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SERIES**

No. 4

**HUMAN LIFE IN THE LIGHT
OF ANTHROPOSOPHY**

Lecture by

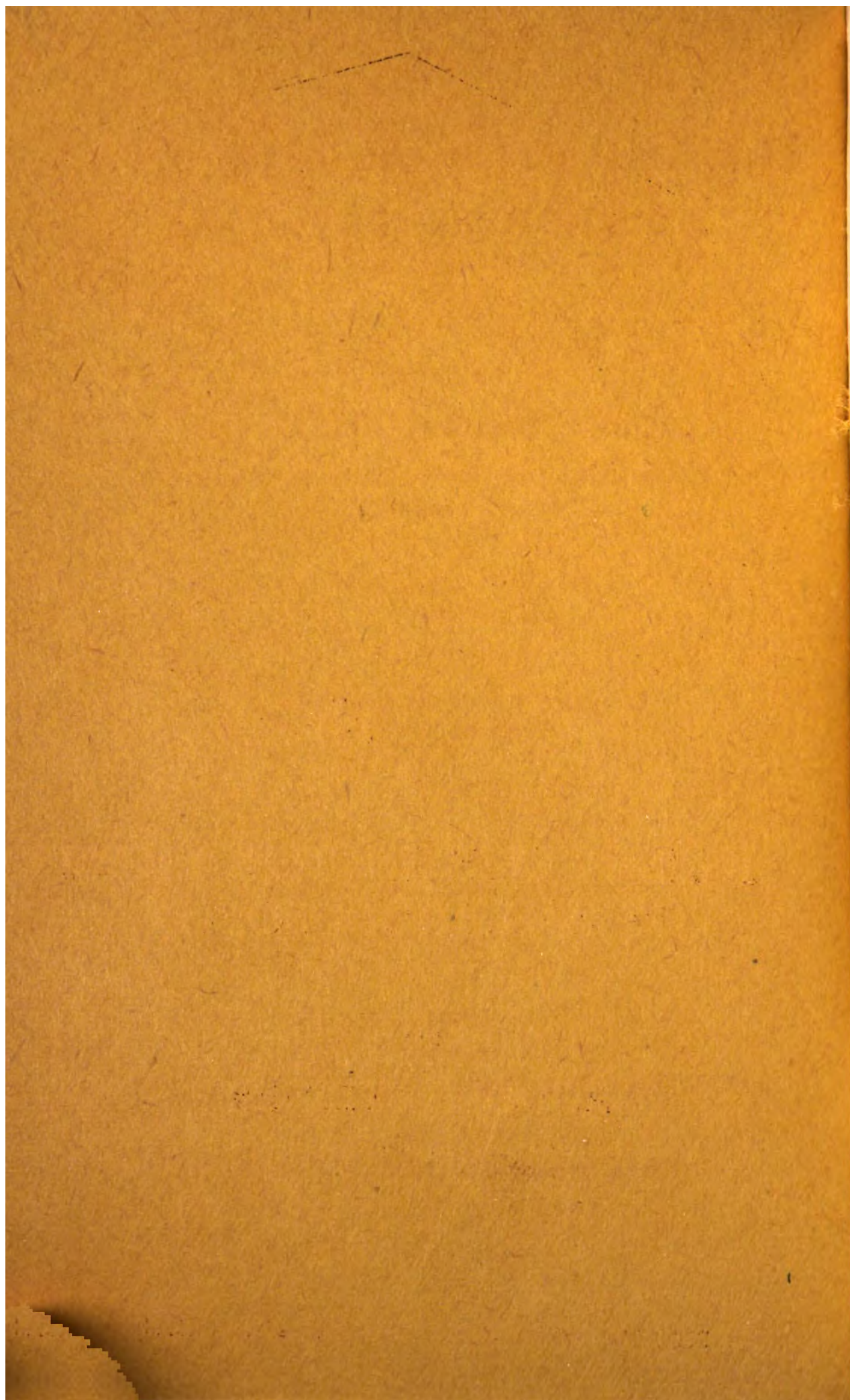
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Human Life in the Light of Anthroposophy

A Lecture by

Rudolf Steiner, Ph.D.

**Given at Liestal, Basle, Switzerland,
16th October, 1916**

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PREFACE

THIS pamphlet contains the substance of a lecture which I gave at Liestal, 16th October, 1916, in continuation of the one delivered at Dornach on 11th January (on Spiritual Science and its Building at Dornach), where I tried to give some details of the spiritual nature of the human soul, and the methods whereby a knowledge of Anthroposophy, or Spiritual Science, may be obtained, while at the same time referring to various objections brought against it.

One can but try to present again and again the true paths and goals of anthroposophical Spiritual Science from different points of view, while realising that many opponents have no real desire to know what they condemn. For instead of studying Spiritual Science, people build up a caricature of the teachings, which they then turn and demolish, attacking in this way, not one's aims, but their opposite.

RUDOLF STEINER.

DORNACH,

November, 1916.

Human Life in the Light of Anthroposophy

THE lecture to-night is not intended to be 'propaganda' in the usual sense of the word, but to answer certain questions which are bound to arise in a town so near our Dornach Building.

On hearing of the Anthroposophical Movement, an outsider will naturally ask whether there is any demand for it in the life of to-day, or whether it consists of ideas started by impractical people with little to do, and is, therefore, unworthy of the attention of real workers for humanity.

Man carries out in later life the tasks for which his childhood and youth prepare him. He seeks to understand something of the purpose and meaning of life and cannot remain satisfied with what he perceives with his senses and the work that he does with his hands. He becomes aware of his soul, and asks—'What does the soul mean in the world?' Through religion he gets the answer and opens

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the door which seems to shut off his physical life from the eternal, immortal life of the soul. Generally speaking, this answer is correct, and one may well ask why anything more is necessary—whether, indeed, we require a Spiritual Science which seems to press in between outer life in the physical world and the revelation of religion with its message concerning the eternal being of man.

But we must take into consideration the fact that the last five centuries, and especially the nineteenth century, have given us discoveries which have radically changed the conditions of all human life, and caused man to think of his problems in a wider way. The particular form which these problems are taking is shown above all in the belief held by many in the nineteenth century, that Natural Science, by its own means, is able to solve the riddle of human existence. Anthroposophy, while fully appreciating Natural Science, maintains that this view is erroneous.

He who penetrates into the achievements of modern Science with deepened powers of the soul, realises more and more that the answers offered by Natural Science to the higher questions of human existence are not answers

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at all, but further questions, although, admittedly, human life is the richer for being able to put such questions. Even the learned men of the nineteenth century paid but little attention to this fact. They thought the questions had been answered, whereas they should really have been put in a different way. They rise again now in the soul of modern man and demand a reply.

The people gathered together in the Anthroposophical Society are those who, in a certain sense, are conscious of the riddles of life. These rise inevitably from the conditions of man's life to-day, and are met, not only by students of Spiritual Science, but by all who enter fully into modern life. If no answer to them can be found, certain disastrous consequences will follow. If one speaks of these things, one is called a visionary by those who are dazzled by the progress of humanity, but who fail to see that unless this is followed by progress in other domains, something beneath the surface will be prepared.

Men may, of course, be blind and deceive themselves, refusing to face these riddles at all. This course, however, weakens certain inner spiritual forces, which strive for growth through

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modern development. The life of the human soul then reaches a condition which we may compare to that of a man whose hands and arms are tied, so that he is unable to make use of them.

Forces which man possesses and does not use have an increasingly weakening effect upon him, and lead to an utter lack of interest in everything to do with the soul and religion. But a condition of indifference to all that concerns the soul is only endurable so long as man's interest is vitally attracted by other things which darken the soul. This interest may persist for a while in those much influenced by modern Science, but a time comes when it fades away and man then loses his zest for work ; life itself is felt to be a burden.

The first symptoms of indifference to religious life are clearly to be seen in the last century. I give as an instance, not one of the many scholars who believed that they could answer the questions of spiritual life through Natural Science, but a simple man of the people who thought the same thing. I refer to a peasant who lived through a kind of martyrdom in Upper Austria during the last century—Conrad Deubler—who was entangled in all the

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consequences of the Natural Science of that time. During his youth he entered deeply for a time into spiritual studies originating with a man like Zschokke ; but acquaintance with Darwinism, and with the writings of Haeckel and Büchner, led him to abandon these other modes of thought, to immerse himself in the materialistic form of Darwin and to become absorbed by Haeckel's philosophy, until he finally believed all talk of a spiritual world to be folly unless it proceeded from the source of Natural Science.

Deubler conceived the world as built solely out of material substances and forces. His views were not superficial, but he was a man who was utterly misled by the tendency of his time to deny all spiritual sources of knowledge. True, he retained a zest for life until his death, but this was because he lived in an age in which it was still possible to be dazzled by the brilliance of purely scientific achievements. The psychic consequences of such ideas as his were only to show themselves in those who lived at a later time. Deubler is a good example of a certain type of soul in recent years, and many such examples could be brought forward. They would prove that

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numbers of people in that age believed in the power of Natural Science to give an intelligible explanation of the meaning of the world. It is neither possible nor desirable to hinder the scientific knowledge of Nature, which is a necessity to modern man if he is to introduce anything of use into his existence. If, however, his mind is bent one-sidedly in this direction, he loses his connection with spiritual life and with the element of soul in his own being.

Men such as Deubler did not yet realise that Natural Science indeed raises new questions, but furnishes no answers for the life of the soul. His mode of conception would of necessity become more and more general if a Spiritual Science were not to be added to Natural Science, and be a match for the latter.

The members of the Anthroposophical Society are of opinion that through the newer Spiritual Science, or Anthroposophy, a bond has to be created between the great progress of life rooted in natural-scientific knowledge and the religious life of man.

If we penetrate into the real significance of Natural Science, we can say that it leads to a picture of the world in which the essential being of man can find no place. In making

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this remark I am not speaking from my own personal opinion, but from what appears clearly to-day when we study scientific research with an unprejudiced mind. Our present age may well be deceived, for though it may justly admire scientific knowledge, it cannot as yet realise its limitations. Individual investigators have long recognised certain limitations, and the speech of Du Bois-Reymond at Leipzig in the seventies of last century, ending with '*Ignorabimus*'—'we shall never know'—has become famous. This very eminent scientist meant that however deeply one investigates the secrets of Nature with the methods of Natural Science, it is never possible to know what lives in the human soul as consciousness, or indeed to understand what lies at the base of matter itself. Natural Science is not qualified to understand matter and consciousness, which are, as it were, the two poles of human life. Natural Science has practically forced man as a spiritual being out of the cosmic picture at which it is working. This is revealed by a study of the ideas that have arisen as to the development of the planet Earth.

I am well aware that these ideas have been

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subject to variations and modifications and that many people may consider them obsolete. That, however, is not the essential point. All that is said along these lines to-day is conceived in the same spirit as the older Kant-Laplace theory of which I am now going to speak. According to this conception, the Earth and the whole solar system have been formed out of primeval nebula in which nothing else existed save its own characteristic forces. The planetary system is supposed gradually to have arisen through a rotation of the nebula, and within this system the Earth was formed. Through the continuous evolution of the same forces which were once contained within the nebula, everything we now admire on the Earth, including man himself, is said to have come into being. This view is thought to be highly illuminating and is even taught to children at school. Man deceives himself into thinking it illuminating, because a simple experiment suffices in showing it to children. Such clear evidence is loved by those who try to find in Natural Science a satisfying philosophy. It is only necessary to let a drop of oil float on water and to insert for the equator a piece of paper with a needle

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stuck into it perpendicular to the plane of the equator. The drop is allowed to swim on the surface of the water and is rotated with the needle. Tiny drops break away : here is a cosmic system in miniature ! This is said to represent the whole process of the origin of the world in miniature, and the children think they understand, for it seems so clear. One factor, however, is always left out of account. Even if in daily life it is often good to forget oneself, it is not always good to do so in scientific experiments ! The drop would not separate smaller drops from itself unless the teacher were there revolving the needle. Since, however, regard should be paid to *every* factor, anyone who demonstrates this experiment to the public ought also to explain how in the Cosmos there must be a mighty teacher, some giant professor who transfixes through the nebulous mass some kind of gigantic needle and causes the whole to rotate ! And, moreover, what has arisen out of the drop ? Nothing that was not there already in the undivided condition. Thus is knowledge often led astray by the obvious.

In spite of all the authority of Natural Science, certain men who possess a healthy

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feeling for the world have, of course, revolted against such evidence. Let me instance a case which I have already mentioned in my book—*The Riddle of Man*. Hermann Grimm, the great investigator into the realm of art, was of opinion that never in the whole course of his life had Goethe allowed himself to indulge in the purely external explanation of cosmic evolution outlined above. Hermann Grimm says: “Already in Goethe’s youth the great Kant-Laplace theory of the origin and future dissipation of the earth globe had long taken root. Out of a self-rotating nebula—as school children themselves will tell you—a central sphere of gas is formed. Out of this the Earth arises later on and as a solidifying sphere passes, in the course of inconceivable periods of time, through all its phases, including the episode of inhabitation by the human race, in order finally to be absorbed again into the Sun as so much burnt-out dross. It is a long process, but one that is wholly intelligible to the public, and it requires for its existence no other external interference than the working of some outside force to maintain the Sun at a constant temperature.

“It is impossible to conceive of a more fruit-

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less perspective for the future than this which is thrust upon us as a scientific necessity. In comparison with this last excrement of creation, in which guise our Earth finally seeks a home in the Sun, a decaying bone round which a hungry dog circles, would be both refreshing and appetising! The passion for knowledge with which a generation adopts such theories and thinks it believes them, is a symptom of diseased imagination on which the learned men of future times will have to employ much ingenuity when it is a question of explaining it as an historical phenomenon of the age. Goethe never would admit such a comfortless view."

Hermann Grimm's intuition — in an age when Anthroposophy could not as yet be known—is well worth consideration. It shows that there lives in man a striving for a solution of the great riddle of cosmic existence other than that which Natural Science—wonderful as it is—is supposed to be able to supply. And here let me emphasise once again that Anthroposophy is not an enemy of Natural Science. The real path taken by Natural Science in its later development shows that it is in a position to raise deeply suggestive and

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penetrating questions, but that the answers must come from quite another side. It is the aim of Anthroposophy, or Spiritual Science, to give these answers. Quite different forces of cognition must of course be used from those that are recognised to-day. I spoke of the development of supersensible powers of cognition in my previous lecture here. This lecture has been published as a pamphlet entitled *The Mission of Spiritual Science and its Building at Dornach*,¹ so I need not repeat what has already been said. I shall merely point out that in addition to the ordinary powers of soul which man possesses and which he applies in the knowledge-process in the sphere of Natural Science, it is possible to develop others. These latter are related to the ordinary powers of cognition just as—by way of comparison—the musical ear is related to a perception directed merely to the vibrating strings of an instrument. In the outer world a symphony, apart from the hearing of it, reveals vibrating strings and so on; but something quite different is revealed to the musical ear through these vibrations The

¹ Anthroposophical Publishing Co. 1s. net.

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spiritual investigator is, in a certain sense, a man who has developed the power of beholding the world which is related to the perception of Natural Science as the musical ear is related to the perception directed merely to the vibratory processes of space. The spiritual investigator possesses faculties by means of which the spiritual world is revealed, just as the symphony is revealed through vibratory processes.

Let me here point out emphatically that it is by no means necessary for everyone who seeks to make Spiritual Science fruitful in his soul, to become a spiritual investigator himself. The relation between the spiritual investigator and the man who does not himself investigate, but only assimilates the results of spiritual research, is not the same as the relation between the scientist and one who merely studies the results of scientific research. The relation is quite different and I shall try to express it figuratively.

The spiritual investigator himself merely prepares, as it were, the instrument which communicates knowledge of the spiritual world. By dint of certain faculties which he has unfolded, the spiritual investigator is able

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to form instruments by means of which any man who is unprejudiced enough to use them aright can penetrate to the spiritual world. Correct ideas concerning the nature of the instruments must, however, be evolved. Whereas the man who prepares the instruments for an external chemical or physical experiment uses external objects through which a secret of Nature can be made evident, the spiritual investigator prepares an instrument the nature of which is purely of the soul and spirit. This latter consists of certain ideas, certain connections of ideas which, used in the right way, open up the entrance into the spiritual world.

For this reason the literature of Spiritual Science differs in a sense from other literature. The literature of Natural Science communicates certain results of which man informs himself, but the literature of Spiritual Science is of another kind. It can become an instrument in the soul of every individual. If a man permeates his being with Anthroposophical conceptions, he is no longer confronted by a dead result which can be learnt, but he has something which, through an inner life, unites him to the spiritual world he is seeking. Who-

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ever reads a book on Spiritual Science will observe—if he reads it in the right way—that the substance living in the book can become in his life of soul the means of bringing this soul-life itself into harmony with spiritual existence. He now has a spiritual understanding of what he formerly only understood with his senses and the intellect bound to the senses. If this is still but little recognised, and the literature of Spiritual Science taken in the sense of any other literature, the reason lies solely in the fact that we are standing at the very beginning of the development of Spiritual Science. As this proceeds, it will be recognised more and more that in a book written truly in the sense of Anthroposophy, we have not merely a content as in any other book, but a kind of instrument, which not only communicates certain facts of knowledge, but through which man himself becomes self-creative. It must, however, be realised that this instrument in Spiritual Science is purely of the nature of soul and spirit, consisting of certain quite definite living ideas which are to be distinguished from all other ideas because they are not pictures like the latter, but living realities. It must be emphasised that even at

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the present stage of Spiritual Science, everyone who makes efforts can himself become a spiritual investigator at a certain level. This, however, is not necessary if spiritual knowledge is made fruitful for the soul in the sense described.

Just because Spiritual Science, or Anthroposophy, is still at the beginning of its development, it is quite comprehensible, and even natural, that the results to which one is led through the developed powers of the spiritual investigator are received with doubt, perhaps even with ridicule. This doubt and derision, however, will disappear more and more in course of time when the needs awaken, which, as we have seen, are still slumbering to-day in the majority of men. Universal recognition will come for Spiritual Science as it has come for many things in the course of human evolution.

The spiritual investigator knows that man, as he appears to the senses and to Natural Science working with external means, represents only one part of the whole human being. Within the totality of human nature, besides the outer physical man, there exists a supersensible being living and working in the physical man, who otherwise would immediately fall into decay.

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The spiritual investigator discovers that just as colour is perceived with the physical eye, so with the 'spiritual eye' (Goethe's expression) the so-called etheric body can be perceived within the physical man. (The term used is not essential, and I ask you not to make words a stumbling-block. I might equally well use others.) The human etheric body exists supersensibly within the physical body. It cannot be seen with physical eyes but only with the spiritual eye. It may be retorted that the spiritual investigator merely 'adds' this etheric being to the physical man. But just as man, as a physical being, has within him the forces and substances of his physical environment with all their activities, he also bears within him spiritual forces which he possesses in common with a spiritual world around him. For the moment let us consider the forces of the so-called etheric body. This body consists of certain 'supersensible' forces. And we can look for these forces in man's environment just as we can discover through Natural Science the physical forces which man bears within him in his earthly environment. But we must behold with the 'spiritual eye' that which exists spiritually in our surroundings.

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I shall now tell you of a certain connection between spiritual processes in man's environment and the forces which build up his etheric body. With our senses we see each year the plants shoot forth in Spring, while later on coloured flowers develop and fruits are formed. Then we experience the fading and decay of the plants. We see in Nature an alternation—the flowering of Summer and the repose of Winter. But these things are only related to the Spiritual as the vibrating strings in an instrument are related to the musical tone. The spiritual eye adds to this alternation of flowering and repose, the equivalent of the musical tone, a kind of spiritual hearing and seeing. As we see with the physical eye plants springing from the Earth, so the spiritual investigator sees how from the Earth's environment, Beings move towards the Earth in the same measure in which the plants spring from the soil. Fantastic as this may sound to modern intellect, it is nevertheless true that in every Springtime the spiritual eye sees a rich life streaming to the Earth from its environment. But this does not happen during Winter.

Whereas with physical sight we behold only

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the growth of the physical plants out of the soil, with the spiritual eye we may see etheric beings descending from the cosmic environment. As the physical plants grow onward to maturity, the living spiritual essence, sinking into the plants, disappears from the etheric environment of the Earth. As Autumn approaches, flowers fade and fruits develop and we see the etheric beings who descended into the plant life, withdrawing again into the space surrounding the Earth. So we perceive an in- and out-streaming of a supersensible element in the being of the Earth, as if living, supersensible plants were growing out of the etheric world and disappearing into the physical plants.

The Earth has a much more intense and active spiritual life of its own in Winter than it has in Summer. And if we really live into these conditions we experience the alternation of etheric life in Summer and Winter. It may be compared to sleeping and waking in man's life.¹ Thus we learn to know how, in Winter, certain beings are separated from the Earth

¹ In this short description it is impossible to show that these experiences do not contradict facts relating to the Earth's movement;

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and live in its cosmic surroundings, descending again in Spring to unite themselves with plant life. In this way they enjoy a kind of repose which stimulates the earthly life because of the union between the Spiritual and the Earth.

Remember that the Earth is a being and not a dead body as geology and other external sciences represent it to be. Conclusions reached by analogies may lead to the belief that the Earth wakes in Spring and falls asleep in Winter, but Anthroposophy brings the knowledge that the warm, sultry Summer is the time when the Earth sleeps, and the cold Winter with its mantle of snow is the time when it wakes. In Winter the Earth-Being has a kind of remembrance of the Summer communion with beings from the cosmic environment. There is, of course, no suggestion of all this to physical sense, but it reveals itself to spiritual cognition from surrounding Nature. It is as if a deaf man were suddenly to receive the power of hearing, and to hear the volume of sound produced by vibrating strings, which in his former state was impossible. The objection that the comparison with musical hearing proves the experience of Spiritual

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Science to be merely subjective has no foundation for those who understand it aright.

Let me emphasise here that Spiritual Science, unlike certain philosophies of the nineteenth century, does not build up anthropomorphic ideas, but it gives the results of what it beholds—actual spiritual perceptions—and these are generally very different from anthropomorphic conceptions. If we permeate ourselves with the knowledge resulting from these observations, we learn to understand how human life itself is fashioned; for of all riddles meeting us in the external world, human life is itself the greatest.

In a short lecture I can only give a brief indication of what Anthroposophy has to say about the riddle of human life. I may tell you, however, of the continuous rhythm which it sees therein. The first measure of the rhythm of life is the period of earliest childhood: from birth until the sixth or seventh year, when the second teeth make their appearance. This is a time of extraordinary interest for spiritual observation. (The period from conception to birth, interesting as it also is, cannot be considered here.) So much develops in this first period of life that intuitive

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educationists have held that man learns from his mother or nurse, in the first years of childhood, more than he can learn from all nations or peoples during the rest of his life, even if he travel the world over. During these years the human being acquires, among other things, the powers of standing upright, of speech, of thinking and memory, and, moreover, there are working in him those inner forces which come to a certain culmination with the appearance of the second teeth.

All these processes up to the seventh year reveal themselves to the spiritual investigator as if generated by earthly forces. He must, of course, add all that the spiritual eye beholds within earthly evolution to everything that the senses can perceive therein. This naturally does not imply that Spiritual Science has already investigated all the mysteries of this period of human development. Sincere and profound investigation will have to seek for these things in earthly existence.

A second period of human life begins with the coming of the teeth, and lasts approximately until the fourteenth year, when the human being approaches puberty. In this period, spiritual investigation finds that the

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processes in the physical body are no longer to be explained from what is operative on the Earth itself, but from the existence of forces external to the Earth, similar to those connected with plant life in the course of the year. They work during the second period of human life in such a way that the process which is enacted in one year for plant development takes about seven years in man. (These things are not the result of any interpretation of the 'mystical number seven' but of spiritual observation.) The similarity lies only in the nature of the super-earthly forces, for there is no spatial in-working into man as there is into the plants. What works etherically in the development and decay of the plant-world in the course of the year, lives as if enclosed in the human organism as the etheric body. The child evolves during the second period under the influence of these forces, and because he bears them within him, he is no longer a mere earthly being but an image of the super-earthly.

We have in the brain an organ that is pre-eminently the product of earthly forces. Strange as it may seem to the ordinary ideas of to-day, the brain is mainly a product of the Earth. Outwardly, this is revealed in the fact

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that at about the age of seven, the development of the brain has reached a certain conclusion. I do not mean the development which consists in the assimilation of concepts and ideas, of course, but the inner formation and structure of the brain, the hardening of its parts and so forth. Something must now be added to all that has played a part in the development of the human body up to the seventh year, something that is not contained within the earthly elements, but is derived from the super-earthly. Thus, among other things, it happens that from the seventh to the fourteenth year, those forces which man develops—apart from his head and brain—in the rest of his organism, also make their way into the development of his head and countenance. With his seventh year, man brings forth within himself, as it were, a super-earthly, etheric being, having a life and freedom of its own. Just as his physical body enters physical existence at birth, so now an etheric super-earthly body comes into being. And the result of this is greater precision in the expression of the features. Through the etheric body, the breathing and circulatory systems also take on a more individual character.

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Not only are the earthly forces active in the physical organisation, but the etheric forces are also working therein, fashioning the super-earthly element of man's nature and causing the *inner* being to unfold. This remains with man throughout life as the bodily expression of his life of feeling and perception.

In the knowledge of this etheric body, which is possessed in common with the plants, spiritual research has not yet exhausted the nature of man. It finds that another supersensible being lives, not in the super-earthly environment as do those I described with regard to the plants, but as a spiritual reality that can be found neither within the Earth nor in the super-earthly environment, but yet reveals itself throughout the realm of sense existence. It is a supersensible element that is already present in man from birth, indeed from conception, but it only begins to operate in the bodily organism at about the fourteenth year. It does not work like the etheric elements in the space surrounding us as earthly men.

Now I have already said that Spiritual Science can show us that the Earth retains as a memory during Winter what has been

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experienced during Summer in connection with super-earthly forces.

As we learn more of the spiritual nature of the Earth, we shall realise that the Earth-body on which we live is a descendant of a pre-earthly planet just as the son is a descendant of the father; the son, however, is like his father in structure, but the Earth-body is the descendant of a planetary being with which it has but little resemblance. We learn to know this planetary being if we can observe the Earth in Winter, when it awakes and unfolds a kind of memory. For in the spiritual element which is revealed in the Earth, there is still preserved, as it were, the memory-picture of the condition passed through by that cosmic body which afterwards became the Earth.

These things sound paradoxical to-day—to many people foolish or even mad—but it has always been so in matters which have later been recognised in Science as natural and obvious.

The mineral kingdom was not present in the living, cosmic body from which our Earth has arisen, but there was a closer connection with the etheric life which to-day works in

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the super-earthly world in Summer. If the spiritual eye is able to see how the present Earth has arisen from an earlier living being, it gains the power to know a supersensible element which works in man and in animals, though it is not to be found in earthly space, nor in the super-earthly world. This supersensible element forms the third member of human nature, the astral body, or soul-body, which is indeed present from birth, but only begins to manifest a definite independent activity from about the fourteenth year of life. (Again let me say that the actual term 'astral body' is not essential; another might easily be used.) It will at first be difficult for one trained in other modes of conception to form a true idea of the difference in man's astral body before and after the fourteenth year.

Another supersensible member begins to work in the human organisation near the age of twenty-one years. This is the real bearer of the Ego which raises man above the animal.

Now we must ask in what sense Anthroposophy maintains that this member first manifests an independent activity in the fourth period of life, since man already owes to it the upright position, the faculty of speech,

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etc., which have even in childhood raised him above the animal. The answer is supplied by the knowledge of the purely supersensible essence of the Ego, which has developed through repeated earthly lives. If it only possessed the forces which can be acquired in one life, it could not work independently until the body had reached the fourth period of life. But the forces gained through previous earthly lives enable the Ego to work in certain parts of the bodily organisation before the fourth period is reached.

For this same reason the astral body can also be active in the physical organism earlier than would otherwise be the case. Just because spiritual research can see the difference in the activity of the Ego before and after the fourth period of life, it realises how man passes through repeated earthly lives and spends long periods between death and rebirth in a purely spiritual existence.

I have here given you a short outline of part of the Anthroposophical conception of the world. You may realise from what has been said, that this is not based upon arbitrary and fantastic speculation, but on a careful and conscientious method of research needing

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special kinds of knowledge. The teaching of Natural Science about the body of man is enriched by the knowledge of the Spiritual which surrounds us, in addition to the physical world. As the first messengers of the spiritual world we find beings which 'grow down' to the Earth etherically as plants grow out of the Earth physically; we ourselves grow into this realm just as we grow into the external world through our senses. But we also learn to know in our environment a higher spiritual world from which our astral body and human Ego are derived; our soul-nature belongs to this realm and its beings as does our body to the physical world. Here dwell those who have passed before us through the gate of death. Spiritual research shows us that we must not seek with the dead any relationship which arises from human desire, but that any approach must start from the dead themselves. Then through their will we may gradually be able to see them with our 'spiritual eye'. The spiritual investigator must be filled with reverence if he is to approach this sphere. But all other knowledge which may flow to us from the spiritual world through the deliberate unfolding of our faculties, is our own concern,

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and contains answers eagerly desired by those who feel the spiritual longings which arise naturally in the present conditions of man's evolution.

True Spiritual Science does not oppose Natural Science, nor can it possibly estrange anyone from the religious life. On the contrary, it will eventually form a bond between Science and Religion, although this may seem a very doubtful matter to-day. Of late years, Natural Science has realised that in itself it is one great question, to which something must be added before it can become really intelligible to man. In concerning itself with the riddle of man, it has overstepped its sphere. (This is not based upon my personal view, for spiritual investigation does away with subjective considerations and allows the evolution of facts themselves to speak.)

In the middle of the last century, the hopes raised by Darwinism, by spectro-analysis, by the great progress made in chemistry and biology were specially in evidence. In 1860, Eduard von Hartmann wrote his *Philosophy of the Unconscious*. He was not as yet a spiritual investigator, but a man who pointed through hypotheses to a spiritual reality

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behind the physical world, which—although the term is open to controversy—he called ‘The Unconscious’. He surmised, philosophically, facts that are established by Spiritual Science, and he could therefore not agree with contemporary scientists who believed any view of active spiritual forces to be unscientific and untenable by anyone with a knowledge of physico-chemical forces and biology.

Hartmann tried to show how the facts discovered by Darwin point to spiritual forces in the growth and development of the living being, but he was met by very much the same attitude of mind as that displayed towards Anthroposophy to-day. People said: ‘Eduard von Hartmann is a mere dabbler, he knows nothing of the root-nerve of Natural Science, therefore do not let us be led astray by this amateurish *Philosophy of the Unconscious*.’—Among the criticisms was an anonymous book, recognised by eminent scientists as written by one who knew what was essential to scientific research. This particular criticism seemed to play havoc with Hartmann’s scientific follies, but when the second edition was published, it bore the name of the writer, who proved to be none other than Hartmann himself! He thus

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showed that he was able to speak quite as scientifically as the scientists themselves.

In this way, the spiritual investigator of to-day could also reply to all the objections brought forward by people who think him an unscientific dreamer, objections such as are usually raised against knowledge with which they are unfamiliar, by those who pride themselves upon their 'scientific' point of view.

In an important book named *The Development of the Organism: a Refutation of the Darwinian Theory of Chance*, an eminent pupil of Haeckel—Oskar Hertwig—describes the scientific impotence of a materialistic Darwinism in face of the problems of practical life. This work, by a man who has written a whole series of books on biology, proves from the point of view of the natural investigator himself, that the hope of Haeckel and others to solve the problems of life through Darwinism was unfounded. (Let me here emphasise that I still value the accomplishments of Haeckel within the sphere of scientific philosophy as highly as I did years ago. I believe, as I always have believed, that a true understanding of Haeckel's achievements leads us far beyond

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his own rather limited conception, though naturally he himself could not realise this.)

Oskar Hertwig often quotes Eduard von Hartmann in his book, and he cites opinions of Hartmann's which refute those who opposed him on Darwinian grounds. Such incidents show us how scientific philosophy has developed. Its most eminent exponents to-day clearly show how it has been completely led astray in recent years. With the recognition of this fact will come an insight, pointing not only to what Hartmann and the speculative philosophers had to say about Natural Science, but also to what Spiritual Science has to add to these achievements.

Very much might be brought forward in this way to support the view that the true scientific mode of thinking to-day is really in complete harmony with Anthroposophy or Spiritual Science. There is no contradiction between Spiritual Science and Natural Science, or between Spiritual Science and the religious life.

I said something of importance in this connection in my last lecture here. It is my firm conviction that no one who earnestly considers the view expressed in that particular

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lecture can raise objections to Anthroposophy from a religious point of view. To-day I should like to make one point to prove that those who stand within the thought-life of a definite religious confession can raise no objections to it, if only they are fair-minded. I am going to show how this Anthroposophy or Spiritual Science can be viewed from the standpoint of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, who is fully acknowledged by the Roman Catholic Church as a Christian philosopher ; and what I have to say in this connection could equally well be said of the relation between a Protestant tendency of thought and Anthroposophy.

The philosophy of Thomas Aquinas distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge. First, the knowledge that flows unconditionally from Divine revelation, and is accepted by man because the revelation bears witness to its own truth. Such truths are, according to Thomas Aquinas, that of the Trinity, the doctrine of the chronological beginning of earthly existence, the doctrine of the Fall of man, the redemption by the Incarnation of Christ in Jesus of Nazareth and the doctrine of the Sacraments. According to Thomas

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Aquinas, the man who understands the essential nature of his knowledge-forces will not attempt to discover such truths as these by means of cognitional activity developed from out of himself.

In addition to these 'truths of faith' there are, for Thomas Aquinas, others which man can reach through his own force of knowledge and understanding—the 'Praeambula Fidei'. In this category he places all Truths relating to the existence of a Divine-Spiritual Being who is the creator, ruler, preserver and judge of the world. This is not merely a 'truth of faith', but it is knowledge that can be attained by human faculties and powers. To the domain of the 'Praeambula Fidei' belongs everything relating to the spiritual nature of human existence, and in addition, that which leads to the distinction between good and evil—the knowledge which furnishes the basis of Ethics, Natural Science, Aesthetics and Anthropology.

We can agree with the view of Thomas Aquinas and realise at the same time that the essential character of these 'truths of faith' is not altered by Anthroposophy, and also that all that it brings forward falls within the

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category of 'Praeambula Fidei,' if only this conception is understood in the correct sense of Thomistic philosophy. Anthroposophy knows of the existence of regions lying very close to man, which must be treated in the same way as 'the truths of faith' in a higher sphere.

In ordinary life, man has perforce to receive through communication, certain things which cannot as yet be actual experience; for example, the knowledge of what has happened between birth and the point of time to which the ordinary memory goes back. When, as a spiritual investigator, man develops higher forces of cognition, then, indeed, his vision extends backwards beyond this point of time; but *before* that period of development which can be remembered in ordinary life, the 'spiritual eye' does not see events in forms of the sense world; it beholds all that was happening in the spiritual world while the corresponding events were taking place in the physical world. When sense-perceptible processes as such cannot become conscious experience, they can only become part of spiritual cognition if they are communicated to it. (No healthy-minded spiritual investigator

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will imagine that he must waive aside all that is communicated to him by his fellowmen in order to reach the same experience by spiritual observation.)

Thus, so far as Anthroposophy is concerned, there exist, in the realm of everyday life, facts of knowledge which can only be obtained through revelation. In a higher realm, the truths of faith, as recognised by Thomas Aquinas, are such as relate to events inaccessible to a human knowledge based on its own powers alone, because they lie in a domain remote from ordinary experience and do not, in their immediate form, fall within the field of spiritual vision any more than do the events of physical existence occurring in the years immediately following birth. Knowledge of those physical events can only be received by man by revelation from the spiritual world. The fact that Anthroposophy employs such concepts as that of the Trinity, the Incarnation, etc., in the sphere of spiritual perception, has nothing to do with the application of these ideas to the region to which Thomas Aquinas refers. Everyone, moreover, who understands St. Augustine realises that such a mode of thought cannot be called 'unchristian'.

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The point of view held by Thomas Aquinas with reference to the 'Praeambula Fidei' is also reconcilable with Anthroposophy. For everything that is accessible to human powers of cognition, relying on themselves, must be recognised as 'Praeambula Fidei'. Thomas Aquinas includes in this, for example, the spiritual nature of the human soul. If now, by means of an extension of knowledge, Anthroposophy deepens into the *soul* the insight that is revealed by the intellect alone, it is only extending the scope of knowledge that falls within the domain of the 'Praeambula Fidei'; it does not overstep this sphere. It attains to truths which are a yet stronger support to the truths of faith than those obtained merely through the intellect.

Now Thomas Aquinas holds that the 'Praeambula Fidei' can never penetrate to the sphere of the 'truths of faith', but that they support them. Therefore what Thomas Aquinas demands of the 'Praeambula Fidei' is fulfilled in greater measure by their extension through Anthroposophy than through the intellect alone. These remarks on Thomistic Philosophy are only intended to show that man can be the most orthodox adherent of

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this thought and yet unite with it the knowledge given by Spiritual Science. Naturally I do not mean to suggest that everyone who accepts this must embrace Thomistic philosophy. Anthroposophy does not interfere with the religious beliefs of anyone. The fact that one person belongs to this confession and another to that, does not depend on what he knows or professes to know about the spiritual world, but on other circumstances of life. The more these things are really understood, the more will opposition to Anthroposophy vanish.

Those who have been able to acknowledge Spiritual Science in the face of opposition will find comfort in realising the fate of other things.

In the nineteenth century railways were introduced—the story is a familiar one—and certain authorities were called upon to decide whether or not it would be a good thing to build railways. They decided that it was inadvisable, because the health of those who travelled by rail, and of those who lived in the neighbourhood would suffer unless high walls were erected along the lines! I am not saying this in order to cast scorn on those who pass such judgments. It is quite possible even for

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men of great intelligence to make this kind of mistake, and it is never necessary to attribute foolishness or maliciousness to opponents. I am merely mentioning the opposition that arises in so many directions in order to teach those who are exposed to it the right attitude to adopt.

To-day everyone admires Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Yet when it was first performed, Weber, the celebrated composer of 'Der Freischutz,' remarked: 'The extravagance of genius has now reached the *non plus ultra*—Beethoven is ready for the asylum.' This was not the remark of a mere nonentity, but of a distinguished musician! And when the Abbé Stadler heard the same Symphony, he said, 'The E is repeated *ad nauseam* and the stupid fellow does not seem to notice it.' I do not refer to these foolish utterances in order to prove anything, but only to stimulate more accurate examination of something that is unfamiliar, before judgment is pronounced.

Without in any way daring to compare the work of Anthroposophy with the greatest of all events in human evolution, let me ask you to consider the development of the Roman

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Empire at the beginning of the Christian Era and the growth of Christianity from that time onwards. Christianity was too remote from all that was then considered worthy of the interest of intelligent human beings in Rome. Then look away from Roman culture, look at all that was developing literally under the earth in the catacombs ; think how the true life of Christendom was unfolding there in the depths. And then look at Rome a few centuries later. Christianity has ascended from the depths and is accepted in the very places where it was formerly despised and rejected. Those who believe that they should serve truth, although it has to make its way in the face of opposition, can strengthen their confidence by thinking of such events. A man whose being is permeated with Anthroposophy is not surprised when there is opposition. Rather will he regard it as his duty ever and again to place the aims of Anthroposophy in relation to the spiritual life of humanity in the right light, in face of this opposition.

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SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

THE short references to objections made by opponents to Anthroposophy which I have added to this lecture, are in the nature of general observations and do not deal with specific instances. If one allowed oneself to enter into detail, many extraordinary things would have to be mentioned. For instance, in a recently published pamphlet containing the report of a lecture given in Switzerland on the subject of the relation of my teachings to Christianity, we find the following words: "Thus again we come back to the challenge raised by the Russian Mystic Solovioff, that one and all, we can and must be 'Christs'— a challenge, moreover, that has been raised by all mystics who have seen fit to study Christianity." This was said in the year 1916 about my spiritual-scientific teachings, in spite of the fact that the objective untruth of the words can be proved to everyone who has read *Christianity as Mystical Fact* (published as long ago as 1903) and who has given even a

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superficial study to what I have said since that time on this subject.

Although it should be clear from all my writings that I am striving towards a mode of research which aims at the fundamental *extermination* of all 'suggestion' and 'anaesthesia', the following is to be found in this same pamphlet: "We can only be grateful to Dr. Steiner for showing us the extent to which 'suggestion' and 'anaesthesia' operate in modern Mysticism." This sentence does not mean to imply that I am an instance of how 'suggestion' and the like can be overcome, but that I myself have fallen a victim to such things! And thus it is with many so-called 'refutations', which of course merely prove that people are making a caricature of what they want to fight and then attacking it.

