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A READER'S JOURNAL

**An Esoteric Cosmology
Evolution, Christ & Modern Spirituality,
GA#94**

**18 lectures in Paris, May 25-June 14, 1906
by**

Rudolf Steiner

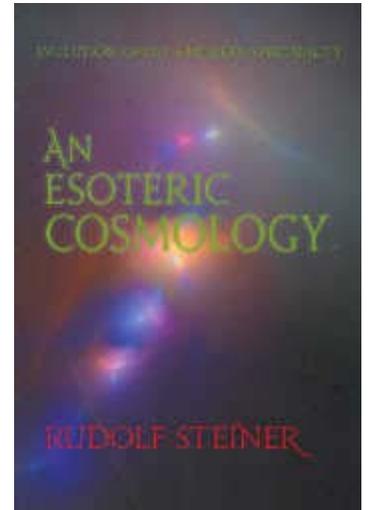
Preface by Bernard Garber

**Lecture notes translated and foreword by
Edouard Schuré**

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Chapter: Spiritual Science



These eighteen lectures can be considered as a draft of Rudolf Steiner's grand opus, *An Outline of Occult Science*, which was written about three years later. These lectures are much easier reading, but in their brevity one loses the scope and details which he was to provide later in his much larger book. My theory is that when learning something new, it's best to know all about it before you start. For you newcomers to Steiner's works, this book of lectures will achieve that function. You will be left with lots of unanswered questions — but you will hear, if not completely learn, all about the evolution of the cosmos and how we humans evolved to this stage where we are ensconced upon this planet, Earth. For those, like myself, who have already studied Steiner's work in depth, these lectures provide an excellent review with thumbnail summaries of the myriad of topics covered in detail in his later and much larger book, [An Outline of Occult Science](#).

Remarkably the notes of these eighteen lectures were transcribed by Edouard Schuré who wrote them down in French each night after the lectures. All of Steiner's lectures were given in German and later translated into English. Schuré wrote these down in French from which they were later transcribed into English as early as 1928. Here is his description of how he took down the notes of the lectures:

[page xvi, xvii of Foreword by Schuré] I took no notes of the first lecture, but it made such a vivid impression upon me that, once I reached home, I felt a need to write it down without forgetting a single link in the chain of these illuminating thoughts. I had absorbed the lecture so completely that I found no difficulty at all. By a process of involuntary and instantaneous transmutation, the German words, which had ingrained themselves in my memory, changed into French. The same thing, repeated after each of the eighteen lectures, gradually grew into a dossier that I keep as a rich and rare store of treasure. These lectures, which were never transcribed or revised by Rudolf Steiner, do not exist in the archives of his public lectures or in the collection of lectures duplicated for members of the Anthroposophical Society. They are, therefore, entirely unedited. . . . these priceless lectures mark a significant phase of Rudolf Steiner's thought: the spontaneous burst of his genius and its first crystallization. Moreover, it gives me joy to pay this new tribute to that teacher to whom I owe one of the great revelations of my life.

This is certainly one of the easiest and therefore most remarkable translations ever made from one language into another. What empowered Schuré to perform these transcriptions? We can only guess it was the indelible impression made upon him by Steiner's presentation.

[page xvi of Foreword] His fervent, convincing eloquence, irradiated by invariable clarity of thought, struck me at once as possessing two outstanding and unusual qualities.

First was its artistic power. When Rudolf Steiner spoke of the phenomena and beings of the invisible world, he seemed at home. With striking details and in familiar terms he told of events in these unknown realms, just as though he were speaking of the most ordinary matters. He did not describe but actually *saw* and made others see the objects, scenes, and cosmic vistas in clear-cut reality. Listening to him, one could not doubt the power of his astral vision; it was as limpid as physical vision, but much more penetrating.

Another characteristic, equally remarkable was that this philosopher and mystic, this thinker and clairvoyant, connected all experiences of soul to the immutable laws of physical nature. Those laws were used to explain and classify the suprasensory phenomena that appear before the seer, initially, in an overwhelming variety and almost bewildering abundance. Then, by a wonderful counter-stroke, these subtle, fluidic phenomena, proceeding from cosmic powers grouped in a great hierarchy, began to illumine the edifice of material nature. The diverse parts of nature were linked together, related to these cosmic powers from the heights to the depths, from the depths to the heights, and a vista of the grand architecture of the universe opened up from the inner world, where the visible is forever coming to birth from the womb of the invisible.

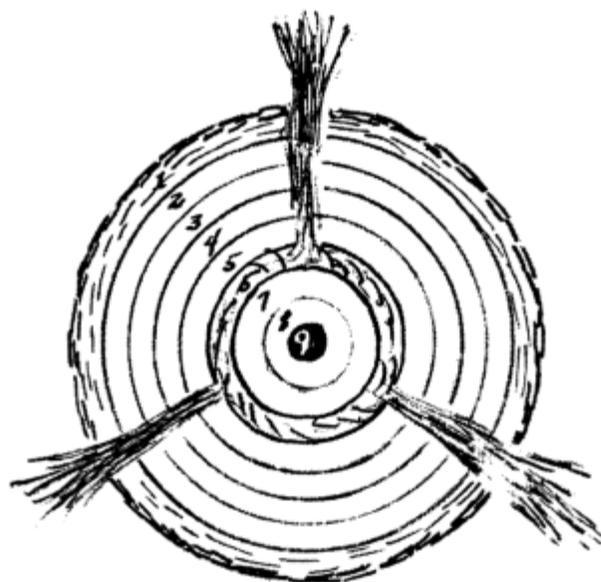
Schuré relates on page xxi how Steiner "describes how the Rosicrucians worked to unite themselves with the Christ by meditating the first fourteen verses in the Gospel of St. John".⁽¹⁾ This form of meditation was mentioned in my review of this book of lectures, I created this [webpage](#) for those who may wish to meditate on them on a regular basis. Thanks to Schuré's notes, we have this record in lecture seven of Steiner mentioning this meditation.

While working towards a degree in physics, I encountered discussions about the interior of the Sun and the interior of the Earth. Of course, we have no direct data about either place as no human and no instrument has ever visited either place, nor is either likely to happen. The extremes of pressure and temperature in both places makes it unlikely that sensory data will ever be retrieved of these places. But Rudolf Steiner does not need require instruments be placed within the center of the Earth to experience what the conditions exist there and at each of the distinctive layers one finds going to the center. He visits them with his supersensible sight and returns to explain to us how these layers are organized. One can choose to listen to the wild projections of materialistic science which have no basis in sensory data (are only maps of what *might* be there, all things being *equal* inside the Earth to how they are on the surface, which of course they are most definitely *not*). Scientific explanations of what happens in the center of the Earth are useful mostly in the daily lives of scientists. Or one can choose to listen to Rudolf Steiner who perceives the various layers and gives explanations of how these layers reveal themselves as events upon the surface of the Earth in everyone's daily lives. Schuré gives a precise summary of those inner layers in his Foreword:

[page xxi, xxii] The mystery of the Earth's interior, the basis and stage of human evolution, is one of the numerous problems that materialistic science has never been able to solve. Unceasing research has not helped. Many scholars imagine the Earth's interior as an igneous mass, capable of bursting the crust of the Earth; others imagine it as a compact mass of mineral substance, which explains neither volcanos nor earthquakes. The Earth is a living *being*, as are the planets and suns, endowed with an interior organism indispensable to its functions and its role in the Cosmos. Steiner sees the Earth's constitution in the form of nine layers — or, rather, as nine layers embedded one within the other.

The eight interior layers under the Earth's crust represent, as it

were, the physiological organs of our planet from which its life emanates and upon which this life depends. The substance of these eight inner spheres does not resemble the mineral matter that forms the outer crust and, in a sense, the skin of the Earth. The elements composing these layers are half liquid and half gaseous. The fire principle — the air-fire, mobile and pregnant with life, as well as a reservoir of will impulses and the cause of volcanic eruptions — is only one of the spheres embedded one within the other. It is the fourth from the center, or the [sixth] from the outer mineral crust. The interior fire communicates with the crust along paths that are veritably "ventilating tracts," hence the volcanic eruptions on the surface of the Earth.



The Interior of the Earth: 1. Mineral crust; 2. Negative life; 3. Inverted Consciousness 4. Circle of forms; 5. Circle of growth; 6. Circle of fire; 7. Circle of decomposition; 8. Circle of fragmentation 9. "I-centric" egoism

The nine layers can be divided into three layers from the Old Saturn stage of evolution which have remained in the very center of the Earth (7,8, 9), the three layers remaining from the Old Moon stage (4, 5, 6), and the outer three layers which formed during the current Earth stage of evolution. Those of you familiar with cosmic evolution as described in [Occult Science](#), will wonder why the Old Sun stage is not represented in the layers of the Earth. My hypothesis is that, when the Old Sun separated into Sun and Old Moon, the Sun took all the purified portions and left none within Old Moon (which embodied the Earth which was to come during a later split). The portions of the Sun will only be achieved during the future evolution of the Earth when at the last it will recombine into the Sun when all of humanity has reached its final state of purification(2).

It is useful to read Schuré's summary of the 9 layers of the Earth as it is somewhat easier to understand than the detailed description in the text proper. (Note that he numbers the layers from the center of the Earth in this description, whereas in the Diagram above they are numbered from the surface.)

[page xxii, xxiv] If we glance momentary at the interior constitution of the Earth, one fact strikes us immediately — it makes up the forces concentrated in the planet and worked at its development through successive metamorphoses, from the nebula of Saturn through the Old Sun and Old Moon periods and on to its present state. These same forces have worked at the human structure and today are more active than ever. 1) *Egoism and black magic* constitute the opaque center of the Earth, because egoism-love of self for its own sake, which black magic exaggerates and takes to excess — is indispensable to the development of human individuality. The fatal products of egoism are hatred and strife, represented by the next two layers: 2) *division* and 3) the *prism*, in which individualities multiply and differentiate in order to battle with one another.

It may be said that these three layers represent the Earth's kernel as it existed in the nebula of the Saturn period. This foundation is indispensable to all of the Earth's subsequent evolution. It is the springboard from which individuality can rise to higher worlds, as long as egoism (the principle of evil) is conquered and transformed by the

higher forces arising from the Sun and the firmament-forces of which divinity is the wellspring, and true human freedom the sculptor.

The period during which the Earth was still united with the Moon is indicated within the Earth by the existence of three other elementary spheres: 4) the *Fire principle* is at the root of will impulses and the cause of volcanic eruptions when a path is forged to Earth's mineral crust. 5) Above this is the level of organic *plant life*. Again, 6) there is a still higher level of the *vortex of animal forces*, where the ethereal embryos of the living beings destined to crawl, walk, and fly germinate and attain life in a laboratory of ceaseless activity.

In this second trinity of forces that constitute Earth's interior, we find the remains of the period when Earth was still united with the Moon. In those times, the Earth's surface was a kind of porous substance, the home of hybrid beings, half vegetable and half mollusc, with giant tentacles, while the seeds of terrestrial flora and fauna floated in the semi-liquid, semi-vaporous atmosphere. Wonderful words in the book of Genesis refer to this period: "Darkness was upon the face of the deep and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the Waters."

The third trio of inner organs of the Earth represents its actual form. The final metamorphosis occurs at the time of separation of the Moon from Earth; it is indicated by the addition of two new elements that are, as it were, the "humanized" replica of the Earth's center: 7) *Consciousness inverted*, in which everything is transformed into its opposite; 8) *Negative life*, or *death*. Every living being descending into this realm must perish instantly; it is the *Styx* of the Greeks, cursed by the Gods of life and beauty. 9) Above the sphere of death stretches the *solid mineral* envelope of the Earth, the theater of humanity.

It must be admitted that this extraordinary description of the interior constitution of our planet cannot be verified by any means of observation adopted by natural science. None but a seer possessed of equal power could contradict or confirm it.

Any persistent reader of Rudolf Steiner's works can easily confirm that the descriptions of each layer are consistent with the evolution of the cosmos as he described it in his [Occult Science](#) and in many other lectures. — And with other mythological and theological references across many cultures.

The Christ being remained behind in the Sun when the Old Moon carried the nascent Earth within itself into a separate existence. In historical times, this same great spiritual being entered the man Jesus of Nazareth during his baptism in the Jordan, and strove to rescue us from our precipitous fall into materialistic oblivion by dying on the cross, the first spiritual being to experience death as a human being. And He has stayed with us to be an ever-present help in our times of need. If this sounds like some ideal which is airy-fairy and metaphysical, let me assure you that it is genuinely real. One should never discount the importance of a man with an ideal. Ideals are our greatest weapon to ward off the forces of evil.

[page xxv] The forces of evil are mobilized, but not those of goodness. This is proven by the unprecedented ravages of Bolshevism(3), the relentless application of destructive materialism. A gathering of the spiritual forces available to humanity will be needed to combat this scourge. But a wide and high ideal is necessary. Human beings would gladly know where feet are taking them in this world and in the one beyond. They need a sublime goal in the one, and the beginnings of actual realization of the other. "Evil can be conquered only by a high idea" says Rudolf Steiner. "Those without an ideal are weak and powerless. In a person's life, ideals play the role of steam in an engine; they are the driving force."

Ideals in one's life are like to steam to an engine: it provides the power. What are the ideals you hold dear? Therein lies your power. Words also have a power — as revealed by John: "In the beginning was the Word." Schuré gives an example of the power of living words in a sentence spoken by Steiner, "The

thoughts of the Gods are not as human thoughts. Human thoughts are image; the thoughts of the gods are *living beings*." Then Schuré closes his Foreword thus:

[page xxvi] Revelations like this flash out into the Infinite. They are an echo from far away of the Word creative invoked by St. John at the beginning of his Gospel. Their vibrations thrill through us like the Sound Primordial whence shines the light — the Sound whose harmonies bring worlds to birth.

What happened to cause humans to move from marriages decided by one's father to marriages decided by the man and woman? Anthropology might have difficulty explaining why this is so, but to Rudolf Steiner this change accompanied the development of the human "I" in historical times.

[page 4] Before discussing the world of spirit, we must understand one of the forces that allowed all humanity to pass from the astral to the intellectual level. This occurred through a *new kind of marriage*. In ancient times, marriages were made within a tribe or clan, which was simply an extension of the family. Indeed, sometimes brothers and sisters married. Later on, men looked for wives outside the clan or tribe, the civic community. The beloved became the *stranger*, the unknown. Love, which had been merely a natural and social function, now became personal desire, and marriage became a matter of free choice. This is indicated in certain Greek myths such as the rape of Helen and in the Scandinavian and Germanic myths of Sigurd and Gudrun. Love becomes an adventure, the woman a conquest from afar.

This change from patriarchal marriage to free marriage corresponds to the new development of human intellectual faculties, or the "I." There is a temporary eclipse of the astral faculties of vision and the power of reading directly in the astral and spiritual world — faculties included in ordinary speech under the term *inspiration*.

With the loss of our astral vision, we have lost our unconscious spirituality and we must now prepare to move to a conscious spirituality. That cannot happen with theology because it is a fixed dogma imposed from without, the religious equivalent of a forced marriage decided by one's father, only this time a Church Father.[\(4\)](#)

[page 5] Humanity progresses from unconscious spirituality (pre-Christian), through intellectualism (the present age), to *conscious* spirituality, whereby the astral and intellectual faculties reunite and become dynamic through the power of the spirit of love, both divine and human. In this sense, theology will tend to become *theosophy*.

What, essentially, is theology? It is knowledge of God imposed from without as dogma as a kind of supernatural logic. What is theosophy? It is knowledge of God that blossoms like a flower in the depths of the individual soul. God, having vanished from the world, is reborn in the depths of the human heart.

In the Rosicrucian sense, Christianity is both the highest development of individual freedom and universal religion. There is a community of free souls. The tyranny of dogma is replaced by the radiance of divine wisdom, embracing intelligence, love, and action.

The science that arises from this cannot be measured in terms of its power of abstract reasoning, but through its power to bring souls to flower and fruition. That is the difference between *Logia* and *Sophia*, between science and divine wisdom, between theology and theosophy.

The Nebelungen of Germany mythology lived in the land of the mists (Nebelheim) which Steiner identifies as Atlantis. Before the deluge came, Atlanteans lived in a perpetual mist and had to use their spiritual sight to perceive other humans because the heavy mist obscured the physical world. When the mists finally began to subside, they formed a great deluge and brought clear skies to humans for the first

time. The rainbow was left behind as a reminder to us of our evolutionary past in the land of mists, Atlantis.

Like the Kings and Queens of our time, Atlanteans referred to themselves in the third person. Royalty are subject to the people they rule and accountable to them, and in that sense they have no "I" which can operate independently of their subjects. Atlanteans also lacked an "I" because their etheric body was yet located outside their physical brain. Later movement of the etheric body to within the physical brain brought to the ancient human race their first "I".

The arguments of Creationism versus Darwinism which are rampant in this twenty-first century are moot because both miss the point. We humans did not descend from monkeys, the monkeys remained behind. The superior race does not descend from the inferior.

[page 9] Darwinism has made many errors in regard to the differentiation expressed by the races existing on Earth. The higher races have not descended from the lower races; on the contrary, the latter represent the degeneration of the higher races that preceded them. Suppose there are two brothers, one of whom is handsome and intelligent, the other ugly and dull. Both proceed from the same father. What should we think of those who believed that the intelligent brother descends from the idiot? This is the kind of error Darwinism makes in regard to the races. Human and animal have a common origin; animals represent a degeneration of a single common ancestor, whose higher development is expressed in the human being. This should be a source of pride, since the higher races have been able to develop only because of the lower kingdoms.

Christ washes the feet of the Apostles. This is a symbol of the humility of the initiate in face of inferiors. Initiates owe their existence to those who are not initiated. Hence the deep humility of those who truly *know* in face of those who do not. The tragic aspect of cosmic evolution is that one class of beings must lower themselves so that the other may rise. In this sense, we can appreciate the beauty of Paracelsus' words: "I have observed all beings — stones, plants, animals — and they seem to me nothing but scattered letters, humankind being the word, living and whole."

We humans at one time wrested ourselves away from the animals (whose passions we yet bear within ourselves), and in time to come we must wrest ourselves away from evil. This is the challenge we face as full human beings in this age. To meet this challenge we require a science, a spiritual science of the full human being, an *anthropos-sophy* or anthroposophy. This is the legacy which Steiner has left to us in his books and lectures.

We humans are descending (in the body) and ascending (in the spirit) beings. Steiner said, The vital point, that of intersection and change in the ascending life of humankind, is also the separation of the sexes.... Because of the separation of the sexes, a new, all-embracing element arose: love." (Page 13)

If you have a pet, you likely have wondered at some point as I have, "Why is this pet so loyal and grateful to me?" That is easy to understand because generally our pets depend upon us for their food and shelter. But what do they give us in return for all our expense and attention to them? All they can give us is their love. Consider next our relationship to our guardian angels: they help keep us safe, alert us to dangers ahead of time, and what can we give them in return? Only our love. And just as that love is enough when we receive it from our pets, so also is that love when we give it to our guardian angels and other members of the spiritual hierarchies. (See my review of [Guardian Angels](#) for the importance of not neglecting our special angel which follows us from incarnation to incarnation.)

[page 13] There is some analogy between the relations established by the human world with the divine world and by the human kingdom with the animal kingdom. Oxygen and carbon dioxide are inhaled and exhaled by human beings. The plant kingdom breathes out oxygen; the human kingdom breathes out *love* since the separation of the sexes. The

gods are nourished by this effluence of love.

Animals are fallen humans and humans becoming — that is another way of saying animals are inferior humans left behind during our human evolution, but which are on an evolutionary track to becoming humans. Likewise, Steiner tells us, "Human beings are both fallen gods and gods becoming." (Page 14) He continues:

[page 14] The kingdom of the heavens is nourished by the effluence of human love. Ancient Greek mythology expresses this fact when it speaks of nectar and ambrosia. The gods are so far above human beings that their natural tendency would be to subjugate them. But there is a halfway state of being between humans and the gods, just as the mistletoe is halfway between plant and animal. It is represented by Lucifer and the luciferic element. The interest of the gods is the element of human love, through which their life is sustained.

When Lucifer, in the form of the serpent, induces the human being to seek knowledge, Jehovah is wrathful. Lucifer is understood here as the fallen god who instills into humanity the desire for personal knowledge. This sets human beings in opposition to the divine will that created them in its image.

When we understand that at each level of evolution this is a descending and ascending current, we are forced to realize that there are ascending and descending currents in our own being.

How should one listen to Rudolf Steiner's words? He tells us plainly that there are three ways of listening. Read on and discover for yourself which way you have listening, up until now.

[page 25] There are three ways of listening: accept the words as infallible authority; be skeptical and fight what is heard; heed what is heard without servile, blind credulity and without systematic opposition, allowing the ideas to work upon us while observing their effects. This latter is the attitude that pupils should adopt toward their master in Western initiation.

But, just as Christ washed the feet of his disciples, masters today must be servants.

[page 25] It is not their task to mold the soul of pupils to their own image, but to discover and solve the enigma of those souls. The teaching given by the initiator is not dogma but simply an *impulse* for development. Every truth that is not also a vital impulse is a sterile truth. That is why all thought must filled with the element of *soul*. Thought must be permeated with feeling, otherwise it will not pass into the realm of soul and it will be stillborn thought.

Consider carefully what Steiner tells us: A truth must push us forward or it will die. If we imbibe too many sterile truths, we will likewise die. As a physicist I was taught that a truth filled with feeling was an illusion — in other words, I was taught the exact opposite of the truth. With Steiner's help I have learned to accept in freedom and light the vital truth which lifts me up from now on: *that soul-filled truths are permeated with feeling.*

Where are you on the path to be an initiate, dear Reader? Do you have control over your thoughts and actions, equanimity in all things both good and bad, optimism, confidence, inner balance, and meditation? Before you answer, consider the details of understanding these attributes given by Steiner:

[pag 27, 28]

1. Control of thought. We must be able to concentrate our thought upon a single object and hold it there.

2. Control of actions. Our attitude toward all actions, whether trivial or significant,

must be to dominate, regulate, and hold them under the control of one's will. They must be the outcome of *inner* initiative.

3. *Equilibrium of soul.* There must be moderation in both sorrow and joy. Goethe said that the soul who loves is, until death, equally happy and sad. The esotericist must bear the deepest joy and the deepest sorrow with the same equanimity of soul.

4. *Optimism* — the attitude that looks for the good in every thing. Even in crime and in seeming absurdity, there is some element of good. A Persian legend says that Christ once passed by the corpse of a dog and that his disciples turned away in disgust. But Christ said: "Look, the teeth are beautiful."

5. *Confidence.* The mind must be open to every new phenomenon. We must never allow our judgments to be determined by the past.

6. *Inner balance* is the result of these preparatory measures. One is then ripe for the inner training of the soul. We are ready to set our feet upon the path.

7. *Meditation.* We must be able to make ourselves blind and deaf to the outer world and to our memories of it, even to the point where the shot of a gun does not disturb. This is the prelude to meditation. When this inner void has been created, we are able to receive the prompting of our inner being. The soul must then be awakened in its very depths by certain ideas that can move it toward its source.

These are the parallel paths taken by an initiate, one who is seeking to know the spiritual world directly in this lifetime on Earth. Everyone is operating to a different level in each of the seven ways and thus there are different degrees of initiation known from ancient times by particular names.

[page 29]

***First degree:* the raven (one who remains at the threshold). The raven appears in all mythologies. In the *Edda*, he whispers into the ear of Wotan what he sees afar.**

***Second degree:* the hidden scholar, or the esotericist.**

***Third degree:* the warrior (struggle and strife).**

***Fourth degree:* initiates bear the name of their people they are "Persian" or "Greek" because the soul has grown to a point where it includes the soul of the people(5).**

***Sixth degree:* the initiate is a Sun hero, or Sun messenger, because progress is as harmonious and rhythmic as that of the Sun.**

***Seventh degree:* the initiate is a "father," having gained the power to make disciples of others and to be the protector of all; one is the "father" of the new being, the "twice born" in the risen soul.**

You may read these names and think you've never heard them before, but the fourth degree initiate is mentioned in the Bible when Jesus calls one of his disciples a *Galilean*, one of the fourth degree whose soul had included the soul of his people in Galilee. And everyone has heard of Icarus, who attached feathers to his arms and flew too close to the Sun. He was an initiate trying unsuccessfully to reach the sixth degree or Sun sphere.

[page 29] **The Sun represents the vivifying movement and rhythm of the planetary system. The legend of Icarus is a legend of initiation. Icarus has attempted to reach the Sun sphere prematurely, without adequate preparation, and is cast down.**

Steiner revealed in lecture 7 that the Gospel of St. John was the source of essential truths of Christianity by various brotherhoods, among them the Albigenes, Catharists, Templars, and Rosicrucians. They were precursors of a form of Christianity to come later. The Gospel of St. John was their source of eternal truth.

[page 32] **The [first fourteen verses](#) of this Gospel were the subject of daily meditation among the Rosicrucians. Those verses were thought to possess magical power — a fact**

well known to esotericists. By repeating these verses at the same hour, day after day without intermission, the Rosicrucians began to see in dream visions all the events recorded in the Gospel and lived through them in inner experience.

In this same lecture Steiner revealed that Lazarus emerged from the tomb as John who was to write the fourth Gospel.

[page 33] The raising of Lazarus may be regarded as a moment of transition from the ancient initiation to the Christian initiation. The fourth Gospel makes no mention of John himself until after the story of Lazarus's death "The disciple whom Jesus loved" is the one who passed through the stages of death and resurrection in initiation, and who was called to new life by the voice of Christ himself. John is Lazarus, who emerged from the tomb after his initiation; he lived through the death experienced by Christ. Such is the mystic path concealed in the depths of Christianity(6).

Why have the Hindu people of India from ancient times believed in reincarnation and the Christians of the West have not? The Hindus had direct knowledge of reincarnation — there was no question of belief. But the Westerner who has no knowledge of reincarnation would say that the Hindus believe in reincarnation. In the marriage of Cana, when Jesus changed the water into wine, he indicating that the "sacrifice of water was to be replaced for a time with the sacrifice of wine."

[page 33, 34] There were ages inhuman history when wine was unknown. In the time of the Vedas(7), it was virtually unknown. In the ages when there was no drinking of alcohol, the idea of previous existences and of many lives was universal; no one doubted its truth. As soon as human beings began to drink wine, however, knowledge of reincarnation rapidly faded, eventually to disappear entirely from human consciousness. It existed only among the initiates who took no alcohol. Alcohol obscures the intimate depths of memory. . . .

Belief in reincarnation and the law of karma had a great influence not only upon the individual but also upon one's social sentiment. It helped people bear the inequalities of human life. . . .

As the era of Christianity drew near, humankind was destined to enter an epoch of focusing on earthly efforts; people were to work toward the amelioration of earthly existence, the development of intellect and a logical, scientific understanding of nature. Knowledge of reincarnation, therefore, would be lost for two thousand years, and wine was the means to this end.

Thus, it can be seen that the last supper which is commemorated in the majority of Christian churches by a communion involving wine is an institutional way of keeping the knowledge of reincarnation hidden from the priests and members of the church. The period of two thousand years has passed and we find in the twentieth century a renewed interest in the ancient texts of India and their knowledge and ideas about reincarnation and karma.

Steiner leaves us a jewel of wisdom in the end of lecture seven which shines its light upon the famous saying of Christ Jesus, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." He reveals to us the inner meaning of a scene from the Bible:

[page 35] Christ left us a testament in the scene of Mount Tabor, in the Transfiguration before Peter, James and John (Luke 9:28-36). The disciples see him between Elias and Moses. Elias represents the way of truth; Moses, truth itself; Christ, the life that epitomizes them. That is why Christ can say, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

One can best understand the Christian mystery (Lecture 8) by pondering how each level of life is

dependent on the levels below it. One comes then to understand the first stage of Christian initiation, "The Washing of the Feet".

[page 37] Theology gives a purely moral interpretation to this act and looks upon it merely as an example of the profound humility and devotion of the master toward the disciples and the master's work. The Rosicrucians also held this view, but in a deeper sense, relating the story to the evolution of all beings in nature. The scene is really an allusion to the law that the higher is a product of the lower. The plant might say to the mineral: I am above you, since I have a life that you do not; yet without you I could not exist, for the substances that nourish me are drawn from you. The animal might say to the plant: I am above you, for I have feeling, desires, the capacity for voluntary movement, which you do not; but without the food you provide, without your leaves and fruits, I could not live. And human beings should say to the plants: I am above you, but to you I owe the oxygen that I breathe. To the animals we should say: I have a soul and you do not, yet we are friends and companions, involved in the great process of evolution. The esoteric meaning of washing of the feet is that Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Son of God, could not exist without the Apostles.

Steiner gives an equivalent description of the rest of the seven stages: The Scourging,. The Crowning with Thorns, The Bearing of the Cross, The Mystic Death, The Entombment, and The Resurrection in this lecture.

The next two lectures deal with the astral and the spiritual world. These are not places which ones goes to, but conditions which surround us, which we can only perceive with a higher sight than that with which we perceive the physical world around us. The puerile idea fostered by religious teachers that the world of the spirit exists in some distant place outside of the universe does more harm than good. Such concepts make it difficult for people to feel close to their loved ones who have entered the spiritual world. They believe they will only feel close to them again when they too have gone to *where they are*, oblivious of their loved ones' presence among them every moment when they think of them. Consider the pain a departed loved one must feel when he, in the spirit world, sees the woman he loved mourning his loss. He stands in her presence up close, and yet, because of her delusion that they are separated by an incomprehensible distance, she mourns for him, all the while ignoring the reality of his close presence. This causes him great distress.

The only cure for this cause of much distress in both the physical and spiritual worlds is a strong dose of reality about the existence and nature of the astral and spiritual world, which Steiner provides.

[page 43] The astral world is not a place but a *state*, or condition, of existence. It surrounds us, and we are immersed in it while we live on Earth. We live in it as beings born blind who guide themselves by touch. If sight is opened up for them by operation they see for the first time the forms and colors with which they have always been surrounded.

Steiner quotes from Goethe about how nature opens up for our senses fully, no matter what set of senses we have remaining for us. One only to has view the movie, "Ray", to understand how Ray Charles lived fully in nature. In a memorable scene, he directs his date's attention to the sound of hummingbird wings outside an open window, a sound which none of the other patrons in the restaurant had noted but the blind singer.

[page 44, Goethe] The wholeness of nature shows itself to another sense in a similar way. Allow the eye to close, let the sense of hearing be excited, and from the lightest breath to the wildest noise, from the simplest sound to the highest harmony, from the most vehement and impassioned cry to the gentlest word of reason, it is nevertheless nature that speaks and manifests her presence, her power, her pervasion of life and the vastness

of her relations. Thus, a blind person, to whom the infinite visible is denied, can still comprehend an infinite vitality by means of another organ.

Astral images appear in reverse, mirror-imaged in space and in time. This causes an inversion of the usual cause-effect relationship of events.

[page 45] In the astral world, the cause comes *after* the effect, whereas on Earth, the effect follows the cause. In the astral world, the goal appears as the cause, proving that the goal and the cause are identical, merely acting in reverse according to the sphere of life in which we are functioning. The teleological problem that no metaphysician has been able to solve through abstract thought is thus solved by clairvoyance.

Passions appear as animal forms. "A feeling of hatred that was entertained against another being appears as an attacking demon."

[page 45] Such astral self-knowledge occurs in an abnormal way for those who are troubled with soul illnesses; it involves constant visions of being pursued by animals and menacing entities. The sufferers see the mirror images of their emotions and desires.

No soul trouble arises in true initiation, but a premature and sudden flashing of the astral world may lead to insanity.

After death the etheric body (carrier of life's memory) reveals to one's consciousness a great panorama of one's lifetime. In times of near-death experiences, this is the most often reported event. It precedes all the other experiences. It lasts only for the short period while the etheric body is detaching from the physical body (the corpse). Then one's etheric body passes all of one's lifetime of experiences to one's astral body and the etheric body dissolves away into the far reaches of the cosmos. Since the astral body operates backwards in time, one is led backwards through all the events of one's lifetime. This period of backward looking, called *Kamaloka*, goes on for the same amount of time one spent sleeping, or about one-third of one's lifetime. During this period we experience bad feelings we created in others as arising in ourselves, so that we learn in *no uncertain way* what we may have not learned while still in the flesh. This is a time that will only end when one is again a child. Only then can one progress into the next higher stage of spiritual life, which some call "Heaven."

[page 46, 47] The soul now begins to live through the past life in reversed order, beginning with death and going back to birth. One's life must be lived through in this purifying fire to the point of birth before the soul is ready to pass into the spiritual world, or *Devachan*. This is the meaning of Christ's words to his disciples: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

A lot of bad information about the effects on one's manner of death exists in our Western materialistic society. Life is treated like a commodity such as a bushel of apples, which if it gets bad, one merely dumps it. Or like an automobile which because it has grown old with age's attendant problems, one should discard it volitionally. The one notable exception was a fine movie titled, "What Dreams May Come." It accurately portrays the horrors one must endure after a suicide. Unfortunately it glosses over the difficulties faced by the husband's sudden death in an accident which led his wife to commit suicide.

[page 47] An individual is compelled by desire when descending to earthly incarnation. There is a reason why desire for the Earth is born in human beings; the end and purpose is to learn. We learn through all our experiences, which enrich our store of knowledge. But before human beings can learn on the Earth, they must be allured by involvement in pleasure. In the astral world after death, when the soul is experiencing the past life in reverse order, there must be rejection of pleasure, while the essence of the experience itself is retained. Passage through the astral world is thus a purification in which the soul learns to forsake all taste for physical pleasures.

Such is the purification of the Hindu *Kamaloca*, the "consuming fire." Human beings must become accustomed to existence without a physical body. Death leads, at first, to the impression of an infinite void. In cases of violent death and suicide, the impressions of emptiness, thirst, and burning are much more terrible. An astral body that is unprepared for existence outside the physical body separates with great effort, whereas in natural death the detachment of the matured astral body takes place easily and smoothly. In a violent death that is not intended, the process of separation is less distressing than in the case of suicide.

Why bother to learn about the astral world? Won't we get there soon enough anyway? What good will it do to us to know about the astral world now? Are these questions not similar to what a blind person might say about recovering his sight? Why bother anyway?

[page 48] Knowledge of life in the astral world leads us to a conclusion of fundamental importance — that the physical world is the product of the astral world.

Diseases are caused by terror. Diseases exist in the physical world but are caused by terror which exists in the astral world. Anyone who truly understands this will stop watching news programs on a regular basis. At least with the newspaper, one can skip over details of the latest terror or horror stories which abet diseases, often diseases for which we have no cures. Such was the case for leprosy, whose cure only came about in the past twentieth century. No one need worry about leprosy today, but certainly one can think of diseases equally devastating to human life and happiness which exist in our own time. And the terror existing today will create new diseases in the future for our descendants.

[page 49] The epidemics that raged notably during the Middle Ages are an example, among thousands, of the relationship between human sins to astral events, as well as of the repercussion in the astral world of sins committed in earthly life. Leprosy was the result of the terror caused by the invasions by Huns and hordes of Asians. The Mongolians, the descendants of the Atlanteans, carried within them the seeds of degeneracy. This contact with the European populace produced, to begin with, the moral sickness of fear in the astral world; the substance of the astral body decomposed, and this area of astral decomposition became a field for the development of bacteria, giving rise, on Earth, to diseases such as leprosy.

All that we throw out of ourselves into the astral world will, at some time, reappear in times to come on the physical plane. What we sow in the astral world we reap on Earth in the future. Today, we are reaping the fruits of the narrow, materialistic thoughts strewn by our ancestors in the astral world.

Why bother with the astral world? Has the answer begun to dawn on you, dear Reader? Materialistic science prides itself on its hypotheses — how it is willing to suspend belief and hold a hypothesis, test it out, and only then decide if it is scientific. But it can be clearly seen that time after time science has refused to entertain powerful hypotheses about the existence of the spiritual world. The brief excursion of science into spiritism during the nineteenth century is often cited as an exception to the rule. In fact, science investigated table-tipping and other kinds of so-called communication from the spiritual world *only* because they provided sensory data. Steiner has often explained the fallacy of expecting spiritual events to appear in sensory data form. The results of such experiences will form lies instead of truth and merely convince science that it had better avoid testing the spiritual world, when in truth, scientists who test the spiritual directly will be treated as anathema by their former colleagues. This happened to Rudolf Steiner in his lifetime and attacks on his Waldorf Schools continue today. Friedrich Rittelmeyer in his fine book, [Rudolf Steiner Enters My Life](#), explains how the same theological journals which published his work without emendation refused to publish the first article he wrote about Steiner. Even in theological circles, one finds rejection without investigation of those who do not follow theological dogma. This is double hurtful coming from theological circles where one ought to expect open-mindedness about the spiritual world.

[page 49] This will make us realize the importance of nourishing ourselves with esoteric truths. If science would accept the truths of esotericism — merely as hypotheses to begin with — the very world would change. Materialism has cast humankind into such depths that a great concentration of forces is needed to lift humanity again. Human beings are subject to illnesses of the nervous system, and these are real epidemics of the soul life.

What we call *feeling* on the Earth returns to Earth as actuality, events, and facts. The nerve storms that exhaust human beings originate in the astral world. This is why esoteric brotherhoods decided to demonstrate and reveal hidden truths. Humanity is passing through a crisis and must be helped [through spiritual science] to regain health and equilibrium.

What does spiritual science allow us to do to regain our health and equilibrium? It allows us, for one thing, to see what others feel inwardly. It provides us with a conscious clairvoyance by showing us how to develop supersensible sight.

[page 50] Clairvoyance involves learning to "see" outwardly what we *feel* inwardly in ordinary life. Feelings, desires, and thoughts thus become living and visible forms, making up the aura around the physical sheath.

With supersensible sight, Steiner was able to see the chakras and to recognize them as living organs of supersensible perception themselves, not just some colorful lotus flowers as materialists might think of them. Take the 16-petaled lotus of the larynx as an example. It represents 8 conscious virtues and 8 unconscious organs of perception which can be formed from each virtue(8). Want another example? The 12-petaled lotus of the heart. Only six petals were visible in ancient times, but with the development of "control of thought, power of initiative, balance of the faculties, optimism leading to a positive attitude, freedom from bias, and a harmonious soul life" the twelve petals will begin to move(9). The importance of the number twelve shows up in so many contexts that one must consider it due to more than *random chance*, that *chimera* which science is so proud of having created to explain what it does not understand.

[page 52] They express the sacred quality of the number twelve, as in the twelve Apostles, the twelve knights of King Arthur, as well as in all creation and all action. Everything in the world develops according to twelve different aspects. We have another example in Goethe's poem, *Die Geheimnisse*, (The Secrets), which expresses the ideal of the Rosicrucians. According to Goethe's explanation given to certain students, each of the twelve companions of the Rose Cross represents a religious creed.

Similar truths can be veiled in the other pedaled lotuses. There's encouragement for left-handed people in Steiner's insight into the two-petaled lotus of third eye.

[page 54] The two-petaled lotus flower is beneath the forehead, at the top of the nose. At this time, it is an undeveloped astral organ that will one day develop into two antennae, or wings. The symbol of these can already be seen in the horns represented in tradition on the head of Moses.

... In left and right, the human being is symmetrical, representing the present and the future. These two symmetrical parts, however, are not equal in value. Why are human beings usually right-handed? The right hand, which is the more active of the two today, is destined subsequently to atrophy. The left hand will survive when the two "wings" on the forehead have developed. The heart will be the brain of the chest — an organ of knowledge.

I have mentioned in several other places my insight that the myth of Oedipus reveals to us that when we really understand what a human being is, the cannibal in us dies(10). Steiner says that the myth of

Oedipus reveals the future of humankind "walking on three legs" not just the future of a single human being walking with a crutch. One must interpret the myth as defining long ages of humankind, not just the progression through a single lifetime.

[page 54, 55] Before human beings assumed the upright posture, there was a time when they moved on all four limbs. This is the source of the riddle of the Sphinx: "What goes on four legs in the morning, on two legs at noon, and on three legs in the evening?" Oedipus answers that this refers to the human being, who crawls on all four limbs as a baby, and leans on a stick in old age. In reality, riddle and answer refer to the whole evolution of humanity, past, present, and future, as it was known in the ancient mysteries. A quadruped in a previous period of development, human beings today walk on two feet; in the future human beings will "fly" and will, in fact, use three auxiliary organs: the two wings developed from the two-petalled lotus, which will become the motivating organ of will, and the organ arising through a metamorphosis of the left half of the chest; and the left hand. Such will be the organs of movement in the future.

The present organs of reproduction will atrophy, as well as the right side and the right hand. Human beings will reproduce through the force of the word; through the word, human beings will shape ether bodies like their own.

Another way that spiritual science allows us to maintain our health and equilibrium is by helping us to understand how our astral body works in us.

[page 56, 57] During our conscious life, the physical body is used up, consumed as it were. From morning until night, people spend their forces; the astral body transmits sensations to the physical body, and those sensations gradually exhaust it. At night, the astral body functions in a very different way. It no longer transmits sensations from outside, but works on them and brings order and harmony into what the waking life, with its chaotic perceptions, has confused. During the day, the function of the astral body is to receive and transmit; at night, during sleep, its function is to bring order, build up, and refresh the spent forces.

How do we assist our astral body? By reducing the chaotic perceptions from waking life. How? By nurturing in oneself the attribute listed in the passage from pages 27 and 28 above: *Equilibrium of soul*. We must learn to "bear the deepest joy and the deepest sorrow with the same equanimity of soul." This will sound strange, but it is an essential step to promoting health and stability in our lives. The means for accomplishing this has been known for ages. What is it? Think fast.

[page 57] All of waking life is a process that destroys the physical body. Illnesses are caused by excessive activity of the astral body. Eating to excess affords a stimulus to the astral body, which reacts in a disturbing way on the physical body. That is why fasting is established in certain religions. The effect of fasting is that the astral body, having greater quiet and less to do, detaches itself partially from the physical body. Its vibrations are modulated and communicate a regular rhythm to the ether body. Rhythm is thus set in the ether body by means of fasting. Harmony is brought into life (the ether body) and form (the physical body). In other words, harmony reigns between the universe and humankind.

What is waking life? We awake when we hear melodies but we do not know from where they originate. Our bodies are like pianos issuing these melodies. Our keys are struck by sensory world, but the melodies arrive from the spiritual world. With our etheric, astral, and I bodies and their connection with our physical body, which is filled with minerals during this Earth stage of human evolution, we awaken to consciousness.

[page 82] The consciousness of modern human beings is awakened only when connection

is established with the physical or mineral body. True, it awakens first in the physical world, but it must nevertheless light up gradually in the other members of the human being — in the member of life forces (the plant nature of the human being), in the member dominated by the forces of feeling (the animal nature), and in the "I". Indeed, human beings know *only* what is mineral in the universe. They do not know the essential laws behind the animal's life of instinct and feeling or behind the growth of plants. People simply see their physical expressions. Try to conceive a plant in supra-physical existence, having lost its mineral substance; it would be invisible to our physical eyes.

Over the ages, humans have manipulated the physical world of minerals, from early caveman days of stone axes to genetic engineering of our day. Often our new human tools are used destructively when they first arrived, and only later do we discover how to use them usefully for constructive purposes. As we evolve, our tools will become more related to the spiritual world — we will achieve control over the world through our conscious volition. This will require a purging of human passions along the way. When sex is no longer an agent of our passions, our vocal cords will become the new organ of reproduction. Steiner lays out the path humans will follow:

[page 83] Having transformed the mineral world, humankind will learn to transform plants. This indicates a higher power. Today, we erect buildings; in future times people will be able to create and shape plant life by working on plant substance. At an even higher stage, human beings will give form not only to living beings but also to *conscious* beings; they will have power over animal life. Once human beings have reached the stage of being able to reproduce their kind through an act of conscious will, they will accomplish, at a higher level, what we accomplish today in the mineral world.

The new human tool will be the Word. It was a tool which Christ Jesus demonstrated for us when he walked the Earth. He explained that he was the way, truth, and the life. He pointed to the life that we will learn to achieve on Earth with events we called miracles during his lifetime.

[page 83] The seed of this sublime power of generation, cleansed of all sensuality, is the *word*. Humankind became conscious beings when they drew their first breath; consciousness will reach the stage of perfection when human beings can pour into the words they speak the same creative power with which our thought is endowed today.

In my novel [The Spizznet File](#), I described how dolphins speak by forming realistic, 3-D images which fill the space which surrounds the speaker and hearer. These images are like holographic movies which dolphins and other cetaceans use to communicate back and forth. With our computers and ultrasound transducers (used currently mostly to image the insides of the human body), we have the capability to achieve interspecies communication for the first time in the history of the world. Unbeknownst to me when I wrote my novel, I was describing a future condition of human life.

[page 83] In our age, it is only words that we communicate into the air. Once we have reached the stage of higher creative consciousness, people will be able to communicate images into the air. The word will then be an *imagination* — *wholly* permeated with life.⁽¹¹⁾ In giving body to these images, human beings will give body to the word that bears and sustains the image. When we no longer simply embody our thoughts in objects — for example, when we make a watch — but give body to these images, they will *live*.

But with this new human capability we will go further than the dolphins, we will be able to reproduce by speaking — we will have tapped the creative power of the Word. This is final stage of Earth evolution which will require great transformations and purification by human beings before this ability comes to fruition.

[page 83, 84] Moreover, when human beings know how to give life to what is highest in

them, those "images" will lead a real and actual existence comparable to an animal's existence. At the highest stage of evolution, human beings will thus be able, finally, to reproduce their own being. At the end of the Earth's process of transformation, the whole atmosphere will resound with the power of the Word. Thus human beings must evolve to a stage at which we will have the power to mold our environment in the image of our inner being. Initiates merely precede humanity along this path.

It is clear that the Earth today cannot produce human bodies such as will be produced at the final stage of evolution. Once that final stage has arrived, those bodies will be a suitable expression of the Logos. The one great Messenger, he alone who manifested in a human body like our own, this power of the Logos, is Christ. He came at the central turning point of evolution to reveal its purpose.

Steiner switches at this point to talking about how we human beings lived before we were given breath as described in Genesis. With the lunar landing now about 40 years in our history, few people may recall that the Moon was said to be made of green cheese. I watched the lunar landing and was eating from a cheese ball with green coloring made in the shape of the Moon with a small American flag poised on its top. Before the landing it was possible that the Moon was made of green cheese, but after Neil Armstrong set foot on the Moon, I knew it wasn't. But what was the meaning hidden in the old saying? During the lunar stage of evolution called the Old Moon, the Moon and Earth were combined in one body which had no hard minerals desiccated into land masses as we know them today, rather the surface of this combined planet and moon was in a vegetative state, something like "green cheese". I recognized the origin of the old saying immediately when I first read about the vegetative state of the Old Moon.

[page 84] Now let us investigate the form in which the human spirit lived before it entered into human beings through the breath. Earth is the reincarnation of an earlier planet, Old Moon. In that lunar period of evolution, the pure mineral element did not yet exist. The planetary body was composed of a substance somewhat similar to wood, a substance midway between the mineral and the plant. Its surface was not as hard as the mineral; in fact, it was more like turf. It produced beings in the nature of half plant and half mollusc; it was inhabited by a third kingdom of beings at a stage of existence midway between human and animal.

The atmosphere of the Old Moon was nitrogenous with only traces of oxygen. This explains the green cheese image of the ancients — nitrogenous compounds such as chlorophyll are green in color. The atmosphere would have been filled with cyanide gases (the nitrogen equivalent of carbon dioxide) which would be poisonous to us today, but which humans breathed during the Old Moon stage of our evolution. One evergreen plant which remains on Earth today from that period is mistletoe, and like all the plants present during the Old Moon, mistletoe can *only* grow upon a living plant and attaches itself to the body of a tree and sends its roots into the wood of the tree. Wood to mistletoe is like soil to other plants. Mistletoe was revered by the ancients because they were still able to perceive its unique nature as a remnant from a previous stage of evolution.

[page 85] The atmosphere of the Moon contained nitrogen, just as today's atmosphere of the Earth contains oxygen, and it was the predominance of nitrogen that brought about the end of the Old Moon period and the beginning of a cosmic night. The cyanides on Earth are remnants of conditions during the final stages of the Old Moon evolution. That is why they have a destructive effect on Earth, because the Earth is not their appropriate sphere; they are the poisonous remains of life in another age.

Humans actually breathed in and exhaled fire during this Old Moon stage of evolution. Humans during that stage of evolution had long elongated bodies which flew through the liquid atmosphere and exhaled fire — does that conjure up for you the image of the fire-breathing dragons of ancient mythology? Green cheese and dragons are images left to us in recondite form in our myths and fairy tales to remind us our previous stage of evolution. What remains in us today from that time?

[page 85, 86] The beings who were incarnate in the fire on the Old Moon incarnated, on Earth, in the *air*. Now, however, have any effects of those Spirits of Fire remained in humankind? On Old Moon, living beings did not have warm blood. What was it that led to the warmth of the blood and, as a result, the life of passions? The *fire* inhaled by the beings of Old Moon lives again on Earth in human blood. Moreover, the spirit of the air surrounds the body, which contains the heritage of Old Moon evolution — the warmth of the blood, the brain, the spinal fluid, and the nerves.

In Lecture 17 on Redemption & Liberation, Steiner corrects a mistake in thinking that Eastern philosophy makes about the need for a redeemer. This argument caused the Theosophical Society to be at odds with Steiner because they had downplayed the role that Christ played in the history of the world. Rudolf Steiner saw that Christ transformed the so-called law of karma into freedom. Individuals must follow the law of karma for events which happen within their scope of control, their *subjective karma*. For events outside of individual human control, those which affect all humanity, i.e., *objective karma*, the karmic balancing must come from the outside, and that was the redemption which Christ provided for humanity, once and for all time(12).

[page 99] Karma is the law of cause and effect in the *spiritual* world, just as mechanical action is the law of cause and effect in the material world. At every moment of life, karma represents something like a balance sheet, an exact statement of debit and credit. Through every action, bad or good, we augment our debit or credit. Those who will not admit the possibility of an act of freedom are like someone in business who will not venture a new transaction for fear of risk, preferring to maintain the same balance sheet.

A purely logical concept of karma would prohibit us from helping others in adversity. But here, too, fatalism would be an error. The help we give freely to another opens a new era in the other's destiny. Our destinies are woven from such impulses, or acts of grace. If we accept the idea of individual help, may we not conceive that a far mightier being could help not just one person but all, giving a new impulse to all humanity? Such, in fact, was the act of a god who made human beings not to defy the laws of karma but to fulfil them. Karma and Christ, the means of salvation and the Savior. Through karma, the act of Christ becomes cosmic law, and through the Christ principle, karma achieves its purpose — the liberation of conscious souls and their identification with God. Karma is gradual redemption, Christ is the Redeemer.

The deed of Lucifer in bringing Light to humankind precociously was a deed which made humans truly free, but which brought world-wide consequences to every human being. This deed brought evil into the world because it was a deed that came too soon for humankind — we were not ready for it. The consequences of this early gift would have been disastrous for humankind had not a great spirit of the same or higher level as Lucifer — namely, the *Christ* — come to Earth and by a great sacrifice through the Deed on Golgotha undone the consequences of Lucifer deed, an act we call redemption. It is a redemption that we will each come to experience in the course of the evolution of humanity.

[page 100] A time will come in the future when outer redemption will coincide in each individual with the interior act of the Redeemer. It is truth, not revelation, that frees human beings: "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32).

The path of evolution leads to freedom. Once human beings have awakened within themselves all the qualities that manifest prophetically in the Christ, they will be free. Necessity is the law of the material world; freedom is the law of the spiritual world. Freedom is acquired only gradually, and it will not fully manifest in human beings until the end of our evolution, when human nature will be truly spiritualized.

The end of our evolution as human beings living on Earth is dramatically and accurately portrayed in the Apocalypse. Rightly understood, this Book of the Bible vividly and metaphorically describes the last days of planet Earth, the time when "Sun shall rise and set no more" and Earth will have undergone metamorphosis into a star, a new Sun in the heavens.

In this short book of eighteen lectures given in Paris in 1906, Steiner covers all of his cosmology, quite a remarkable feat. There is undoubtedly some additional condensation and perspective added by Edouard Schuré who listened to these lectures in German and recorded them later at his writing desk directly into French. These lectures can give one a unique perspective of Steiner's entire cosmology at an early point in his career when he was learning how to describe difficult concepts of the spiritual world to an audience of theosophists and those who came to learn about theosophy.

Steiner said about this early period of his work that his knowledge had then attained the stage of understanding that "The whole world outside of human beings is a riddle, the real world riddle; and humanity itself is the answer." (Preface, vii) If the riddle of the world and the riddle of human beings attract you, you contain the answer within yourself, and if you wish help finding the answers, there is no better guide I can direct you to than Rudolf Steiner himself.

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----- *Footnotes* -----

Footnote 1. My copy of this book says on page xxi that this was revealed by Steiner in his eighth lecture, but it was actually in the eponymous seventh chapter, "Esotericism and the Gospel of St. John". Note: SteinerBooks has made this correction for future printings of this book.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 1.](#)

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**Footnote 2.** This cosmic process of re-uniting of the Earth and Sun is described metaphorically in the Book of Revelation as the last days of Earth as a separate cosmic body. Thenceforth it will be a Sun itself.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 2.](#)

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Footnote 3. It is easy enough to replace Rittelmeyer's usage of "Bolshevism" with "terrorism" for this nascent twenty-first century.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 3.](#)

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**Footnote 4.** In the passage below and other places in the text where the word *theosophy* is used, one should replace it with *anthroposophy* which quickly replaced it when the Theosophical Society demanded that Rudolf Steiner follow their dogma.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 4.](#)

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Footnote 5. A fifth degree is not mentioned here. One can find all seven stages of initiation

listed in [The Christian Mystery](#).

[Return to text directly before Footnote 5.](#)

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**Footnote 6.** These events are expanded in a book called [The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved](#) by Edward Reaugh Smith.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 6.](#)

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Footnote 7. The ancient texts in Sanskrit which comprise the oldest religious scripture of the Hindus.

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**Footnote 8.** Steiner explains this on page 51 thus: "There is a certain similarity, for instance, between the Eightfold Path of the Buddha and the Eight Beatitudes of Christ. The underlying truth is that, whenever a person develops one of the virtues, a new faculty of perception is developed."

[Return to text directly before Footnote 8.](#)

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Footnote 9. These are the selfsame six virtues listed in the passage above from pages 27 and 28.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 9.](#)

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**Footnote 10.** The cannibal-in-us is represented in the myth by the Sphinx who commits suicide when Oedipus solves the riddle by giving the correct answer, "Man".

[Return to text directly before Footnote 10.](#)

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Footnote 11. Rudolf Steiner uses the terms *imagination*, *inspiration*, and *intuition* in a specific, esoteric sense and are therefore italicized in this text. What we ordinarily call "imagination" could be called "mental picturing" or "fantasy." Steiner's use of these terms refers to stages of spiritual development as described, for example, in the third lecture of "Pneumatosophy" in his *Psychology of Body, Soul, and Spirit: Anthroposophy, Psychosophy, and Pneumatosophy*, Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1999.

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**Footnote 12.** These concepts of subjective and objective karma are described in [The Burning](#)

[Bush](#) by Edward Reaugh Smith, and were not described *per se* in this lecture by Rudolf Steiner.

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