habit easily arises of liberating himself on all occasions by laughter. Indeed it is natural in many men to laugh and bleat at everything, to attempt to understand nothing ; they puff up their astral body and are continually laughing. In all cases the same fact lies at the base ; but in some cases they may be justified in not seeking understanding, in others not. It may be, too, that the imperfections of fashion decide that something out of the ordinary is not understandable—which produces a smile since we think ourselves superior. You see, therefore, that laughter does not always necessarily indicate a justifiable withdrawal into oneself ; but that makes no difference to the fundamental fact about laughter.

It may happen again that we take into account something which is common in human life. Let us deal with the case of a speaker who takes into consideration the effect he produces on his hearers, whether agreement or disagreement. He reckons obviously with something which the human soul can experience. Now it may be sometimes justifiable to refer to things so trivial or so much below the level of his hearers that they may be described without forging any close bond between them and the soul of the hearer ; in fact, he may help his audience to free themselves from what lies below the level of the subject about which he wishes really to produce an understanding. He may then allow for his audience sharing his rejection of the above-mentioned triviality. But

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there are also speakers who always want to have the laugh on their side ; and I have heard men say that, if they want to win their case, they must tickle the laughing faculty and have the laugh on their side, since victory goes to the side which gains that laughter. This, too, may be due to inward dishonesty. For when we appeal to laughter we are appealing to something which is to raise us above a thing. We do, however, reckon with human vanity—even if men are not themselves conscious of it—when we put things in such a light that they need not soak themselves in them and can laugh about them only because they are depressed to a level where they appear trivial. This reckoning upon laughter may indicate a dishonest purpose. In the same way it is sometimes possible to win men over by stirring in them that feeling of comfort and well-being which I have described to-day as associated with tears. They feel in such cases when some loss is, as it were, brought only before the imagination, that now is the occasion to seek what cannot really be found, and to enjoy the comfort of tears ; and so the contraction of the ego fortifies the selfhood ; and often this appeal to the emotions is only an appeal to human selfishness. All these things may thus be grossly misused, since scorn and contempt, emotion, pain, sorrow, are associated with human egoism and selfishness, and with what strengthens and liberates the ego. It is our selfishness to which in such cases the appeal is made, and it is selfishness which destroys what binds man to man.

The human ego feels itself raised in freedom in laughter and what lies at the base of it, and the self

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is contracted through tears and what is connected with them. But other lectures have shown us how the ego not only works on the sentient-, rational- and consciousness-soul, but is itself through this activity made stronger and more perfect. Laughter and tears may thus be in a way a means of education. By raising itself to laughter the ego calls forth the forces of self-liberation, of its perfection and self-sufficiency within the world. In tears it can train itself to unite with what belongs to it and when it feels the loss in relation to that to which it belongs, the ego is enriched by its own contraction. Laughter and tears, therefore, do contain the means for educating the ego and its powers. The ego ascends in its freedom and connection with the world, by expressing itself in laughter and tears. It is no wonder then that among the great means of education and human development we count those human creations and products appealing to and stimulating the soul-forces expressed in laughter and tears.

In a tragedy, for instance, there really is a something which presses the astral body together and produces a sort of firmness and completeness in our ego, while a comedy extends the astral body, when we rise above the foolish, which then falls to pieces and sets the ego free. We can see, therefore, how important it is for human development that tragedy and comedy put their artistic creations before our soul.

In the observation of human nature and being in its smallest details, we find that everyday experiences can lead to the understanding of the greatest facts. What we see in art for instance

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shows us that in human nature there is something which swings as a pendulum between what is expressed in laughter and in tears. The ego can only progress by being in motion. If the pendulum were at rest, there would be no expansion or development, and the ego would succumb to an inner death. It is a necessity for human development that the ego on the one side can free itself through laughter, and on the other still seek itself in its loss through tears. Nevertheless, if a balance is sought between two poles, it must be found ; the ego will only find its completion in that balance, and never in the oscillation between exultation and despair. It can find itself only in the balance, which may pass as easily from one as from the other.

Man must gradually become the guide and leader of his own development ; if then we understand laughter and tears, we can see them as revelations of the spirit, for man becomes as it were transparent, if we know how in laughter he seeks an external expression for an inner liberation, and how in tears there is an inner strengthening when the ego has suffered loss in that world. We have then two poles, which reveal the secrets of the world.

To the question what laughter on the human countenance really is, we can answer that it is the spiritual expression of man's striving for liberation, that he may not be absorbed in things which are unworthy of him, but with a smile on his face may rise above things to which he must never be enslaved. In the same way, tears are a spiritual expression for the fact that man, even when he

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feels the threads broken between himself and some being in the external world, still seeks the thread in his loss ; for by strengthening himself in his tears, he emphasizes that he belongs to the world and the world to him ; as he shows by the fact that he cannot endure to be torn from it.

Now at last we can understand how this liberation, rising above everything low and evil, could be expressed in the Zarathustra smile, at which all the creatures of earth exulted and the spirits of evil fled. That smile is the symbol in world-history of the spiritual elevation of the ego above everything which might suffocate it. When the ego, however, comes to a moment, when it says that existence is valueless and it wants no communion with it ; when therefore a power must rise up in the ego to force upon its consciousness the fact that the world belongs to it and it to the world, the expression for this feeling may be found in Goethe's : 'The tears pour forth ; the earth holds me again.' This makes us feel that we cannot be cut off from the earth and that we assert our connection with the world, when it seems to be taken from us, even in our tears. And for this there is justification in the deepest secrets of the world. The connection of man with the world is proclaimed to us by the tears upon his face, and his liberation from all lower things which seek to hold him down, in the smile upon his countenance.

VI

MYSTICISM

THE idea which is to be the subject of to-day's lecture is one on which there is nowadays generally complete confusion of thought. Not long ago I heard someone, a cultured scholar, declare that Goethe might really be included among the mystics, since after all, he admitted that there exists something dark and inscrutable. It would be no exaggeration to say that the opinion of many could be summed up in such an expression. Think of all that we call 'mystic' or 'mysticism'. When we are not quite clear about something, if we have a sort of vague idea hovering between not-knowing and a quite dim and obscure notion, we call a thing mystical or mysterious. When we are tempted, because of a too convenient method of thinking and of psychical research, to assert that we have no real knowledge of a thing, and then, as a matter of course, forbid further investigation to the rest of the world, we call this mysticism. In fact, anything, about which we admit that we have only a faint notion, is likely to be included in the subject-matter of mysticism.

It is true that if we study the word even only in

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its historical origin, we shall gain a very different idea as to what great men have understood by mysticism, and what they imagined themselves to possess in it. We shall then see that there have been men who, so far from taking the obscure and inscrutable as the subject-matter of mysticism, described as its content what can be attained only by a higher clarity and a brighter light of the soul : in fact, that the clarity given by the other sciences stops just where the clarity of mysticism begins. That is the conviction of men who claim really to have been mystics ; and we find some mysticism in the earliest periods of human development. Still, what was contained in the Mysteries which we have so often mentioned, of the Egyptians, of the Greeks, and of Asiatic peoples, and what was there called mysticism, is so far removed from our modern conceptional mode of thought, that it is very hard at the start to give an idea of mysticism, if we are going to refer to these old forms of human mystical experience. We may perhaps get nearest to modern conceptions if we take first the type closest to us, as it appears in the German mystics, from Meister Eckhart, in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, up to its culmination in the incomparable mystic Angelus Silesius. If we search here, we shall find that this mysticism seeks a true knowledge of the deepest foundations of the earth ; and the search of these mystics which can best be understood to-day, must be looked at in a particular way. It is a search for the foundations of existence through a purely inward soul-experience, a knowledge which is sought particularly by the liberation of the soul from external

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impressions and perceptions ; so that withdrawing as it were from the external world, the soul tries to pierce into the depth of its own life. When a mystic of this sort can forget, for a short or long period, everything which the senses or his understanding tell him of the external world, when he diverts his attention wholly from the external world, and lives entirely in his own soul, seeking what is still left and can still be experienced, when the soul is alone with itself : it is then that such a mystic feels that he is on the path to the knowledge he seeks. He thinks that by the inner experience of what the soul creates within itself and can make active within itself, he can not merely see what is in ordinary life called thought, feeling and will, but he believes that behind this ordinary thinking, feeling and willing he can perceive the foundations from which the soul itself emerges : that is the divine and spiritual foundation of all being. Since such mystics see in the soul the highest form of being, because they see in the soul that which may call itself truly and literally the child of the divine spirituality, they think they tread the surest path if they can pierce through the ordinary soul-life to the source from which it sprang and to which they believe the soul must return. In other words, the mystic thinks that by withdrawal into his inner soul-life he can find the divine foundation of the world which he could not find by any amount of analysis of external phenomena and any attempt to understand them by his intellect. He believes that what offers itself to our outer sense forms a dense veil through which man cannot directly penetrate

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to the divine foundations by human knowledge ; but that the immediate soul-experiences are a far thinner veil, so that it is easier to pass thus on the inner path to the divine foundation of being, which must be also at the base of external phenomena. This type of mystical experience is that of Meister Eckhart, of Johannes Tauler and of Suso, and continues right through the mysticism of the age down to Angelus Silesius.

We must clearly realize that these men did not imagine that by this path of search for knowledge they would find only what could be regarded immediately ' *a priori* ' as the result of this inner search. In the lectures during this winter—*Metamorphoses of the Soul*¹ —we have dealt in the most diverse ways and from the most diverse aspects with this inner soul-search. We saw that if we look into what is rightly called man's inner being, we come first to the darkest underworld of the soul, where the soul is still subject to feelings of fear, terror, hope and anxiety, to what we called the ladder or gamut of pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow. This part of the soul we summed up in what is called the sentient-soul. We went on to distinguish in the dark foundations of human soul-experience what is called the rational-soul, to which we attain when the ego, the central point of the soul-life, works over the external impressions, and in silent surrender allows that which can arise in the sentient-soul to work itself out and to find its equilibrium. We said also that what may be called an inner truth arises in the rational-soul.

¹ [English Edition—see advertisement at end of book.]

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When the ego then works further, in its inner activity, on what it has achieved by its rise into the rational-soul, it makes its way up to the consciousness-soul, where first a clear knowledge of the ego is possible, where man is led from a mere inner life to a knowledge, a real knowledge of the world. If we keep these three parts of soul-life before us, we have the outline of what we find when we sink ourselves immediately into our inner being. We find out then how the ego, or 'ich' works on these three parts of the soul.

Those mystics who looked for knowledge in the way I describe believed that they could find yet more by diving thus into the depths of soul-life. For them, what I have described, was still but the veil through which they had to pass in order to reach the source of being. Above all, these mystics believed that when they attained to the source of being, they would themselves undergo as inward experience what was represented in external history as the Christ-life and the Christ-death.

Now when this mystical diving in the soul occurs, even if in the medieval sense, the process is such that the mystic stands first of all face to face with the external world with its manifold impressions on eyes, ears, and other senses. He feels that he has the world of light, of colour and of sound and warmth before him together with all that his senses tell him ; and the first step is for him to work upon all this with his intellect. But he remains tied to the external world and he cannot penetrate through the thick veil to the source of all that appears to him as tone, colour and sensation. The soul retains in its ideas a picture of

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the external world, but retains more than anything what itself perceived and felt at the moment of the impression : whether it was with pleasure or with pain, with sympathy or antipathy. A man's ego, with his interests and his whole inner life, always directs him towards the external world which makes impressions on him, some of which elate while others depress him. At the first effort of the mystic to stand apart from the outer world, he retains the ideas and memories which give the pictures of that world, but at the same time he retains all that he received in his impressions and feelings as his subjective impression of the world. He stands therefore with everything which the external world has wrought in him, with everything which it has created in his soul, from morning till evening, with all that arises in the soul as pleasure or pain. Thus in the first stage the inner life appears to us as the repetition and reflection of outer life.

Does the soul remain empty, then, when it tries to forget everything which is reflected within it by the external world ; when it obliterates all impressions and ideas of the world ? The true mystic experience is just this ; that the soul has other possibilities ; that when it, as it were, forgets, not merely its memories but all it feels of sympathy or antipathy, it still has some content. The mystic feels that the impressions of the external world with its variegated pictures and its effects on the soul results in something being obscured and repressed in the inner life, seeking to shoot up in the secret abysses of the soul. He feels that if he submits to the external world, this life in the

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external world is like a strong and mighty light which outshines and extinguishes the finer inner experiences of the soul, as a powerful light extinguishes a weaker. Thus when the impressions of the outer world are obliterated, there blazes up what is usually dimmed, the 'inner spark', as Eckhart calls it. We then experience in the soul, not a nothing, but something which previously did not appear to exist, which was imperceptible because of the turmoil of the external world.

To attain clarity, the mystic then asks if what he experiences in the soul can be compared with what he experiences in the outer world. He finds that it cannot ; that there is a radical difference between it and our experience in the sense-world. There, by our nature, we cannot penetrate into things, since we see only their outside. In their case, even if we are only seeing colour or hearing sounds, we feel that there is something behind them which we must for the moment take to be a hidden part of things ; but in the experiences of the soul which arise when we remove the impressions and ideas of the sense-world, we are ourselves part of them, and we cannot say that we see only the outside of them. For that which compels us to conjecture a hidden inside, is eliminated in a real inward experience. If we have the gift for really surrendering to the inner light, we see its true being, and thus see it to be wholly different from what meets us in the outer world : which appears before us in springing up and fading, in flowering and in decay, in birth and death. But when we observe what appears in the soul when the little spark begins to gleam, we notice

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at once that all the ideas of coming into being and fading away, of birth and death, are not applicable to it ; that we meet something entirely independent, in relation to which the ideas of flowering and withering, of outward and inward which we find in the external world, have no more any meaning. It is therefore no longer surface, an outside of things which we grasp, but *the thing itself in its true being*. By this means also we attain the inner knowledge, assuring us of the reality of what is imperishable in ourselves and of what is akin, in ourselves, to that which we must imagine as the spirit, which forms the basis of all matter. This experience the mystic feels in such a way that he says he must kill off and overcome in himself all that his other experiences convey ; that his ordinary soul-life must die in him and death spread itself far ; then the real soul arises as victor over birth and death. This awakening of the ' *inner core* ' of the soul, after the death of the ordinary soul-life, is felt by the mystic as an inner awakening, as an imitation of what is pictorially represented in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Thus he sees the Christ-event take place in himself, in his soul and spirit, as an inner mystical experience.

We must be quite clear when following the mystic on this path that such mystic experience must lead everywhere to what we may call a unity of all experience. It is indeed of the nature of soul-life that we should pass from the manifold sense-impulses, the rise and fall of perceptions and feelings, the manifold fullness of thoughts, to simplification, because within the soul the ego

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is at work as the centre of life and is always working at unity in our whole soul-life. It is clear, then, that when the mystic treads this path of psychic experience, the effect must be that everything manifold and varied strives after that simplicity which the ego gives when it lives in our inner being. In all mystics, therefore, we find a philosophy which we may call a spiritual monism, a striving for unity. When the mystic rises to the realization that the inner being of the soul has qualities which are fundamentally different from those of the externally revealed world, he experiences in his inner being the identity of what lies in the soul as its core, with the divine spiritual first cause—which is therefore represented as unitary.

The following should be taken simply as a narrative. It is impossible to reproduce the sayings of a mystic in a modern sense, except as mystic life which the individual soul has passed through as its most intimate experience. In that case the strange things told us by the mystic can be compared with one's own experience. An external criticism is, however, impossible, because a narrative account of a mystic's experiences can only be allowed if one has not had it oneself. From the basic standpoint of our lectures, we shall see that the path of the mystic is the path to the inner life ; that is, even if we only look at things historically, in the history of man, merely one of the paths. We may have different views of what is the right path, but this is at least one of the paths which the human spirit has taken in its search. We shall never achieve real clearness about the

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true meaning of mysticism if we do not throw also some light on the other path which is possible. The path of the mystic leads him to unity, to one divine, spiritual being : and this is the result of his taking the inward path where the ego accomplishes the unity of the soul-experiences. The other path, with which the mystical investigation of the basis of existence may be compared, is the path which the human spirit has always sought when it has tried to pierce through the veil of the external world to the foundations of existence. In these cases it is predominantly man's active thought which has tried, through what the senses can perceive and common sense grasp, to comprehend, in deeper thought, what lies under the surface of things. Now what is the natural end of such a path, in contradistinction to mysticism? If everything is taken into account, it can have no other issue than the conclusion, from the manifold variety of external things, that a similar variety of spiritual foundations of life exists. In modern times men like Leibnitz and Herbart who have tried to follow this path of thought, have seen that you cannot explain the fullness of external phenomena from any unity. They found what we may call the true antithesis to all mysticism : monadology. Their conclusion was that the world, or at least the kingdom of the foundations of the world, consists of a multiplicity of monads or spiritual entities.

Thus Leibnitz, the great thinker of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries : ' If we look at what meets us in space and time, we shall not find

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a satisfactory answer if we believe that it originates in unity. Many unities must be working together in it.' The complementary working of the monads which he imagines as spiritual, the activity of a world of monads, produces what appears before the eye, the ear, and the outer senses. I cannot deal with it at length to-day, but a deeper study of the evolution of spirit would show that all who have looked for unity on the outward path were primarily the victims of a delusion, since they projected outwards, like a sort of shadow, the unity which is only experienced inwardly in mysticism. They believed that the unity, which they had discovered on the inner path, lay at the base also of the external world comprehended by thought. Healthy thought, however, cannot see unity in the external world, but finds that all that confronts us as manifold variety, is due to the activity of different monads which mutually influence each other. Mysticism leads to unity because the ego works in our inner being as a single centre of the soul. The path via the external world leads of necessity to multiplicity, plurality, to monadology, that is, to the view that many spirit-beings work together in order to produce our world, because, when we as human observers of the world look outwards, we achieve knowledge of the external world through a multiplicity of organs and observations.

This brings us to a point of infinite significance and importance which should be emphasized but which receives far too little attention in the history of the life of the spirit : mysticism leads to unity, but the fact that it recognizes the divine basis of

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existence as one, is due to the constitution of the soul, to the ego. Our ego puts its stamp on the unity, when we look as inward mystics at the divine spirit. The observation of the external world leads to the multiplicity of monads ; but it is only our method of observation and the way in which the external world faces us, that leads to that variety, which Leibnitz and Herbart see as the foundations of the world. A still deeper study leads to the realization that unity and multiplicity are concepts inapplicable to the presumed divine spiritual foundations of the world ; they are useless for a description of these, and cannot be described in their true being by calling them either unitary or pluralistic. We must say that spiritual foundations are raised above both unity and multiplicity ; these concepts cannot fathom the divine spiritual.

This is a law which will throw a good deal of light on the philosophical dispute between monism and monadology : which are so often put forward as opposites. But if the disputants realized that they were handling weapons inadequate for the understanding of the world foundation, they would begin to throw some light on the subject of their discussion.

We have then found what is the essence of mysticism. It is an inner experience, of such a kind that it leads the mystic to a real knowledge. Even if it were wrong for him to say that such is the truth, when he describes the subject of his experience as a unity, since that unity has its origin only in his own ego, he may still claim that he does experience the spiritual substantiality, as one living within it.

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In passing from this general description and account of mysticism to individual mystics, we frequently come across facts which its opponents use as argument against mysticism. We find that this inner experience of the single individuality assumes individual forms ; that is, that the experiences of one mystic do not agree entirely with those of another. If we think clearly, we shall find nothing really surprising in this, for, because two men have a different experience of something, it by no means follows that what they are talking about is false. If one sees a tree from the right and another from the left and each describes it from his own point of view, it still remains the same tree, and both descriptions are true. This simple picture will show why the soul-experiences of mystics differ : after all, mystics do not approach their inner life as complete *tabula rasa*. However much it may be their ideal to kill off and obliterate external experiences and to withdraw attention from them, yet these do leave a remnant in them and the various experiences of different mystics do matter. It does matter from which race the mystic has sprung and what his experiences are, in life. If he casts out from his soul everything which he has experienced, yet what he experiences inwardly will receive an impress from what he lived through ; and moreover it has to be described in words and concepts and ideas borrowed from his own life. Two mystics may experience exactly the same thing, even if they describe it in different ways, as a result of their former life. It is only when we are able, through our own personal experience to allow for

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what is individual in the description, that we shall grasp that fundamentally the reality of mystical experience is in all cases the same, however differently different mystics may express themselves. It is in fact as if one were to photograph a tree from many aspects, so that the photographs would differ, but the tree is yet the same.

But there is another objection which is made against mystic experience ; and since I must speak without bias one way or the other and must give an objective account, I may not conceal the fact that this is a valid objection against all mysticism. Just because mystic experience is an inner and intimate experience and the mystic retains a remnant, left over in his individual experiences from his earlier life before he became a mystic it is as a rule extraordinarily difficult for the things which a mystic expresses, just because they are in so close a union with his own soul, to be rightly understood or assimilated by another soul. The most intimate must always to some extent remain intimate in all mysticism and is almost impossible to communicate : however keen one may be to understand and enter into what is said. The reason is that, while what is actually experienced by two mystics during the mystical experience may be the same, if only both are advanced far enough—anyone with goodwill realizes that both talk of the same thing—yet they have passed through different lives before their mystical experience. Hence the individual colouring of that experience. The form and the imprint of the statement which is not derived from the mystical experience but originates in the pre-mystical life of

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the mystic, will always remain somewhat unintelligible to us, if we do not make the effort to understand the mystic through his pre-mystic life, and thus get some idea why he describes his experiences in this way. But this diverts our observation from the universally valid to a personal interest in the mystic ; and this can be seen in the history of mysticism.

Thus with the deepest mystics, particularly, we must set aside the idea that their cognition as they describe it can be transferred to others and taken up by them. Mystical cognition can hardly be made into a generalized human knowledge.

But this only strengthens our interest in the personality of the mystic, and it is infinitely attractive to study the mystic in so far as the universal world image is reflected in him. Thus what the mystic describes and only values, because it leads him to the foundations and sources of existence, will be for us, at least as regards what he tells us objectively, of little interest : while we shall find our interest in the single individual, in the subjective in the mystic individuality. The student of the mystic and his mysticism then finds value in just what the mystic tries to overcome, in the personal, the immediate, in his attitude to the world. We can learn much of the depth of human nature when we study the history of man, when we pass from one mystic to another ; but it will be very difficult for us—this cannot be sufficiently emphasized—to find in the words of a mystic anything which, as he phrases it, is universally valid for us.

Mysticism can still be opposed by pluralism,

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whose aim it is to observe and think over the external world which is common to all men. These systems may contain error upon error but discussion about them is possible and some result attainable from a subjective point of view. In this sense indeed an error of a pluralist would be intelligible according to his stage of development.

The mysticism which I have been discussing here can thus be very fascinating, but we shall recognize its limits quite objectively, if we allow our soul to be influenced by the description of it I have just given.

Another light is thrown on mysticism when we measure it by the method of spiritual science, a method of penetrating to the real foundations of existence which can be deduced from the deeper spiritual life of the present. It is common to find that the best way of understanding a subject, which is made difficult by the subtlety of its ideas, is to measure it by some other object related to it.

It has often been stated in these lectures that there is an ascent to higher worlds. The path is relatively threefold. We have mentioned the outward and the inward path, the last taken not by the mystics of the old mysteries, but by the medieval mystics. In the latter case we have been able to define its limits. We will now turn from both these paths to that which can be called the true path of spiritual science or spiritual research.

We have already seen that this science does not consist merely in taking a path, either as outward path to the substrata of what is revealed to the senses, that is, to the monads, nor taking an inward

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path to what exists as the foundation of one's own soul, to the mystical unity of the world. On the contrary, the spiritual science method reveals that man can go not only along paths which the knowledge immediately available to him makes possible, but that he possesses hidden, sleeping faculties of knowledge, starting from which he can find other paths than the two just mentioned. By following either of the first two paths, a person remains, as he is, and what he has become ; he may attempt to pierce the veil of the sense-world and penetrate to the substrata of existence ; he may obliterate his external experiences and allow the spark to arise which is usually damped and darkened by the external world till it escapes notice. But at the back of spiritual science is the idea that man is not to remain as he is with his faculties of knowledge, developed as they are to-day. Just as man has developed into what he now is, so, if he uses the right method, he can develop his soul and develop higher faculties of knowledge than he has to-day. To contrast this with the mystical type of knowledge : if we eliminate the outer soul-life, this may lead us to the discovery of the inner spark, till we can see how it shines and flames up when the external is damped down ; but this is still only an observation of what is already there. Spiritual science, on the other hand, is not content with that ; it attains to the spark, but it does not stop there ; it tries to find methods which can make the spark a far stronger light. We may take the outward path or the inward, but since we develop new faculties of knowledge we do not take either path as a matter of course. The new form of spiritual

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science is distinguished from the medieval type of mysticism, as also from pluralism and the old teaching of the Mysteries, in its development of the inner faculties of knowledge, so that both paths, the outward one, and the inward one to the mystic spark, can be one : in fact we tread a path which brings us equally to both ends.

This is due to the fact, that the development of the higher faculties by the methods of modern spiritual science, leads man through three stages of knowledge. The first stage, which goes beyond ordinary knowledge, is called imaginative cognition, the second inspired cognition and the third, in the true sense, intuitive cognition. How is the first stage attained and what is accomplished in the soul in order that higher faculties may be developed ? The way in which it arises will show you how pluralism and mysticism are transcended by this path of cognition of modern spiritual science. The example leading most easily to the understanding of imaginative cognition, has already been mentioned several times ; it is an example from the methods employed by the spiritual scientist on himself. It is one out of many, which are best given in the form of a dialogue between master and pupil.

The teacher, who wants to educate a pupil in the higher faculties leading to imagination, would say to him : ' Look at the plant, it grows up out of the soil and unfolds leaf by leaf till it is in flower. Compare this plant with man as he stands before you.' ' Man has something more than the plant, in that the world is reflected in his ideas, feelings and sensations, he excels the plant in what we call

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human consciousness. But he has had to purchase this consciousness by absorbing in himself on his path towards becoming man, passions, impulses and desires which may lead him into error, wrong and evil. The plant grows according to its natural laws, it unfolds its being according to these laws, and it stands before us, pure, with its green sap, so that, unless we indulge in fancies we cannot attribute to it any desires, passions or impulses which could divert it from the right path. If now we observe the blood as it circulates through man, the blood which is the external expression of the human consciousness, of the human ego, and contrast it with the green chlorophyll sap permeating the plant, we shall realize that this streaming pulsating blood is the expression as much of man's elevation to higher consciousness, as it is of the passions and impulses which drag him down.' 'Then'—the teacher might continue—'imagine that man develops further, that through his ego he overcomes error, evil and ugliness, everything which tries to drag him down to evil; that he purifies and refines his passions and affections. Picture an ideal to which man strives, when his blood will no longer be the expression of any passions but only of that which is master within him of all that might drag down. Then his red blood may be compared with what in plant sap has changed in the red rose. Just as the red rose shows us the plant sap in all its purity and yet in a higher stage than that displayed in the plant, so the red blood of man, purified and refined, would show what man has attained when he has mastered all that might drag him down.'

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These feelings and ideas may be produced by the teacher in the soul and spirit of the pupil ; and if the pupil is not dry as dust, but can feel the secrets which are represented pictorially in such a comparison, his whole soul will be affected and he will have an experience which will pass spiritually before him as a symbol of the experience. This symbol is the Cross of Roses, the black cross which expresses what has been slain in man's lower nature and the rose which represents the red blood, purified and refined, until it is the expression of a pure and higher soul. The black cross wreathed with red roses becomes the symbolical summing-up of what the soul experiences in this dialogue of master and pupil. If the pupil puts before his soul this symbol which he has purchased with his own blood, having allowed all the ideas and feelings and sensations to work on his soul, which justify him in summing it all up in the rosy cross, if he does not merely pretend to put before himself the cross, but has in it the essence of an inner quality won by a bleeding soul, he will know that this picture, or similar ones, have called something forth from his soul. This is no longer merely the spiritual spark, but a new power of cognition, which makes him capable of seeing the world in a new way. In this case he has not rested on what he was in his life hitherto, but he has developed his soul further. If he does this again and again, he reaches finally the imaginative cognition which shows him that the external world contains something more than the external.

Now let us see how this knowledge came into being. Did we say to ourselves that we would

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take the outward path and seek for the basis of things ? to a certain extent, yes. For we went to the external world and looked for the basis of things, not in molecules or atoms, not even in the immediate data of that world ; but we have retained something of what that world gives us. The black cross could not rise up in the soul, if there was no wood in the world, nor could the soul ever construct the rose, unless it had had the impression of the red rose in the outer world. Thus, at least the content of the soul is taken from the external world.

We cannot say then that like the mystic we have obliterated everything from the external world and diverted our attention completely from that world ; but we have taken from it what it can give us for our need. We have not shut the door upon the outer world, we have submitted to it ; but we have not taken it in the way in which it gives itself : there is no rosy cross in the real world. That which we make use of to make the cross a symbol is found in the outer world, but not the cross itself. What was it, then, which made us combine these two, the rose and the cross, into one picture ? It was the work of our own souls. What we experience in our souls, when we surrender to the external world, what we experience in that world if we do not merely stare at it, but become absorbed in it : what we learn from the comparison of the plant and man developing upwards—all this we have made into an inner mystic experience. We have refrained from treating this soul-experience as medieval mystics, but have sacrificed our soul-experiences to that which the external world can

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give us, and have formed a symbol by means of that which the soul can inwardly give us. In the symbol outer and inner mystical life is fused. We must never say that the rosy cross is a truth over against the outer world and not also over against the inner world ; for we could never construct the cross in the inner world, if we had not received the impressions from the external world. Into the symbol has flowed together what the soul can experience and know from its inner being and what it can receive from without. And so our attitude to it is that it leads us, immediately, neither to the outer nor the inner world, but that it works as a force. If we put this before us in meditation, this force creates a new spiritual eye and we can see into a spiritual world which, till now, we had been able to find neither without nor within. And we now can divine that, what lies at the basis of the external world and what we can experience through imaginative knowledge, is identical with what is also found in our inner being.

If we ascend now to ' inspirational knowledge ', we have to strip off something from our picture. We have to do something very similar to the procedure of the mystic who passes inward. We have to forget the rose and the cross. It is difficult, but possible. We have to remove the whole content of the picture from our conception ; and however hard it may be, it must be done.

Soul-activity was necessary, in order to place this simile in a symbol before the soul. We have to observe the soul itself, what it has done, before it could put before itself the idea of the black

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cross, as the man in us whom we have to overcome ; we have to put before ourselves the inner experience during this forming of symbols. Thus when we deepen ourselves mystically in the knowledge or cognition won by the soul, we reach 'inspirational knowledge'. In the new faculty of inspiration we see that not only does the spark appear in our inner being but that it blazes forth into a mighty force of cognition, and so we experience something which appears as closely related to our inner being and yet is wholly independent of it. For we shall have studied our activity, not as it is, merely as an inner quality, but as something which has exercised itself on the external. Thus there remains in this mystic remnant what is no more than a knowledge of the inner being and yet also a knowledge of what is connected with the outer world.

Now we come to a task which is opposed to that of the mystic. We have to act in the manner of ordinary natural science and go forth into the external world. It is difficult, but necessary, if we are to attain 'intuitive knowledge'. In this case, we must divert our attention from our own activity, forget what we have done in order to bring before us the rosy cross. But if we are patient and carry out the exercises long enough and in the right way, we shall see that something remains of which we know for certain that it is wholly independent of our own inner experience and has no subjective colouring. It leads us to something which is independent of our own personality but, through its objective being, shows that it is related to the centre of the human being,

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the human ego. In 'intuitive knowledge', we pass out of ourselves, in order to attain it ; yet we reach something which is similar to our own inner being. So we ascend from what we experience within ourselves to the spiritual, which we no longer experience in ourselves, but in the external world.

In 'imaginative knowledge', man accomplishes something which raises him above both mysticism and monadology. In 'inspirational knowledge' he takes the same step on a higher stage, which the mystic takes on a lower stage, since humanly he remains as he is. In 'intuitive knowledge' the spiritual pupil takes a step, which leads him, at the proper stage of development, and not as he is now, into the outer world. Thus in the path of spiritual science, in imagination, inspiration and intuition we overcome all that seems to be the shadow side of monadology and the usual mysticism.

Now we can answer the question what is mysticism. It is an enterprise of the human soul, in order to find the divine spiritual source of existence, by deepening itself in its own inner being. Fundamentally, spiritual science must take this mystical path also ; but it has no doubt that it must not take it too soon, that it must make preparations for taking this path. Mysticism is thus an enterprise which arises from a just urge and impulse of the human soul, something in form perfectly just ; which, however, may be undertaken too early, if the soul has not first tried to make progress in 'imaginative knowledge'. When we desire to deepen our ordinary human life

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in mysticism, there is the danger that, not having made ourselves sufficiently free and independent of ourselves, we are unable to produce anything but a picture of the world coloured by our personality. If we have arisen to 'imaginative knowledge', we have poured out our inner being into something borrowed from the external world ; we have then gained the right to be a mystic. All mysticism must therefore be undertaken at the proper stage of human development. The dangers arise when we try to achieve too early what is the basis of mystical knowledge.

Therefore, in the proper form of mysticism, spiritual science has a stage which enables us to understand what is the real aim and intention of spiritual scientific research. There is hardly anything from which we can learn so much in that respect as a devotional study of the mystics. By coming to grips with them we may attain spiritual knowledge. It is wrong to think that the spiritual scientist denies all evolution, when he regards what we may call mysticism, as justified. It is justified, but only when we have risen to a certain stage, when its results are not subjective but the expression of objective reality in the spiritual world. We can then answer the question what is mysticism, by saying that it is an enterprise of the human soul, which is often undertaken at a too early stage in the development of the individual soul. In that case we need not say much about the dangers which a too early devotion to mystical methods can produce : for it is to dive into the depths of the soul, before man has prepared himself in such a way that his inner being may grow

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into the outer world. Then he often closes the door wrongly on the outer world, and this is in reality only a subtle and refined egoism. This is indeed what happens with many mystics, when they turn away from that world and revel in inner raptures, and ecstasies, joys and enchantments which they feel within themselves during the ecstasy which fills the soul of the mystic. This egoism however can be overcome, if the ego is compelled first to pass out of itself, and be busy in the creation of symbols flowing into the outer world. Hence a symbolism of 'imaginative knowledge' leads to a truth, which strips off the egoistic character. The danger, which the mystic runs, if he undertakes the mystical striving after knowledge at too low a stage, is that he should become an eccentric ; or a refined egoist, despising others. Mysticism is justified ; and what Angelus Silesius said is true :

' When thou risest above thyself and God
holds sway,
Thou treadest within thy spirit Heaven's way.'

Man attains, by the development of his soul, not only his inner being but also the spiritual kingdoms at the base of the external world. But he must take in earnest the rising above himself ; and it must not be confused with a mere brooding within himself, such as already exists within him. He must take seriously both the first phrase ' When thou risest above thyself ' and also the second ' Let God hold sway '. But we do not let Him hold sway, if we withdraw ourselves from any

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aspect of the divine revelation ; we do let Him hold sway if we unite the inner and the outer as two aspects of the divine spiritual revelation. We do not allow God full sway if we withdraw from the outer world, but when we are able to sacrifice our own inner being to that, which can flow towards us as the revelation of the outer world. When we think thus as regards our spiritual scientific cognition, we take the second sentence of Angelus Silesius in the right way. We let the divine spiritual basis of the outer and inner world hold sway in us, and only then may we hope that the third sentence will come true for us, that we may ' tread in Heaven's way '. That is that we reach a spiritual kingdom, which is coloured neither by our inner nor by the external world, but has the same basis as all the shining and infinite world of stars around us, as the atmosphere which envelops the earth, as the budding plant, as the living rivers and oceans, the same divine spiritual quality, which lives when we think and feel and will ; all that is divine and spiritual in the external and the inner. Such examples will show us that it is not enough to read a sentence like this of Angelus Silesius but that we must take it up, at the right stage, at which alone it can be wholly true for us and understood and absorbed. In that case we shall see that mysticism, because it has the right core, really can lead us to a point, where we ripen gradually for the vision of the spiritual worlds, and that it can make real for us, in the truest and highest sense, what we can seek and find in the beautiful saying of Angelus Silesius : ' If thou risest above thyself and truly

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allowest the divine spiritual basis of the world to hold sway within thee, then thou wilt tread the heavenly path to the divine-spiritual foundations of existence.'

VII

PRAYER

IN the lecture on Mysticism I spoke of the particular form of mystic absorption which appeared in the Middle Ages from the time of Meister Eckhart down to Angelus Silesius. This type of mysticism has the distinguishing mark that the mystic seeks to become free of all the experiences stirred in our souls by the external world. He seeks to acquire the feeling which proves to him that, even when everything of the everyday is removed from the soul, and the soul withdraws within itself, there yet remains within this human soul a world of its own. This world exists always but is outshone by the experiences which work so powerfully on man from without, and thus it generally appears as a faint light, so faint that most men do not even notice it. The mystic usually calls it the 'spark'. Yet he feels sure that it can be fanned to a 'mighty flame' which will illuminate the sources and bases of existence; in other words, leading man along the path of his soul to the knowledge of his origin—which indeed may be called 'knowledge of God'.

In the same lecture we observed how medieval mystics held that this spark must grow by itself

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constituted as it is at the moment. In opposition to this we pointed out that modern spiritual research calls for a development, conscious and under our own control, of these inner soul-forces, so that they can rise to higher forms of knowledge, which was designated the imaginative, the inspirational and the intuitive. This medieval absorption is thus the starting of the true higher spiritual research, which does indeed seek the spirit by the development of the inner being, but which, through the method of approach, is led beyond it, to that which is the source and foundation of the existence of all facts and phenomena, and of our own souls as well. Mysticism therefore appeared as a sort of first step to true spiritual investigation. If we have the ability to sink ourselves in the fervour of a Meister Eckhart, to recognize what an immeasurable force of spiritual knowledge it brought to Johannes Tauler, to see how deeply Valentin Weigel or Jacob Boehme were initiated in the secrets of existence by all that they attained by such absorption, even though they passed beyond it ; to understand what an Angelus Silesius became through its means, how he was enabled not only to gain an illuminating insight into the great laws of spiritual order, but to utter with glowing rapturous beauty all sorts of sayings about world-secrets, we shall then be able to realize the depth and force of this medieval mysticism and what an enormous help it can be to anyone who wants to tread the path of spiritual investigation for himself. Medieval mysticism thus appears to us, particularly as the result of that lecture, as the great and wonderful preparatory school for

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spiritual research. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? After all, our own object is simply to develop that spark, of which these mystics spoke, through its own inner forces. They believed that they might surrender themselves in the peace of their soul to the little glimmering spark, so that it might begin to burn and flame ever more brilliantly of itself; whereas spiritual science is convinced that we must use the capacities and forces which are placed by the wisdom of the world under our control, for the growth of the spark.

On the one hand, then, this mystical attitude is a good preparation and guide for spiritual science; on the other we have as a preparation for that medieval absorption the activity of soul with which we are to deal at greater length, and which we may call, in the true sense, prayer. Just as the mystic is enabled to attain his absorption because he has, even though unconsciously, trained his soul to have the right temper for such mysticism, so if we want to work our way to this absorption, to tread a path which shall end there, we shall find a preparation in true prayer.

In the development of the last centuries, even from spiritual aspect, the essence of prayer has been misunderstood in many ways by various spiritual currents of thought. Thus it will not be easy for us to get a true understanding of it. If we remember, however, that the last centuries have been associated with the appearance particularly of egoistic currents of spiritual thought, which have laid hold of all sorts of people, we shall not be surprised, if prayer has been dragged down

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among the egoistic wishes and desires of men. In fact prayer can hardly be more misunderstood than when it is permeated with some form of egoism. In this lecture we shall try to study prayer entirely from the point of view of spiritual science, without *parti pris*.

To get some idea of prayer—but this is only intended to give a preliminary understanding of it—we might say that, while the mystic assumes the existence in his soul of some spark which his mystical absorption can brighten and illuminate, prayer is intended to *produce* that spark, that special life of the soul. Prayer, whatever leads to it, displays its efficacy just in this stirring of the soul, either so that we discover gradually that spark of the soul, if it is there and lives, though hidden, in the soul, or else kindle it. To study the need for, and the essence of, prayer, we shall have to enter on a description of the soul in its depth : of which in an earlier lecture it was said that the words of Herakleitos, the Greek philosopher, were only too true : ‘ You can never fathom the boundaries of the soul, even though you tread every path ; so all-embracing is the soul.’ Thus, even if in prayer we seek only for the secrets of the soul, it is true that these inmost feelings which are stirred in prayer, teach even the simplest of us something of the infinite expanses of soul-life.

We have to comprehend this soul, as it lives in us and carries us forward in life, somewhat as follows. This soul which is in process of living evolution does not merely come from the past and progress into the future, but at every moment of

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its life it carries within itself something of the past, and indeed of the future also. In the actual moment, in which we are living, there penetrate both the effects of the past and the effects which, as it were, hasten towards it from the future. Anyone, who can see deeply into the life of the soul, will feel that there are two streams continually meeting in the soul, one rising from the past, and another meeting us from the future. Possibly in other spheres of life, it might seem mere folly to talk of the approach of the events of the future. It is after all easy to say that the events of the future do not yet exist, and prevent us from saying that, what will happen to-morrow, approaches us ; while it is possible to say that, what happened in the past, stretches its effects into the present. This latter standpoint is easy enough to establish. Who would dispute that our life to-day is the result of our life yesterday, or that we are to-day under the influence of our energy or idleness of yesterday or the day before ? No one will deny the penetration of the present by the past. Yet we ought no more to deny the reality of the future :—since, after all, we can see in the soul the reality of such intrusion of future events, before they happen. After all, there is such a thing as fear of something which is to happen to-morrow, or anxiety about it. Is that not a sort of feeling or perception which we direct to an as yet unknown future ? At every moment when the soul experiences fear or anxiety, it shows by the reality of its feelings that it reckons not only with the effects of the past, but that it allows vividly, within itself, for what is coming to it from the future. These are of course trivial

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indications, but they will show that even a casual observation of the soul contradicts the logical abstractions, which proclaim that, since the future does not exist, it can have no effect. This is proved in living reality when we study immediate soul life.

In our soul then two streams, of the past and the future, unite and produce there, as everyone with self-observation would admit, a sort of whirlpool comparable to the confluence of two streams. Observation of what lives in our soul from the past shows that our soul has come into being under the impression of our experiences of the past. The way in which we have used those past experiences has made us what we are, and we bear within us the legacy of our doing, feeling and thinking of the past. We are what we have become. If we look back from our to-day's standpoint on our past experiences, particularly those in which, both in their actual happening and the judgment of them, we were ourselves concerned, if we allow our memory to play over the past, we shall be driven to a judgment of ourselves. We shall realize that to-day we have attained a certain quality of character ; and with that as our basis we find we are not in agreement with a good deal that happened in our own past ; we have acquired the capacity to be opposed to, even ashamed of, some action of the past. If we thus measure our past and our present, we shall come to the conviction that there is something within us which is far richer, far more significant than what we have made of ourselves by our will and consciousness and individual force. If there were not something stretching

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beyond what we have made of ourselves, we should be unable to reproach ourselves or even know ourselves. There must, then, be something within us greater than all that we have employed to form ourselves in the past. If we allow such a judgment to be transformed into a feeling, we shall be able to observe what is known to us and visible, in our past deeds and experiences ; which will lie as clearly before us, as memory can make it. Then we shall be able to compare this clear vision of ours with our own soul, and we shall see there something which is bigger, which seeks to work itself out, urges us to set ourselves face to face with ourselves, to judge ourselves, from the standpoint of the present. In short, we shall feel something which projects beyond ourselves, if we observe the stream flowing into the soul from the past. This sense of something greater is the first glimmer of the inner feeling of God within us, a feeling that there is something within us which is greater than all our own will. So we are enabled to see something, leading beyond the limited ego to a divine spiritual ego. Such is the impression of an observation of the past, which has been transformed into feeling and perception.

What is the message, then, of what we may call the stream of the future, when we transform it into feeling and perception ? This speaks still more emphatically and definitely to us. In looking back over the past, our feelings assert themselves in the form of a judgment of rejection, of regret or shame only after the event ; but in relation to the future we deal at once with the feelings of fear and anxiety, hope and joy. But the actual events are

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not yet existent to which these feelings refer, and we cannot see through them. Thus it is easier in this case to transform the idea into a feeling, since the soul does this of itself. As, in relation to the future, it can give no more than the feeling of reality, these feelings exist as something born from an unknown stream ; of which we know that it may have different effects and bring different hopes. If we can transform into a right feeling this that comes so surely to us from the lap of the future, and if we experience its course into the soul and the way in which our own perceptions meet it, we shall know how our soul is always being kindled anew by the experiences approaching from the future. Here above all we feel how the soul can become richer and more comprehensive than it is ; even in the present we know that in the future it will have an infinitely richer and mightier content. We feel ourselves akin to the future ; we must feel it. We must feel our soul to be equal to the whole content which the future can give.

Such an observation of the future and the past, of their flowing into the present, will show us how the life of the soul grows beyond itself. When the soul, in looking back over the past, observes the important things which play on it, and for which it does not feel itself to be an equal, we shall understand how it can unfold a basic attitude and feeling in relation to the outcome of the past. When the soul, whether in a judgment, or in shame and regret, feels something great flow into itself out of the stream of the past, it creates within itself what we may call a devotion towards the divine. This devotion towards the divine which looks

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down upon us from the past, which we can imagine as something which acts upon us but which our own consciousness cannot take in, is produced by one form of prayer—there are two—which leads to an intimacy with God. If the soul surrenders itself in inmost calm to these feelings about the past, it will begin to wish that the mightier thing which it left unused and which has not permeated its own ego, may become present to it. The soul will know that if it were possessed of this greatness, it would be a different soul ; the divine did not fully belong to its inner life, and that is why it has failed so to form itself that it can approve of all that it is. When the soul has this experience, it can overcome the feeling by asking itself clearly how it can make truly part of itself what has lived in all its actions and experiences, but lived unknown to itself ; how it can draw into itself this unknown which its ego has failed to grasp. If the soul has this attitude, either in feeling or in word and idea, we have the prayer to the past ; and then we seek to approach the divine in one way of devotion.

Towards the divine gleam shining through the approaches of the future there is another attitude. To distinguish it from the one with which we have just been dealing, let us ask once again what it is that leads to prayer as regards the past. It is, that we have remained imperfect, though we can feel a something divine shining into us ; that we have not developed and unfolded all the capacities and forces which might have flowed thence ; we feel all the defects which make us less than the divine which shines into us. What is it, then,

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coming from the future which makes us in similar fashion defective and restricts our ascent to the spiritual ?

We have only to remember that feelings and sensations gnaw at our soul : fear and anxiety of the unknown future. Is there anything, then, which can pour into the soul some certainty about the future ? It is what we may call the feeling of devotion or submissiveness [*Ergebenheitsgefühl*] to what enters into our soul from the hidden future. It can only work properly if it arises as an attitude of prayer. Let us avoid misunderstanding. We are not praising what here or there is considered to be submission, but a definite form—namely, a submission to what the future can bring forth. If we look to the future with fear and anxiety, we strangle our development, and hamper the free unfolding of our soul forces. Nothing so obstructs this development as anxiety about what may come to the soul from the future. But only actual experience can judge of the results of the right feeling of submissiveness to the future. What does such submissiveness mean ?

In its ideal form it would be the sort of attitude of the soul which would assure us that, whatever might come, whatever the next hour or day might bring, we cannot alter it by any fear or anxiety, if it is unknown to us. We must therefore wait for it in complete inner peace, and utter tranquillity. This experience, which results from such submission to the events of the future, means that anyone who can thus calmly and quietly meet the future, and can yet prevent his energy and activity from suffering in any way, is able to develop the

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force of his soul most intensively and freely. It is as if hindrance after hindrance falls away, as the soul is more and more pervaded by this feeling of submission to the events which are approaching us from the future.

But this feeling cannot be produced in the soul by some edict, or any arbitrary decision based on nothing. It is the result of the second form of prayer which is directed to the future and the wisdom-pervaded course of events within it. To give ourselves up to the divine wisdom of events ; to be certain in our thoughts, in our feelings and in our impulses, that what will be must be, and that it will have its good effects somewhere ; to call forth this feeling in the soul and to live it in our words and ideas : That is the second form of prayer, the prayer of submission, or devotional resignation.

It is from these feelings that we must acquire the impulses to what is called prayer. For the soul itself possesses the urge, and fundamentally every soul attains the attitude of prayer when it raises itself only a little above the immediate present. The attitude of prayer, we might say, is the upward gaze of the soul from the transitory present into the eternal which embraces past, present and future. Just because this gazing and living upward from the present is so essential, Goethe puts into the mouth of Faust the great and significant lines to Mephistopheles :

*, Werd' ich zum Augenblicke sagen :
" Verweile doch !—du bist so schön ! " ' ,*

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‘ When to the moment fleeting past me,
“ Tarry,” I cry, “so fair thou art” ; ’

that is, if ever I could be satisfied with living
merely for the moment :

*, Dann magst du mich in Fesseln schlagen,
Dann will ich gern zu Grunde gehn ! ’*

‘ Then into fetters mayst thou cast me,
Then let come doom, with all my heart.’

We might say, then, that it is the attitude of prayer
for which Faust begs in order to escape from the
fetters of his companion.

Prayer then leads, on the one side, to the obser-
vation of the limited ego which has worked from
the past into the present, and shows us when we
look, how much more there is in us than we have
put to actual use ; and on the other side leads us
to the study of the future and shows how much
more can flow from the future into the ego than
this ego has comprehended in the present. Every
prayer must coincide with one of these attitudes.
If we take this to be the spirit of prayer, and
prayer as the expression of this spirit, we shall
ourselves find in every prayer the force to lead
us beyond ourselves. For prayer, if it is born
thus, is nothing else than the kindling of that
power which seeks to pass beyond what our ego
is at the moment. As soon as the ego is seized by
this striving, it already has this power of develop-
ment. When the past has taught us that we have
more within us than we have ever used, our prayer is

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a cry to the divine that it may be present in us and fill us with its power. When we have reached this knowledge by our own feeling and perception, prayer becomes the source of further development. And prayer is one of the forms for the development of the ego.

We can do the same with prayer about the future, when we live in anxiety about what the future may bring. We then still lack that submissiveness which prayer can give, when it is directed to our future destiny; and by means of which we realize that it is set before us by the world-wisdom. If we give ourselves up to this feeling, we produce something quite different than we do when we meet what is to come with fear and anxiety. These only restrict our development, and push back from our soul what the future is to give us. But if we meet the future with submissiveness and devotion, we draw near to it in fruitful hope, so that it can enter. Thus submission, which seems to make us small, is a powerful force carrying us forward towards the future, enriching the soul and bringing our development to a higher level.

This shows us prayer as an active force within us ; and we can therefore see in it a cause, drawing with it as immediate effects the enlarging and evolution of our ego. We need not expect any external results, for we know that by prayer we have put within our soul what we may call a force of warmth and light ; of light because we free the soul as regards what is coming to us from the future, and prepare it to assimilate what the obscure future may be to us ; of warmth because

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it helps to realize that, though in the past we have failed to bring the divine within us to full development, we have now permeated our feelings and sensations with it, so that it really can work within us. The attitude of prayer, which we attain by our feeling of the past, produces that inner warmth of soul of which all those speak who can understand prayer in its true being. The effect of light appears in those who know the feeling of submission in prayer.

With this view of prayer we shall not be surprised that the greatest mystics found, in the submission to prayer [*in der Hingabe an das Gebet*] the best training for what they were seeking in mystic contemplation. They guided their souls, as it were, by means of prayer to the point, where they were able to light up the 'spark' we mentioned. It is just the study of the past which can give us that deep intimacy, coming over us in true prayer. Experience and living in the external world really estrange us from ourselves, just as in the past they prevented the unknown and more powerful ego from coming to the surface. We are given over to external impressions and waste our energies in the variety of external life, which prevents our composure. It is just this that stopped the higher and stronger divine force from unfolding in us. Now when we unfold it in such a deep intimacy with God, we no longer feel ourselves given over to the dissipating effects of the external world ; we are filled with that wonderful and ineffable warmth [*Wärme des In-sich-seins erfüllt*] as with an inner blessedness, which we really may call divine warmth. And

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just as it is the heat in the cosmos which appears in higher beings like physical inner warmth, and which originally created the higher beings—for lower beings have the same temperature as their surroundings—and as this physical heat interiorizes a being—so the psychic warmth, born of prayer, can make a soul that is losing itself in externalities, collect itself in inwardness. In prayer we are warmed in the feeling of God ; we not only feel warmth, we find ourselves intimately in ourselves.

If, on the other side, we approach the external world, we always find it confused with what has been called ' the dark lap of the future '. Upon close observation we always find that there is a germ of the future in whatever we touch of the outer world. We are continually thrust back, when we still feel fear of what may befall us. The world is like a veil before us ; but if we evolve this feeling of submission in regard to all that may come to us from the lap of the future, we shall find that we meet everything in the external world with the same certainty and hope, which we have gained from our submissiveness. We know that in everything it is the wisdom of the world which shines before us. As a rule, in everything which meets us, we see a darkness which passes into our feelings, but now we see how, through our submission, the feeling arises in us that, in fact, the whole wisdom of the world shines through what we long for and desire as the highest. Thus it is hope for illumination of the whole world which comes to us in the devotions of prayer. As darkness encloses us within ourselves, and

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narrowness and confusion surround us even in the physical, when we stand in the gloom of night, and blackness spreads around, so we feel, when the morning comes and light meets us, as though set beyond ourselves : yet not in such a way that we should lose ourselves, but as though we could transfer into the real world all our soul's truest longing and highest aim. The surrender to the world, estranging us from ourselves, is overcome by the warmth of prayer uniting us with ourselves. Then, too, the warmth of prayer becomes a light. We pass beyond ourselves and know that, when now we unite with the outer world and behold it, we are no longer disturbed and estranged in it, but what is best in our soul flows from it ; and we are united with what shines towards us from the external world.

These two types of prayer can be better comprehended in picture than in idea : for instance, in the Old Testament, the story of Jacob and that bitter struggle in the night which seared his soul. It is as if we ourselves were given over to the manifoldness of the world, in which at first our soul was lost and could not find itself. When the striving to find ourselves begins, there follows the struggle of the lower and the higher ego. Feelings surge up and down, but we can work our way through by this prayer, and at last there comes the moment which is shown to us in the story of Jacob, when the inner struggle of the soul during the night is levelled out in harmony, as the morning sun shines before him. That is really the effect of prayer in the human soul.

To think of prayer like this is to be free of all

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superstition. For it brings out the best in us and works within ourselves, immediately, as a force. Prayer in this light is a preliminary to mysticism, just as mystic contemplation is itself the preliminary to what we know as spiritual investigation. Our discussion of prayer will have made it clear that, as has been so often emphasized, we pile error on error if we think we can find the divine, or God himself in ourselves, by mystic thought. This has been a common mistake of many mystics, even of ordinary Christians in the Middle Ages ; and this was because, just at that period, the attitude to prayer began to be permeated with egoism, an egoism which impels the soul to ever-increasing perfection and to concentration only on that inner perfection. It is fundamentally an echo of that egoistic desire for inner perfection, when a misguided theosophy to-day asserts that, if only we turn aside from everything external, we can find God within ourselves.

We have seen that there are two types of prayer, one which leads to an inner warmth, the other, by a feeling of submission, leads out again into the world, and so to illumination and true knowledge. If we think of prayer like this, we shall soon see that the knowledge acquired by ordinary means of intelligence is unfruitful compared to another knowledge. When we realize the attitude of prayer, we become aware of that withdrawal of the soul in itself when it is released from the multiple world in which it has been dissipated ; when it gathers together in itself, and lives what we may call a complete ' self-enclosedness ', self-being,

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bethinking itself of what is above the momentary, of what comes into the soul from the past and the future. When we know this feeling, when our whole environment becomes breathless and silent, when only the finest thoughts and feelings, of which we are capable hold the soul together, when perhaps even these vanish and at last only a basic feeling remains, pointing in two directions, to the God who proclaims himself from the past and the God from the future—when we know this and have learned to live in this feeling, then we know that there are moments for the soul when it sees : it has turned away from and now disregards all the cleverness which it created by its own thinking, what it brought into being by its own feelings, the ideals which it grasped in its own will and to which it had been educated ; all these have been swept away. It had then been given over to its highest thoughts and feelings ; and even these it had swept away and only left that last basic feeling of which we spoke. When we have felt this we know that in the same way as the wonders of nature meet us, when we turn our regard with pure eyes [*reine Auge*] on nature, these new feelings shine into the soul, of which we were hitherto unaware. Impulses of will and ideals which were strange to us rise up in the soul ; in this feeling germinate fruitful seeds.

In its best sense, then, prayer can give us a wisdom of which, at that actual moment, in ourselves we are not yet capable ; it can give us the possibility of a feeling and thinking which we cannot by ourselves attain. If we go further, it can give us a strength of will to which we have so

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far been unable to rise. In order to feel this, the greatest thoughts, the most splendid ideas and impulses, must live in the soul and call it up. And at this point we cannot but refer once more to the prayers which have been given to us since ancient days and in the most solemn moments.

In my pamphlet on the Lord's Prayer you will find an account of its contents, showing that the 'seven petitions' embrace all the wisdom of the world. It is no real objection to tell me that, in that book, it is said that these 'seven petitions' can only be understood by those who know the deeper sources of the universe, while the simple man who utters the prayer has no real notion of their depth. This is not so. But, in order that the Lord's Prayer should ever have come into existence, it was necessary that the all-embracing wisdom of the world should set down in words what may indeed be called the deepest secrets of man and the world. Since this is contained in the Lord's Prayer, it works through the words, even if we are very far from understanding the secrets. We can understand, if we rise to the higher stages, to which prayer and mysticism are the prelude. Prayer prepares us for mysticism, mysticism for meditation and concentration, and from that point we are directed to the real work of spiritual research.

It is no valid objection that we must understand what we are praying if the prayer is to have its true effect. That simply is not the case. Who understands the wisdom of a flower? and yet we can take pleasure in the flower. We need not penetrate all the wisdom of the flower; yet the

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soul delights in its contemplation. Wisdom was necessary that the flower might come into being, but it is not necessary, in the first instance, if we are to take delight in it. For a prayer to come into existence, the wisdom of the world was necessary ; but that it should possess warmth and light for the soul, it is just as unnecessary to understand the wisdom as it is in the case of the flower. But if it did not owe its existence to that wisdom, it could not have that effect. The mere effect of the prayer shows us the depth it possesses.

If the soul is really to develop under the influence of such a vital quality within it, we may always refer to the way in which a true prayer, whatever the stage of development in which we stand, can give all of us something. The simplest of us, who knows nothing more than the mere prayer, can still feel the effect of the prayer ; and it is the prayer which calls forth the effective power to raise him always higher. But however high we may be, we have never done with a prayer ; for the soul can always be raised a stage higher than it is. The Lord's Prayer can be not merely uttered, but can call forth the mystical frame of mind and be the subject of meditation and concentration. That is true also of other prayers.

Since the Middle Ages, however, something has risen up which makes prayer and the attitude of prayer impure—a sort of egoism. If we use the prayer in order to become more perfect in ourselves, to descend into ourselves—as was the case with medieval Christians, and still is, perhaps, to-day—if we are not going to look back into the

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external world with the illumination we have received, then prayer only succeeds in making us become strangers to the world and isolated from it. This happened with many of those who used prayer as false asceticism and seclusion. They wanted to be perfect, not only as the rose is perfect, which adorns herself that the garden may be fair, but they wanted to be perfect for their own sakes, that they might find blessedness in their own soul. If we seek God in the soul and do not use the power we have thus won to pass again to the outer world, we shall find that in a sense we are punished. Thus you will find in many writings, when the authors have known only the one type of prayer in which they find inner warmth—even in the writings of Miguel Molinos—remarkable descriptions of all sorts of passions and impulses, fights, temptations and wild desires, which the soul has to experience, if it seeks perfection by inner prayer and complete surrender to what it takes to be God. If we seek God one-sidedly and thus approach the spiritual world, if we unfold that feeling for prayer which leads to inner warmth, and not the other sort which leads to illumination, we see that that other side takes its revenge on us. If I look to the past only with feelings of regret and shame, realizing that there is something great in me to which I have never allowed full play, but with which I am not going to allow myself to be filled that I may become perfect, then, to a certain extent, this feeling of perfection does arise. But the imperfection, which remains in the soul, becomes a counter-force and comes upon us with the greater vigour in the form of temptation and

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passion. But as soon as the soul, having found itself in inner warmth and intimacy, seeks for God in all the works where He is revealed, and thus strives for illumination, it immediately comes out of itself and escapes from the narrow selfish ego, and all the wild temptations sink down in calm and peace. That is why it is so harmful to allow the egoistic impulse to be mixed up in prayer or mystical contemplation or meditation. If we want to find God, but then only to keep him in our soul, we exhibit an unsound egoism which maintains itself into the highest reaches of the soul ; and then we shall be punished for it. We shall only find healing when, having found God in ourselves, we pour out what we have won, unselfishly into the world, in our thoughts, feelings, willing and doing.

We are often told to-day, particularly according to the ideas of a theosophy falsely understood—and we cannot be careful enough of this—that we cannot find God in the external world, for God lives in ourselves ; that we have only to go rightly within ourselves and we shall find God. I have even heard someone say, in flattery of his audience that they need not learn or experience anything of the great secrets of the world ; that if only they would look within themselves, they would find God.

But we must add something to this before we can reach the truth. To this which may be true enough of itself if it is kept within proper limits, a medieval thinker gave a true answer. Let us remember once again that it is not untruths which are most harmful, for the soul will soon find out

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untruth ; most harmful are the things which are true from one aspect, but which applied, on false assumptions, produce grave falsehood. It is true that in a sense we seek God in ourselves ; and because it is true, it is the more harmful if the truth is not kept within its proper limits. This medieval thinker then said : ' Who would seek everywhere in the external world for a tool he needed, when he knows well that it is at home ? He would be a fool to do so. Equally is he a fool who seeks the instrument for the knowledge of God in the outer world when it lies at home within his soul.' Bear in mind he uses the word ' tool ' or ' instrument '. It is not God himself we seek in the soul ; he is sought by that instrument, and that at least we shall not find in the external world. That we find in the soul, in prayer and genuine mystical absorption, by meditation and concentration at its proper levels. With this instrument we must approach the kingdoms of the world. Then we shall find God everywhere ; for he reveals himself, if we have acquired the instrument, in all kingdoms of the world and at all stages of being. Thus in ourselves we find the instrument, but everywhere we find God.

Such observations as these about prayer are not popular to-day. Nowadays we are asked how on earth any prayer of ours could alter the course of the world ; which after all is guided by laws of necessity, which we cannot alter. But when we want to find a force, we should look for it, where it really is. We, to-day, have sought the power of prayer in the human soul and have found that it exists as something which can help the soul to

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progress. If, then, we know that it is the spirit which works in the world—not an imagined abstract spirit but concrete spirit—and that the human soul belongs to the kingdom of spirit, we shall know too that material forces are not the only active ones, working according to external laws of necessity, but that spiritual beings also are at work in the world, even when the effects of these forces and beings are not visible for the outer eye and knowledge. If we strengthen our spiritual life by prayer, we need only wait for the effects, which will certainly appear. But no one will seek the working of spirit in the outer world, who has not first recognized the force of prayer to be a reality.

The following experiment will give evidence of this, when once we have admitted the fact. Consider a period of ten years during which we have scorned prayer, and another period of ten years when we recognized its force ; and compare the two periods. We shall very soon see how the course of our life altered under the influence of the forces, which poured with prayer into the soul. Forces become visible in their working ; and it is easy to deny the forces, if we shut out eyes to their effects. Who has the right to deny the force of prayer who has never sought to let its force be effective within him ? Do we believe that we could know the light if we had never developed it or approached it ? A force which is to work in and through the soul can only be discovered by its use.

The further effects of prayer—I am willing enough to admit it—cannot yet be discussed at

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the present day, however unbiassed the discussion might be. Thus, to understand the fact that a prayer from a community, in which the force rising from a praying community flow together, has an enhanced spiritual force and therefore enhanced effect on reality, is not easy of acceptance for the ordinary consciousness of to-day.

So we must be content with what we have discussed, as the inner being of prayer ; and indeed it is sufficient, since if we have some understanding of it, we shall rise above many of the possible objections which are so easy to raise against prayer.

For instance, we are told that, if we compare an active man of the present day who uses his powers to help his fellow men, with one who withdraws meditatively into himself and works on the forces of his soul in prayer, idleness is the only word we can truly apply to the latter in comparison with his active fellow. You will excuse me if on the basis of spiritual science I tell you there is another point of view. I will speak bluntly : but there is good reason for it. Anyone who knows the interrelations of modern life will maintain that many who write articles in newspapers would be doing better service to their fellows, if they prayed and worked for the perfection of their own souls. Would that there were people who were convinced that it would be better to pray instead of writing leading articles ! And this attitude is equally applicable to many another intellectual occupation of to-day.

Further we shall never understand the whole life of man without that force which lives in prayer

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and which is particularly clear, if we look at certain departments of higher spiritual activity. Is it not clear that prayer, not indeed in the one-sided egoistic sense, but in the broad sense in which we have discussed it to-day, is for instance a constituent of art? Art of course has the opposite attitude in comedy, in the humorous feeling with which it rises above what it depicts. But there is also the ode and hymn in which there is a feeling of prayer. In painting also we have what we might call a 'painted prayer'. And in a massive majestic cathedral surely we have a prayer in stone towering heavenwards? We only need to feel these things in relation to the whole of life, in order to see that prayer, looked at in the right light, is one of the things which lead us from the transitory finite of this world to the infinite. This was felt especially by those who passed from prayer to mysticism, such as Angelus Silesius whom I mentioned to-day and in the last lecture. He felt that he owed the inner truth and glorious beauty, the warm intimacy and brilliant clearness of his mystical thought as he showed for instance, in *The Cherubinean Wanderer*, to the training of prayer which had worked so powerfully on his soul. And in fact, what streams through and illuminates all such mysticism, is the feeling of eternity, for which prayer is the prelude. Everyone who prays has an idea of this, when in prayer he comes to true inner peace and intimacy, and thence again to liberation from himself; something which teaches us to look from the passing moment to eternity, embracing in our soul past and present and future. Whether we know it or not: when-

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ever in prayer we turn to those sides of life where we seek God—the feelings, thoughts and impressions accompanying us in prayer, are permeated by that sense of eternity which lives in the lines of Angelus Silesius, and dwells in every true prayer like some divine sweetness and aroma—a sense with which we can appropriately close as—**MAN IN ETERNITY.**

‘ When quitting time, I am
Myself eternity,
I shall be one with God
God one with me shall be—’

The Cherubinean Wanderer,

by Angelus Silesius, 1657.

VIII

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MAN

THE souls of men are great in their variety. To typical differences, and the reasons for them, we have already referred. We have shown how souls vary in relation to character and temperament, and other forces and faculties.¹ In all human individuals there is the difference which in to-day's lecture I am going to call 'positive' and 'negative'. Right at the beginning I want to make it clear that this account—which will be wholly in keeping with my other lectures—has nothing to do with the amateurish but fashionable accounts which make use of the terms positive and negative. Their meaning must be wrung from the conception itself.

Now we might first look for a definition, an attempt to make clear what is meant by a 'positive' and 'negative' person. Then according to the method of serious teachings about the soul and man, we should call a positive man one, who in regard to the impressions streaming in from the external world, is capable of retaining at least to some extent the firmness and security of his inner

¹ Now published in *Metamorphoses of the Soul*.

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being : having therefore clear-cut ideas and conceptions, certain inclinations one way or the other, and feelings from which those impressions cannot move him. Further, we might say that he is one, who shows in his actions, certain impulses and instincts from which he cannot be moved by every casual impression. A 'negative man' would then on the other hand be one, who easily submits to the changing impressions of life, is strongly affected by ideas which arise in him, coming from some person or from crowds of people, because of which ideas he is inclined to alter what he had been feeling or thinking or had perceived, and to replace it by something new. In his activity we should call a man negative who is easily put off his impulses to action by all kinds of influences from other people.

Such would be—more or less—our definition ; but these deepest peculiarities of human nature above all prove that attempts at clearing up ideas by means of such definitions do not take us very far, and that to strive for such comfortable definitions is rather useless. For as soon as we pass from such an abstract definition to real life, it is clear that a man of strong impulses and passions which have borne a definite stamp since childhood and will probably remain the same through life, must have allowed all sorts of good and bad examples to pass by him and will thus retain the same old habits. He will have obstinately formed ideas and conceptions, to which he will cling, whatever facts we may bring before him, and there will be countless obstacles before we can convince him of the truth of something, which differs from them.

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Such a man would indeed be positive, but his positiveness would lead to nothing but a dull and impressionless life, seeing and hearing nothing which might enrich his life, or make it more all-embracing. The other man, inclined to surrender every moment to new impressions and always ready on the arrival of facts disturbing to his usual ideas, to correct these ideas of his, would after a comparatively short time become quite a different being. We should see him passing, in one phase of his life after another, from one subject to another, and thus after some time we might see him as a wholly altered man in contrast to his earlier life. In comparison, however, to that other type which passes through life dully without impression, he would certainly have made more of his life. Yet according to our definition, we should have to call him negative.

Again : a man of strong nature, who goes through life by rule of habit, might be induced by the fashion of the moment to travel in a country containing many art-treasures ; but he is so positive in all the perceptions which have grown up in his soul that he passes by one work of art after another, at most consulting his Baedeker to see which are the most important, and so, after returning home, his soul has not been in the least enriched by trailing from gallery to gallery, and from landscape to landscape. On the other hand, another might go through the same experiences, but in such a way that he gives himself up, loses himself enthusiastically in every picture, so that when he stands in front of it, he forgets himself completely and lives entirely in what he sees. So

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he passes from one to the next with a soul that surrenders to every detail ; but because he does thus surrender himself, each impression is obliterated by its successor ; and on his return home, he has only a sort of chaos in his soul. This is the opposite to the first type, an example therefore of the negative.

We could continue giving the most varied examples of the two types. We could produce a negative type of man, who has learned so much that his judgment is uncertain on every subject, that he does not know any more what is truth or falsehood, and so has become a complete sceptic about life and knowledge. Another might have as many and the same impressions, but goes through life assimilating the impressions and fitting them into the whole of his acquired wisdom. That is a positive man in the best sense.

A child may be tyrannically positive, in relation to a 'grown-up', when it asserts its fixed nature and rejects everything which opposes it. Thus, since it refuses to be influenced, it can be very positive. Or again a man, who has been through many experiences, disappointments and errors, and yet in spite of his experience, surrenders to every impression, may be easily elated or depressed : in spite of all he has gone through he is, compared with that child, a negative type. In short it is not until we allow the whole of a man's life in all its variety to work upon us, and not merely according to conjecture—and until the ideas are only a guide to lead us to the facts and achievements of life, that they are of any use in the ordering of the phenomena and facts, or that we can find

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our way among these important questions. Here we touch upon something of great importance ; for we deal with man, in his full living entity. And, but for this, the whole business would be much simpler.

We have over and over again and in the fullest detail discussed in these lectures, what is meant by placing ourselves in living fashion, within the evolution of man. We see the soul passing from one stage of evolution to the next ; and when we speak of true spiritual science, we do not picture what occurs in a man's life between birth and death, as always homogeneous. We know that this life is only the repetition of past lives and the starting-point for successive ones ; and when we observe human life in this way through its various incarnations, it will be perfectly intelligible, that in one life, development goes slowly and a man retains the same characteristics all through that life, while in another life he has all the more development to pass through, so as to bring him to other levels of human soul-life. The study of a single life is always, in the highest degree, insufficient.

Let us now ask how these remarks about the positive and negative type can help us in the study of the soul along the lines we have laid down in previous lectures. We showed in past lectures how man's soul-life is by no means a chaotic seesaw of ideas and sensations and conceptions, as it appears to a casual glance. On the contrary there are three parts of this soul, which we must distinguish. First there is the lowest which we called the 'sentient-soul'. This is best discovered

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in its truest form, as it were, in men of a relatively low stage of development, who are wholly given up to the impulses, desires, wishes and passions offered by their way of life, and who therefore pursue every wish and impulse, as it rises within them. What we call the ego, that is the real self-conscious core of the human soul, dwells, in men of this sort, within a surge of passion and impulse, of sympathy and antipathy, tossed about helplessly by every storm of the soul. Such men follow their inclinations, not dominating them, but dominated by them. They surrender to undefined inner wishes. The ego has therefore little chance to rise from this surge of feeling and instinct. But when the soul does develop, we see always more and more clearly how the ego works at a strong central point.

Then a higher part of the soul, which exists in every one of us, rises to sovereignty over the sentient-soul. This we have called the 'rational-soul'. When we cease to surrender to every impulse and inclination, we evolve what has always existed in us, but what could only be effective, when we begin to use the ego in order to control the changing impressions of life, when these impressions mingle with something which can give them a sort of coherence in the inner life. Thus we see man in a deeper form, when this second part, the rational-soul, begins to predominate.

We then referred to the highest part of the soul, the 'consciousness-soul' or 'spirit-soul', in which the ego appears in its full vigour. Then the inner life is, as it were, reversed ; ideas and concepts no

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longer exist only to gain control of the passions, but at this level, the whole inner life of the soul is guided from the ego, so that it becomes a mirror, with true knowledge, of the external world. When we rise to a knowledge of that world, it is a sign that the 'consciousness-soul' has attained predominance. These three parts exist in every one of us, but in every case there is a different balance.

The last lectures have shown that the soul can go still further ; indeed, we must go further, even in ordinary life, if we are to be men in the true sense of the word. When our activity is sensitive only to the external demands of life and is subject only to those impulses, which come from sympathy or antipathy, we shall never realize a true humanity. It is only when we rise above the ordinary demands of sympathy and antipathy, when we rise to moral ideas and ideals, that we are establishing a true human nature. Moral ideas must rise in us from what we call the spiritual world ; for by these ethical and moral ideas we enrich the soul-life with new elements. Man attains a history, only because he can put into life something which his inner being draws from unknown depths of darkness and impresses on his external life. In the same way, we should never attain a real knowledge of world secrets, if we could not attach external experiences to ideas which are invisible in the outer world, but which we bring forth from our own spirit, and by means of which we are enabled to explain and grasp the external world in its proper form. In this way we bring a spiritual element into our inner being and enrich the soul

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with elements, which we could never gain from the external world in itself.

As we explained in the lecture on Mysticism, we may rise to a higher soul-life by cutting ourselves off for a time from the impressions and stimulus of the external world, by emptying the soul and then surrendering in inner absorption to what flames up within the soul, what, in the words of Meister Eckhart, is 'a tiny spark outshone' by the changing events of everyday. Such mystics rise to a soul-life above the ordinary level; they can sink themselves in the secrets of the world, because they unveil within themselves, what these secrets have laid down within them. In a later lecture we saw that, when we await the future in calm devotion [*Ergebenheit*] and in our realization of the past perceive living within us something greater than anything hitherto realized within ourselves, we are then impelled to appeal to this greater thing, which reaches beyond us. We saw that, in prayer, we rise above ourselves in our own inner being, that we raise ourselves to something which we cannot see in the outer world, and which reaches beyond our ordinary life. Finally we saw that by real spiritual training, which attains the three levels of 'imagination', 'inspiration' 'intuition', we can grow into a world which is as unknown to ordinary men as is the world of light and colour to the blind.

Thus there is a process of growth of soul beyond the normal, and this gives us a glimpse into the development of the human soul through the most varied stages.

If we look around us, between birth and death,

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we see that people are at various stages of development. One man, when he enters into existence, shows that he has the potentiality of reaching certain stages, that he has a certain measure, within which he can raise his soul to a new level and can thus take with him through death into a new life, what he has so gained. People live at the most varied levels of existence. If we study how they pass from one stage to the next, we shall come to the two notions of positive and negative, not only in the notion that one person is positive, another negative, but that the same person may display both qualities at successive stages of development.

A person may have, at the beginning of his development, the strongest and most emphatic impulses in the sentient-soul ; and may be filled with definite desires and passions, having all the time an ego-centre which is obscure and hardly felt. To that extent he is positive and his life is that of the positive type. But if he remained positive in this sense, he would never advance. He has to become negative in the course of his development and abandon the positive man which he was at a lower stage, and the qualities he then had ; for man must be open to what is necessary for his development. If he is not willing, by the suppression of positive qualities existing in his sentient-soul, to prepare himself for the inflow of new impressions which may unite with his soul and become its content—if, that is, he cannot rise without assistance above the definite degree of positiveness which nature has given him, and gain a certain negativeness, he will never get any further.

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This expresses the frequent necessity of overcoming positive qualities in the course of development, and making ourselves negative, so that we may acquire a new content for the soul. That brings us, however, to a fact which is necessary but may also be dangerous. We are touching on a point in our soul-life which shows very clearly how only a deep knowledge of the soul can lead us safely through life. It is true that we could never progress if we shunned certain dangers of the soul ; and such dangers always exist in the negative soul, for in those circumstances we are always liable to external influences. The negative type is that which takes in impressions, and unites itself with them. But that means that one of that type will take in not only good, but bad impressions also.

When a person with this negative quality of soul meets another, we shall observe that he is easily carried away by all sorts of things which have no basis in judgement and reason, and takes into himself what comes from the other person : not only what he says, but what he does. He will imitate his example and actions, and may easily become a mere duplicate. In such cases, the negative type may be open to good influences, but he is also likely to admit into himself every kind of evil stimulus, and not only admit it but make it part of himself. When we rise from ordinary conditions of life to the level, where with spiritual knowledge, we can see what spiritual facts and beings work in our environment, we must say that a man with negative soul-qualities is particularly amenable to, and liable to be influenced by, just those intangible

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and indefinable impressions which scarcely show in external life. Now it is certainly true that man is a different being when he is by himself, from what he is in the society of others. Any careful observer will see that his whole soul-life is different especially if the society he is in is active. When he is alone he follows his own impulses ; even a weak ego will look for the source of its action in itself. But in society there is a sort of mass-soul, in which the various desires and impulses and judgment join. A positive man will not easily surrender to this common flow, but the negative will always be easily influenced by it. Thus we can over and over again be convinced of the truth of what a dialect poet says briefly, even if roughly ; for there is a good deal of truth in what Rosegger says :

‘ A man is one,
People are two,
If there are more, they are cattle.’

We often notice how men are wiser alone than in company, where they are almost entirely the victims of the average. Thus a man may go to a meeting without any definite ideas or feelings ; he may hear a speaker who takes up enthusiastically some point which had previously left the hearer quite cold :—perhaps even it is rather the universal acclamation rather than the speaker that affects him ; he is gripped by it and leaves the meeting quite convinced.

This mass-suggestion plays an enormous part in life. And it will show where the dangers lie for what we called the negative type. That is, too,

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why the creation of sects is so dangerous ; for what we should often fail to achieve, if we tried to convince a man individually of some point, becomes comparatively easy, when we have a group, in which this mass-feeling of soul on soul is at work. And it is especially in the negative type that the dangers exist of being liable to mass-suggestion.

We may go further. We have seen in earlier lectures how the soul can rise and evolve into the higher regions of spiritual life. You will find in my *Occult Science* what training is necessary for the soul if it is to pass some stage in its development and reach a higher one. It has, in the first place, to suppress something positive and open itself up to impressions, and put itself artificially into a negative mood. Unless we 'put' ourselves artificially into a new mood, there is no result. We have often discussed what is necessary to reach higher stages of spiritual development. We have to produce, voluntarily and consciously, the condition which is normal in sleep, when the soul is empty of outer impressions. We have intentionally to induce the condition, in which all the outward impressions of the day cease and the soul is empty. Then the soul has to surrender to impressions which during the first stages of practice are entirely new : that is, we must be as negative as possible. Everything which in mystical life and knowledge we call the inner vision and absorption, does really produce a negative attitude of soul. That is inevitable ; for if we are to put ourselves into a condition where we suppress external stimulus and admit nothing, which we have till

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then felt as positive human beings, we must become negative.

Indeed we may produce something similar, when we employ the easier external method which cannot of itself create a higher life, but can give us some support in our ascent ; for instance, if we pass from what usually stimulates the positive impulses in a sort of animal fashion, to a special diet, vegetarian or the like. We cannot raise ourselves to higher worlds merely by vegetarianism ; it would be too easy, if we could, as it were, eat our way to higher worlds. Nothing but work can raise us. But this work on our own soul is easier, if we avoid the weakening imposed by certain forms of nourishment. We can easily convince ourselves of the increase of our forces following on special diet, when we are trying to live a higher and more spiritual life. For if we cut out certain forms of nourishment, which strengthen the robust and positive in ourselves, we acquire a sort of negativity. No one who takes the view of a genuine spiritual science, which is void of charlatantry, will ever deny that which must be, in fact, connected with a true spiritual life, even if these facts are external. But this means that we may run the risk of being accessible to evil influences also. When we educate ourselves in spiritual science and rid ourselves of everyday impressions, we open ourselves to the good spiritual facts and beings around us ; but we shall also become accessible to the evil ones which are connected with them ; in the same way as when we want to hear tones, we must hear discordant ones too. If we are going to make our way into spiri-

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tual worlds, we must realize that we may experience what is evil. And if we gave ourselves to that world purely negatively, we might be liable to all sorts of dangers.

Let us for the moment look away from the spiritual world and spiritual development and take the standpoint of everyday life. Even here we may ask, what is the immediate effect of, for example, a vegetarian diet, that it should make us negative. If we become vegetarians merely because of some popular agitation but without adequate judgment, or from some abstract principle without altering our manner of living and acting, then this adoption of a new diet may in certain conditions have very serious effects in relation to other influences in our life ; and we may be weakened, especially physically. But if we have to pass to a life of initiative, to deal with new problems, arising not from the external world but from a rich and fully-developed soul-life, and if we bring a new content into our life, then it may be of great use if, in diet also, we adopt a new path and remove the hindrances which might arise from the old diet. Things have very different effects :— as is clear to anyone who looks at life closely. Because the spiritual science seeker is well aware of this, he always emphasizes what we have so often emphasized : that the true investigator will never give anyone the means of rising into higher worlds without making it clear, that he must not merely develop the negative qualities of soul, which are necessary for the acquiring of new impressions—that he must not merely aim at inner vision and absorption ; but that a life, which is to

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rise to new heights, must have a new content which is strong enough to hold and to fill it. If we enable a man to see into the spiritual world, we would at the same time expose him, through the negativity connected with it, to all sorts of evil forces. But if we find the willingness to learn from what the spiritual investigator can tell him, of the content of the spiritual world, he will never be exposed, merely negatively, to these influences ; but he will have something, which can fill the soul with positive content, at a higher stage. That is why we always emphasize that one must not merely strive for higher levels, but at the same time must carefully study what spiritual science tells us ; for in that, special note is taken of the fact that, when we enter new worlds, we cannot help being, in a way, negative.

What we have to call forth in our own soul, when we consciously develop it, can be seen in various people in the ordinary world, since the soul does not develop only in the present life, but has passed through development in previous lives and has reached a definite stage before it is born. Just as we pass during life from one stage to another, and to reach a positive stage, must develop negative qualities in between, so the same thing may have happened when we died and entered a new life with predominantly positive or negative characteristics. What is designed to send us into life with positive qualities will leave us as we are and act as a brake on further development ; for positive tendencies give a clear-cut character. The negative tendency on the one hand opens us to many influences between death

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and new birth, but on the other exposes us to all the chances of life, and especially to the various impressions other people may make on us. And so when a man of a negative type meets others we can usually see how their qualities leave their mark on him. Even in himself, he can feel, when he approaches a friend or someone for whom he has an affection, how he becomes ever more like the other. In cases of deep friendship or marriage even his writing may be affected, and when we look we can see how the writing of a married person with a negative character becomes more and more like that of his or her companion.

As negative types, then, we are exposed to the various impressions of other people, especially of those with whom we come in close contact. The negative quality, therefore, makes us to some extent liable to a weakening of the self, since our self and our ego may be extinguished. That is the danger of the negative type. The danger of the positive type is that it cannot take on the qualities of others or be accessible to impressions, that it passes everyone by, cannot unite with them or even form any association or friendship with them. The danger is that such an one becomes rigid and fossilized in his soul. In ordinary life, also, we see how the two types work ; and we get a deep vision into life, if we study people from this standpoint of the positive and negative, even in relation to nature ; for if we have the eye to see, we shall observe how even the influences of nature work differently on the two types.

Now what is it which mainly works from one man to another and makes impression ? There

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is one thing which makes the soul more positive : it is, for modern man, in his normal development, regardless of its stage, the judgment or sensible consideration, the clear elucidation of a situation. This always makes man positive, whereas the loss of the healthy self-conscious judgment has the opposite effect admitting impressions to the soul, without its being able to protect itself by positive qualities. It is even true that human qualities, upon their descent into the unconscious, have more effect on others than when they proceed from sound judgment, or normal self-conscious judgment. It is unfortunate, especially in spiritual science, that when facts are told from the spiritual world, clothed in strict logical form such as is common in other spheres of life, men are inclined to evade them ; they refuse to accept facts which are given in a logical form and progression, with cause and effect. But if they are given in a way, enabling the judgment to escape or be eliminated, it is far easier to convince men of the facts of the spiritual world. Indeed, there are people who are very scornful if information about the spiritual world is given with sound logic, and are very credulous of others who, more or less as mediums, inspired by an unknown force, communicate their facts to this world. Mediums, who do not know what they say, who say more than they know, find more believers than men who know exactly what they are saying. How is it possible, we are asked, that anyone can tell us about the spiritual world, who is not at least in a half-conscious state, thus clearly possessed by some other power ? And this is often taken as a

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reason for rejecting anything communicated consciously ; and this is why it is much commoner to run to mediums than to accept what is told us in the form and on the method of sound reason.

But when anything from the spiritual world descends to a region where consciousness is excluded, there is always the danger that it will work on the negative qualities. Negative qualities come into action when we are approached by things from dark, subconscious sources. If we look closely we shall see again and again how a less intelligent person, thanks to positive qualities, has a stronger effect even on more intelligent people, and how even these are influenced by a less sound reason than their own, by what comes from some dark depths. So we can understand why in life a finer nature with a finer reason is often the victim of people of a robust character who base their assertions on their own impulses and inclinations. A step further would explain still more ; we should notice the remarkable fact that, when we come across a person who not merely denies his sound reason, but whose reason is diseased, and who makes his assertions on this basis, yet so long as his morbid quality is unnoticed, it is just the finer natures that are victims of such assertive people. All this is part of a real wisdom, and we cannot understand it until we realize that on the one hand, a man who has positive qualities need not be at all accessible to sound reason, while, on the contrary, a man with negative qualities is accessible to what he cannot help, unilluminated by reason. All this has to be considered by a finer psychology.

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But we may leave aside impressions from man to man, and not notice only those which come from the general environment ; and we shall reach valuable results for our study of the positive and negative types. Let us take a case of a student who has worked very fruitfully on some special subject, and has produced a vast accumulation of facts. All this is very useful to us. But now, suppose he co-ordinates the facts according to preconceived ideas, acquired through his education and his past life, from definite theory and philosophy, which may be a very one-sided statement of the facts. The ideas which he has developed out of the facts—if only they are the result of his own thinking—will have a healthy effect on his own soul ; for since he reached his own philosophy as a result of it, he will have gained some positive content in his soul. Now perhaps followers and devotees may come along who have not worked over the facts by themselves, but have only heard or read them, who have none of the ideas which the original worker won for himself in his study ; then we have in the followers only a negative type. The same doctrine may be regarded as evidence of the positive in the leader, even though the doctrine is one-sided, but in the mass of the followers, who only repeat what has filled his soul, we shall have negative qualities with unhealthy effect, making them more and more weak and negative.

This is a fact which strikes us in the whole history of human culture. Even to-day we can see men with a materialistic philosophy which they have seriously deduced from the facts and

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who are lively, delightful, positive creatures; but in their followers, who have basically the same ideas but have not attained them by their own thinking, they indicate a weak, unhealthy and negative type. It makes a great difference then if we achieve a philosophy for ourselves or take it over from another; in the one case it indicates positive, in the other negative character. These things cross and inter-cross in life.

Thus our attitude to the world may make us both positive and negative. A purely theoretical view of nature, indeed anything which we cannot see, may make us negative; yet in order to reach a definite stage, we must admit in ourselves the negative. There must be a theoretical natural science; but we must not blind ourselves to the fact that theoretical science—systematic study of animals, plants, minerals and the natural laws deduced from them—makes us wholly the slaves of our negative character. On the contrary, everything which has the effect of absorbing nature in its greatness and wholeness, with a living appreciation, arouses positive qualities: for instance, delight in a flower which we do not pull to pieces, but allow to influence us in its beauty, or the surrender to the morning glory, which we do not study astronomically but look at in all its splendour. Anything which we adopt because of a theory does not implicate our soul; it is dictated from without. But our whole soul is active when we are thrilled or repelled by the phenomena of nature. The truth of nature does not concern our ego, but what delights or repels us does; according to the

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quality of our ego, we are attracted or repelled by nature.

Living with nature, then, develops the positive side of us, and the theorizing about nature the negative. This again is limited by what we said before that a man who analyzes a mass of natural phenomena, is far more positive than one who accepts them and learns them from him. That ought to be emphasized in all education. Therefore, also, whenever any consciousness has existed of what we have been discussing, the negative qualities alone have never been cultivated by themselves. Why did Plato put over the door of his philosophical shrine, 'Let no one enter without knowledge of geometry.' It is because geometry and mathematics generally are subjects which cannot be taken at another's word. We have to penetrate with our own soul into geometry, achieve it for ourselves and acquire it through the positive soul-activity. If we really heeded this, many of the theories of the world existing to-day would never exist. For when we realize what a positive piece of work it is, to achieve such a system of ideas as geometry, we learn to respect man's inner activity ; but if we read, for instance, Haeckel's *The Riddle of the World* without any idea how the result is obtained, we may be able to work out a new philosophy, but we shall be working in a purely negative attitude of soul.

Spiritual science or Anthroposophy thus contains something which has a definitely cultural effect on the positive in us. When we are told of the latest modern achievements in one of the

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usual ways, by lantern slides or similar demonstrations, we may be able to see the animals or the phenomena illustrated on the screen, but we give ourselves passively up to it and our attitude is negative ; we need no positive qualities and need not think : for instance, in a series of pictures of the different phases followed by a glacier in its course down the mountains. That is all evidence of our love of the negative. Anthroposophy is not so simple. There is no access to the things which lead to the spiritual world, except by the human soul ; so that if we want any result for our spiritual science, we must realize from the start that there can be no demonstration of the most important facts. We must co-operate in our own soul and release its most positive qualities. That, too, is why spiritual science is qualified to cultivate the positive qualities in man, and in that lies the healthiness of this philosophy, which makes no claims except to rouse the sleeping faculties in our souls. Anthroposophy, in appealing to the self-active in the soul, calls forth what lies there, to permeate all the juices and forces of the body, and what, in the truest sense, has a healthy effect on the whole of man.

And since Anthroposophy only appeals to sound reason which cannot be called forth by mass-suggestion, but only through individual understanding, and since it renounces anything that is called out by mass-suggestion, it counts only the most positive qualities of the human soul.

Thus we have put together, without embellishment, facts which show us how man stands under the double stream of the positive and negative in

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life. Man cannot rise to a higher level unless he leaves a lower positive level, and changes to a negative attitude, in which he absorbs some new content ; this he carries through with himself, so that he becomes positive on a higher level. If we observe nature rightly, we can see how the world-wisdom makes us pass from positive to negative and from negative to positive.

From this point of view it is illuminating to study some detail, such as Aristotle's famous definition of tragedy. A tragedy, he says, puts before us a complete action in such a way that fear and pity are released within us, but released thus that they undergo a Katharsis or purgation. Man, who comes into existence with all his usual egoism, is at first very positive ; he is complete in himself, he hardens himself. Then, if he sympathizes with others in their joy and suffering, he becomes negative : negative because he leaves his ego and develops sympathy, community of feeling.

But we become negative also if we sink ourselves in what threatens as an undefined fate, in what may happen to-morrow as a result of the actions of someone, with whom we sympathize. We have all felt the trembling coming over us when someone rushes to his doom, when we see the fate that impends while he yet cannot act in any other way than he does. We are afraid of what may happen ; and that puts us into a negative frame of mind, for fear is negative. But we should cease to have any real share in life, if we could no longer fear for a man who is approaching some unknown future. Thus fear and sympathy

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makes us negative. Then, that we may return to the positive, tragedy puts before us the hero, with whose actions we sympathize, and whose fate touches us so nearly that our own fears are roused. But at the same time the completion of the drama in its fulfilment puts before us the picture of the hero in such a way that our fear and sympathy are purged, that, instead of remaining negative qualities, they are transformed into the harmonious contentment which the work of art gives us and so enables us to re-establish the positive.

The definition of the old Greek philosopher shows us in a work of art how Art is an element in life, which meets a necessary negative attitude and transforms it into a positive. The artistic appearance leads us everywhere to higher levels where we must first of all be negative, so that we may pass from a still undeveloped condition of soul. In beauty we have something which is given us, because we should otherwise be unable to rise above our present stage. Then ordinary life is irradiated by the glamour of a higher frame of mind, when we have once been raised by art to a higher soul level.

Thus not only in the life of the individual but of the whole of humanity, there is an interchange of 'positive and negative', which contributes to the raising of the individual from one incarnation to the next, and also raises the common life of humanity. We could easily show, if there were time, how there have been positive and negative epochs; and the idea of positive and negative throws light into every sphere of the soul's life. It is never simply the case that one man is positive

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and another negative ; but every man is both. Each of us has to go through positive and negative at different stages of our being. Only then shall we see the idea as one of life's truths, and therefore a foundation for living our life. And this discussion has once again confirmed a saying which we put at the beginning and end of these lectures, the saying of Herakleitos, the Greek philosopher, who because he could see so deep into the human soul, was called the ' Obscure ' ; ' the boundaries of the soul you will never fathom, not even if you tread every path ; so all-embracing is the nature of the soul.'

Then all study of the soul is useless, you say ; for if the soul is so vast that its boundaries are undiscoverable, no study can establish them, and we must always be in doubt about it. But only a negative man would argue thus. A positive man would add : Thank God that this soul-life is so vast that no knowledge can embrace it all ; for this assures us that everything which we comprehend to-day in our understanding will be surpassed to-morrow, and that we may thus rise ever higher. Let us be glad that the soul is at every moment too great for our knowledge. We need an unbounded soul-life ; for the vision of the infinite gives us hope that we may every moment surpass the positive and rise from step to step. The finest vision of our future trust and aspiration lies above all in the soul-life, infinite and unknowable. Because we can never find its boundaries, the soul is able to rise beyond them and mount to higher and ever higher levels.



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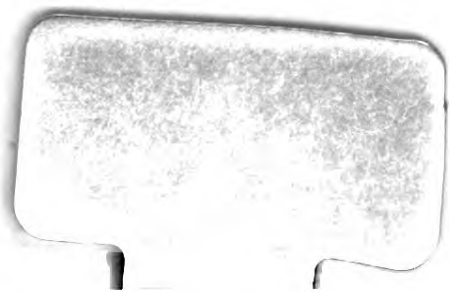
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the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased from 10.5 million to 13.5 million, and the number of people aged 75 and over has increased from 4.5 million to 6.5 million (Office for National Statistics 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the needs of older people, and the UK Government has set out a strategy for the 21st century (Department of Health 1999). This strategy is based on the concept of 'active ageing', which is defined as 'the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation in society, and security in old age' (Department of Health 1999).

The strategy is based on three pillars: health, participation, and security. Health is defined as 'the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (World Health Organization 1948). Participation is defined as 'the ability to take part in the life of the community' (Department of Health 1999). Security is defined as 'the ability to meet the needs of old age' (Department of Health 1999).

The strategy is based on the principle that older people should be able to live independently and actively in their own homes for as long as possible. This requires a range of services and support, including housing, transport, and social services. The strategy also emphasizes the importance of promoting the health and well-being of older people, and of encouraging them to participate in the life of the community.

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