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A READER'S JOURNAL

**The Karma of Untruthfulness, GA# 173,
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by

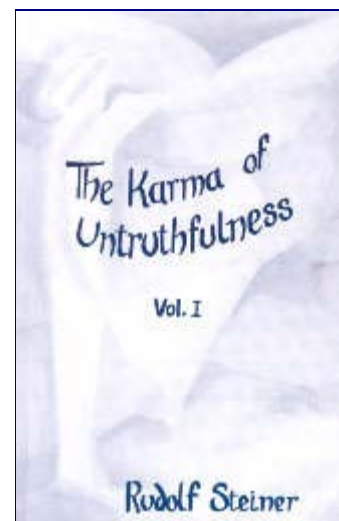
Rudolf Steiner

12 Lects Dornach, 1 Basel, DEC 1916

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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2003



"Wisdom lies solely in truth." Goethe's words,
Steiner's motto [page 1]

When I began studying Carl Gustav Jung's works about twenty years ago, I remember one day becoming very excited as I for the first time realized the reality of the psyche. This concept pervaded his work, but it took me years of study before that concept bubbled up from the depths of abstract philosophical, scientific, and religious ideas to a vibrant, living concept. [Carl Jung](#) helped build a bridge between material life and spiritual life from the exoteric side with his books and researches. Rudolf Steiner worked on building the bridge from the esoteric side by translating the esoteric into exoteric in a way no one had done before. Here is Steiner's description of why such a bridge is necessary:

[page 1] To begin with, the connections between material life and spiritual life are little understood because spiritual life is frequently seen today as nothing more than the sum of abstract philosophical, abstract scientific, and abstract religious ideas. From what has been said on other occasions you will have grasped that religious ideas are today often most strongly afflicted by abstraction, by ideas and feelings which can quite well be developed without any direct, real spiritual life. . . . If man's future evolution is to avoid being swept into total degeneracy, a true spiritual culture will have to enter ever more strongly into external life. Very few people realize this today because very few have any feeling for what spiritual life is.

Everyone today if asked will agree that truth is important and will probably want to know why anyone would bother to ask them if truth is important. This book is filled with answers to the question, "Why is truth important?" It was especially important during the period of the Great War [WW I] which had been raging for two years or so when Steiner was asked to make these comments to anthroposophists from many nations in Dornach. It is especially important now as the first war of the 21st Century, the War Against Terrorism is raging at various points around the world as the world's latest version of the late Barbary Pirates are ravaging peaceful countries and killing innocent people, up until now.

Steiner tells us that "the world is frequently misled by the way in which history is written."

[page 31] The writing of history is really something very much more profound. Only at the outermost edge of physical existence, in the utmost maya, can it be said: If this or that professor is a competent historian who has mastered the historical method, he will know how to depict the right things historically. This need not be the case at all. Whether a historian knows how to depict the rights things or not depends on whether his karma leads him to the possibility of discovering the right things or not. Everything depends on this.

Everything depends upon whether the historian's karma leads him to discovering the right things or not! How many PhD's in history are awarded based on whether the candidate for the degree has a karma that will lead to discovering the right things? Not many, so far as I can guess. Let's take an example from current events. Suppose historians set out in the last two decades of the 20th Century to discover why a certain code was chosen for reporting an emergency over the telephone. No amount of research would have led them to more than a trivial answer. But suppose other researchers had been working in New York City on the origin of that code on September 11, 2001. The answer would have been obvious to them in a flash — the code for emergency, 911, which had already for decades been burnt into people's memories was to coincide with the date of the World Trade Center and Pentagon catastrophes in the American date format of 9-11-2001.

[page 31] For one who is led by his karma to see the right things at the right moment, they are revealed at the point where something significant is expressed by a single phenomenon. Often a single phenomenon expresses something that throws light on decades, illuminating like a flash of lightning what is really happening.

It seems unlikely to me that a candidate for a PhD in history would be required to be aware of the occult teachings of secret brotherhoods, but, as Steiner points out, it would be useful for one seeking to research the rise of the English language to prominence in the world to be led to study those occult teachings. For if one did, one would find that "English-speaking peoples are for the fifth post-Atlantean epoch what the Romans were for the fourth." [4th PAE: 800 BC to 1450 AD; 5th PAE: 1450 AD to 3570 AD] Steiner was writing this almost a hundred years ago, but anyone aware of the prevalence of English in world-wide communications today would have to agree that English plays the role today that Latin did in the 4th PAE, also called the Greco-Roman age. And he gives us hints of what will arise as we progress nearer to the 6th PAE:

[page 40] In addition, it has always been taught that, just as the Germanic-British element, as they call it, opposed the Latin, so will the Slav element come to oppose the English element, for that is the way of the world.

[page 80] The fifth post-Atlantean period belongs to the English-speaking peoples alone; it is for them to make the world into something which stems from them.

[page 124] The fifth sub-race [RJM: 5th PAE], which began at the start of the fifteenth century, is composed of those peoples who are called upon to speak English in the world. The English-speaking peoples represent the fifth sub-race, and the whole task of the fifth post-Atlantean period [5th PAE] consists in conquering the world for the English-speaking peoples.

What Steiner calls the way of the world is the occult teachings that he illuminated in his spiritual science. One can see the cultures laid out in historical and futuristic accuracy in the [Sevens Table](#) containing the Seven Post-Atlantean Epochs.

How it is possible that one's karma brings one to discover the truth is a bit of a paradox. One can only find out after the fact that one has all along been pursuing a certain line of thought that produces exactly the insights that one would have wanted to pursue, *had one known from the beginning* what those insights were! My name for that is the [bootstrap paradox](#). A common German name for it is embodied in the story of [Baron Münchhausen](#), who, legend has it, could lift himself and his horse into the air by pulling up on his own pigtail. We might state it this way: one creates the karma and the karma creates one. Steiner tells of a German philosopher, Rudolf Christian Eucken, who poses the bootstrap paradox, namely, one cannot lift oneself by one's own bootstraps or pigtail. Eucken talks very similarly to many social scientists today:

[page 41] Eucken, for instance, speaks of the influence of the environment without noticing that he is saying on the one hand: The environment creates the person; and on

the other hand: The environment is created by the people; which is equivalent to saying: I want to lift myself up by my own pigtail! The way to look at what is termed the environment in which people are immersed is to realize that this environment emerges in a definite way from certain spiritual streams. It is not the nebulous something that many people consider it to be.

Steiner tells of Franz, the hero of *Ascension*, a novel by Hermann Bahr, in which Franz was driven hither and thither by his karma in the world until "he notices that there is something in the background behind human evolution and discovers that he ought to pay attention to what goes on behind the scenes." (Page 48) Then one night Franz is at a canon's house and finds himself in the library looking through the canon's heavily annotated copy of Goethe's writings in the Weimar edition. The canon chose that moment to leave his company and join Franz in the library and told him, "Nobody knows Goethe's scientific writings. Alas! The old heathen he is supposed to have been appears in quite a new light in them, and they help you to understand the ending of *Faust* as well." The canon goes on to tell Franz that "every page shows how Catholic Goethe was" and yet "there is also a heathen, a Protestant, and even almost a Jewish Goethe." What the canon had discovered by his study of Goethe was that Goethe was a spiritual scientist, but the canon could only express it in terms of a list of well-known labels, lacking a spiritual science as such to point to, such as the spiritual science of Rudolf Steiner which exists today, but not in Bahr or Franz's time.

[page 56] You notice, even in these circles a different Goethe is sought, one who can follow the path into the spiritual world, a different Goethe for sure than that 'insipidly jolly, common or garden monist' described and presented to the world today by the Goethe biographers. As you see, the path trodden by Franz is not so very different from those you find interwoven in what we call our spiritual science and, as you also see, a certain modicum of necessity can be present.

To understand what Steiner means by *necessity* in the quote above, one would do well to read his books, [Necessity and Freedom](#) and [Chance, Providence and Necessity](#). My own approach to spiritual science came about through as tortuous a path as that taken by the fictional Franz and many other real people that I know. It is not from environmental influences, because there were none in my early life, other than my Catholic upbringing, which upbringing tended to cause me to shy completely away from anything spiritual at the time. And yet, slowly the massive gears of necessity clicked into place and I found myself studying Rudolf Steiner, someone whose works I did not understand and so I could not for the life of me understand *why* I continued to read someone whose works were so intricately abstruse to me. Somehow I managed to overcome the bootstrap paradox like the aerial Baron by lifting myself up by a sheer act of will and fortitude. Looking back now, I can see clearly the "modicum of necessity" in my life that led me to spiritual science. None of this will make any sense to one who has not overcome such a paradox in one's own life.

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
Ancient India Epoch	Ancient Persian Epoch	Egypto-Chadean-Bablonian-Assyrian Epoch	Greco-Roman Epoch	Present Cultural Epoch	Sixth Cultural Epoch (Russian)	Seventh Cultural Epoch (American)
7893 BC->	5733 BC->	2970 BC ->	747 BC ->	1413 AD ->	3573 AD ->	5067 AD ->

Steiner makes the point many times during this book that "great spiritual streams underlie current events," — that "the history of mankind — even in its most painful events — is guided and led by spiritual impulses." (Page 67) Consider Judas and the executioner's men who nailed Christ to the Cross — they were guilty of murder and yet they were forgiven by the man they killed who pleaded for them thus, "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do."

[page 65, 66] Can you imagine someone who might say, You Christians owe it to Judas that your Mystery of Golgotha took place at all. You owe it to the executioner's men, who nailed Christ to the cross, that your Mystery of Golgotha ran its course! Is anyone justified in defending Judas and the executioner's men, even though it is true that the meaning of earthly history is owed to them? Is it easy to answer a question like this? Is one not immediately faced with contradictions which simply stand there and which represent a terrible destiny? Think about what I have placed before you! . . . What I have just said is spoken only so that you can think about the fact that it is not so easy to say: When two things contradict one another I shall accept the one and reject the other. Reality is more profound than whatever human beings may often be willing to encompass with their thinking. It is not without reason that Nietzsche, crazed almost out of his mind, formulated the words: 'The world is deep, deeper than day can comprehend.'

Many are aware of Thomas More thanks to the movie, *A Man for All Seasons*, how he died because he defied King Henry VIII's wish to take another wife. When More died, an order was given to quarter his body and spread the four pieces to the compass points — but was there a deep, deeper meaning to his death?

[page 96] Most of you know, since it has long been published in secular books, that in Freemasonry the ascent through the various degrees is connected with certain formulations which also include the manner of death awaiting those who fail to keep the secrets of a particular degree. It is stated that under certain circumstances the candidate will have to die a terrible death; for instance, in the case of one of the degrees, his body shall be cut open and his ashes strewn to the four winds of the earth.

If Thomas More gave away a secret, one can assume it must have happened in his book *Utopia — On the Best Form of the State and the New Island of Utopia*, a book that Steiner calls the most important thing More did. He also says that "*Utopia* can have the utmost significance for anyone who looks at it squarely." (Page 96) I don't know how many lawyers there were during Thomas More's time, but if there were enough of them, one could easily guess how More's end was plotted and by whom after one reads the following passage:

[page 116] There were no lawyers in Utopia; they are considered to be the most harmful people. Contracts are not entered into because the Utopians believe that if someone wants to keep an agreement he can do so without a contract, whereas if he does not, he can break it even if he has a contract.

To understand how virulent the antipathy to More's way of thinking would have been in his time, one need only recall that More was born only a few years after the end of the Greco-Roman or Latin or 4th post-Atlantean epoch, when the rules of Roman law had completed its work on the insides of human beings. And yet, this English-speaking man spoke in the manner of the nascent Germano-English or present 5th PAE, in which the Consciousness Soul would become more important than the Intellectual Soul that had been nurtured during the Latin epoch. Thomas More had no contract with King Henry, and even if the King thought so, More broke it. That was too much to bear for a man of the Intellectual Soul age, so More was put to death. And the manner of his death was designed to warn off anyone else who reveal such secrets as More did to the uninitiated.

"The world is deep, deeper than the day can comprehend." Nowhere is the world deeper and more hidden from the light of day than in the way we choose our parents. It is related to "the forces which bring people together over many generations."

[page 120] Through the ever-repeated union of different pairs of parents and all that leads to descendants, as well as other aspects of the succession of generations, it comes

about that the human being between death and rebirth finds himself within a whole stream which, in the end, leads him to the parent through whom he can incarnate. Just as in physical life one is linked with one's physical body, so between death and rebirth is one linked with the conditions which prepare for birth through a particular pair of parents.

In the cascading of parents being selected from generation to generation, the forces bringing people together are operating in a delicate balance of freedom, chance, providence, and necessity to bring us to Earth to work out our individual karma. If Nietzsche had attempted to grasp that reality, it may have driven him crazy and led him to state that, "The world is deep, deeper than day can comprehend."

In Thomas More we were shown a man who straddled two epochs — he was born shortly after the beginning of the Consciousness Soul age of the 5th PAE at a time when those around him were still strongly operating out of the Intellectual Soul age of the 4th PAE. In Dante we find someone who straddled three epochs. Through his genealogy or lineage, those generational forces mentioned above, he was of 3rd PAE or Sentient Soul or Egypto-Chaldean (Etruscan or Celtic) — that was the first layer of his being. The second layer was the 4th PAE or Intellectual Soul or Greco-Roman — he was born in Florence in 1265 just before the end of the Latin period, was an Italian poet, and died in Ravenna in 1321. These Roman roots gave his work a basis in legal concepts that added validity to it. The third layer was a Germanic element, ancestors from Switzerland, from which "he gained the boldness and freshness of his views, a certain candour, and the courage of his convictions in what he had set himself." (Summarized from page 122.)

The next concept deals with how each mature sub-race acts as a wet nurse to each new sub-race. "Sub-race" refers to the people that live within a given post-Atlantean epoch or period, a PAE. At the beginning of each PAE, the people of that sub-race are like infants and need nurturing in order to survive and thrive. For the 5th PAE, the English sub-race's nurturing came from the guidance of the Pope and the Roman Empire who together acted as a wet nurse to nourish and educate, to shepherd the infant English sub-race into youthhood in the eighteenth century.

[page 125] Thus, in the course of time in the North, under the rule of the wet-nurse, the guardian, and so on, the present mature condition grew. This bears within it the germ of rendering Britain the ruling nation of the fifth post-Atlantean period, in the same way as were not only the Romans but also the Roman element in the form of the Papacy, which was derived from them. So, according to this doctrine, while the remains of the Latin element crumble away from the human race, a new fruitful element expands from the factor in which lives the British element. Now it is hinted that all external actions and measure which are to serve any purpose and be fruitful, must be made under the sign of these views. Anything that is undertaken without these views, anything that does not take into account that the Latin element is in decline and the British element ascending, is doomed to wither. Of course such things may be undertaken, say these people, but they are condemned to remain meaningless, they will not grow. It is like sowing seeds in the wrong soil.

"The world is deep, deeper than day can comprehend," Nietzsche said, but we can progress a little further in our comprehension if only people will turn their minds to spirit realms. Once we have assimilated how the previous sub-race serves as a wet-nurse for the succeeding sub-race, we can come to understand what our sub-race will meet coming towards it later in the 5th PAE. Just as the peoples of the North came towards Rome to meet the Roman element, so too now, we can already see signs of the people of the East, the Slavic peoples, coming towards the West. They represent the nascent sixth sub-race which will thrive during the succeeding 6th PAE, called the Russian period. We can expect that the 5th PAE sub-race, the English, to be the wet-nurse for the 6th PAE, the Slavs or Russian.

"The Papacy," beginning in the 4th PAE, Steiner tells us, "created churches and religious communities of

all sorts." Out of the British element in the 5th PAE an economic *papacy* will emerge to create a form of economic society of a socialist nature, but this socialism cannot be founded in the West which is its wet-nurse, but only in the East where the sixth sub-race will carry it to maturity. It should surprise no one that Karl Marx was German and wrote his ideas on socialism and communism while he was living in London. In this next sentence, Steiner, speaking these words in 1916, before the Russian Revolution, is presaging the great Russian experiment in socialism called the Soviet Union of Socialist Republics which was to last for 70 years.

[page 127] The East, experimentally at first, must be used for such experiments for the future. Political, cultural and economic experiments must be carried out.

Was Rudolf Steiner prescient? He would not say so. What he said was that he was just reporting what he had dug up in the teachings of western Freemasonry. (Page 127)

Before Steiner ends Lecture Six, he gives us a summary exposition of the well-known linguistic law known as Grimm's Law on pages 128 through 30. These pages deserve a lot of study as they show how folk characteristics over the ages are embedded linguistically in cultures.

The next section of the book, which I would like to tackle in detail, gives the connection between thought and word as they vary from culture to culture. As happens so often when I encounter a brand-new and mind-boggling concept in Steiner's works, the concept rings so true that I am left with little doubt of the veracity of the concept while I am yet trying to make sense of it. The details of my Steiner reviews testify, as this one does, to my own working through, my own journey into understanding of such concepts. First, some pertinent quotes from Steiner about how the French, German, English, and Slavic cultures operate differently vis-à-vis words and thoughts.

[page 158] The French people have the tendency to push the thought right down into the word; thus, when they speak, the thought is pushed right down into what they are saying.

This, he adds, is why the French have an intoxication with words and phrases in the best sense of the meaning. George Bernard Shaw said it succinctly, "A Frenchman doesn't care what you do, actually, so long as you pronounce it correctly." That shows clearly that Shaw understood the process of the French pushing the thought into the word.

[page 159] The English people press the thought down below the word, so that the thought mingles with the word and seeks reality beyond the word.

Let me see if I might resurrect Shaw just long enough for him to pen a pertinent quote for the English. "The English don't care what you say, actually, so long as what you say makes sense." While I am not completely happy with that statement, who am I to quibble with Shaw. Is it an apt characterization of what Shaw might have said? I'll hold that as an unanswered question till my Shavian reception improves.

[page 159] The German language has the peculiarity of not taking the thought as far as the word . . . it retains the thought in the thought.

What does Shaw tell me about the Germans? "The Germans don't care what you think, actually, as long you're sure that what you're thinking is true." Steiner explains it is impossible to translate Hegel, actually, into English — one can only produce a substitute for what Hegel actually wrote. Which naturally leads us to ask of Steiner, How then is understanding possible between the Germans, English, and French?

[page 159] The fact that some understanding is possible comes about solely because certain Latin elements are common to more than one language, for it is the same whether you say 'association' in French, or 'association' in English; both go back to the Latin element. Such things build bridges. But every people has its own special mission

and it is only possible to approach this through a longing to attain such an understanding.

My own situation is embodied in my surname. My grandfather who came to America was named Johann Adam Matern born in Rosenheim, Germany (now a German speaking section of France in the Alsace region). When he arrived in St. Charles Parish, Louisiana in 1721 he went to the Hahnville Courthouse [the town's name came from combining the German surname, Hahn, with the French suffix for town, namely, "ville."] to register. There he encountered a French clerk who likely asked him, "*Comme s'appelle?*" and Herr Matern likely answered, "Wir heissen Matern." The French clerk wrote down "Matherne" adding the silent "h" and the silent terminal "e" to Matern. Later the "h" was left off one of his son's names and that gave rise to two versions: Materne and Matherne. At this point the three names, Matern, Materne, and Matherne were phonologically equivalent — not one's whit's difference in the French pronunciation between the three. About a hundred years later, Louisiana became a state and more and more English-speaking people poured into the region. Another hundred years later, English was made the official language for teaching in public schools and along the way the pronunciation of the three names diverged. My own surname took the biggest hit as it began to be pronounced *Muh THurn'* by most residents of South Louisiana versus *Muh Turn'* by the indigenous Cajun (French descendants). Thus I came to have a German name that has been Frenchicized, then Anglicized. And since I am an Anglicized, Frenchicized German, it seems exactly appropriate that my own heritage be reflected at first glance in my name. My paternal grandfather was of German descent and his wife was of French descent. My maternal grandfather was of French descent and his wife was of German descent.

As I write, in whatever I write, I bring these three parts of me into play: my French heritage in which my "thought disappears over against the word," my German heritage in which is "found a marriage between what is of itself spiritual and what is spiritual in the thought," and my English-speaking heritage, my first language since birth, which "makes it to a certain extent necessary to materialize what is spiritual." (Quotes from pages 160, 161)

In the days when Steiner was still alive and teaching, many critics accused him of serving warmed up leftovers of gnosticism in his anthroposophy. Direct knowledge of gnosticism had already been extirpated by the Church a dozen or so centuries earlier, leaving behind only the writings of those opposed to gnosis as a record of what Gnosticism was. I know few people today who would know enough about gnosticism or anthroposophy to make such a criticism, but a hundred years ago there were many who did, and the criticism brought strong retorts from Steiner on several occasions. Here is one such occasion.

[page 171] Today there is no longer a question of returning to Gnosis for, of course, the light of Gnosis has meanwhile gone out. But the elimination of Gnosis, root and branch, through a consequence of evil, ignorance and hostility towards knowledge and wisdom, sprang, nevertheless, in a way from a necessity of earthly evolution. So the accusation that anthroposophical spiritual science intends to warm up ancient Gnosis is nothing more than one of the many malevolent attacks now being made on us. This accusation is made by people who know nothing about Gnosis and, similarly, little about Anthroposophy. We do not want to warm up Gnosis, but we do want to recognize that Gnosis was something powerful, something great, for that time nineteen centuries ago when it endeavoured to give some kind of an answer to the question: Who is Christ?

Steiner tells us bluntly that the Gnostic saw directly into the spiritual worlds, saw the hierarchies arrayed rank upon rank. "He also saw how Christ strode down through the world of the [spiritual hierarchies](#) in order to enter into the enveloping bodies of a mortal human being." Next he tells us: "What Gnosis was as wisdom, the Temple of Solomon was as a symbol."

[page 173] When Christ Jesus had come to the earth, when the Mystery of Golgotha had taken its course, then this great Mystery of Golgotha was to be mirrored in every single human soul: 'My kingdom is not of this world!' So the external, physical Temple of

Solomon first of all lost its significance, and its destiny fulfilled itself in a tragic way.

Have you ever considered that the time between Easter and Christmas is approximately the time of gestation of the human in its mother's womb? That a baby conceived during the first full moon after the vernal or spring equinox will be born during the Holy Nights of Christmas? I had never considered that, until I read this next passage about the Northern tribe of the Ingaevones who lived about 3,000 B.C. on the Denmark peninsula called Jutland. All of their best children were born during the Holy Nights of deepest winter.

[page 176] This came about because the temple priests of this secret Mystery centre on the Jutland peninsula decreed that in certain tribes, the Ingaevones as Tacitus called them, the sexual union of human beings must only take place during the first quarter of the year. Every sexual union outside this period decreed by the Mystery centre was taboo; and anyone not born during the season of the darkest nights, in the coldest season towards the new year, was considered by these tribes of the Ingaevones to be an inferior human being. The impulse was sent out by the Mystery centre at the time of the first full moon after the spring equinox. This was the only time when those who felt truly connected with the spirital worlds were allowed to practise sexual union. The forces which are used up in sexual union were saved for the whole remainder of each year and thus contributed to the growing strength of the people. Therefore, they were able to develop that remarkable power of which even the dying echo so astonished Tacitus — writing a century after the Mystery of Golgotha.

This next part is incredible, so I would like to set the stage for you. Each year when Christmas comes around, I like to send [Christmas cards](#) which show scenes of dark nights with snow covered ground, with trees, stars, lights, and people riding out in the cold all bundled up for warmth. I grew up in the South and never experienced such things, but I always felt an attraction to them, even today. Obviously there wasn't any snow on the ground in Bethlehem when Baby Jesus was born in a manger, so why the allure of snowy scenes? I took it for granted and never gave it a second thought until I read this next passage by Steiner — then suddenly everything became crystal clear.

[page 176] In this way the tribes of the Ingaevones, and the other Germanic tribes to a lesser extent, underwent at the time of the first full moon after the spring equinox a particularly strong experience of the process of conception, not in a state of waking consciousness but through a kind of dream annunciation. They knew what this meant with regard to the connection between the mystery of man and the mysteries of heaven. A spiritual being appeared to the one who was conceiving and announced to her, as through a vision, the human being who was to come to the earth through her.

This is beginning to sound like the Annunciation to Mary of her destiny to give birth to the Holy Child, Jesus. The coincidences go deeper yet.

[page 179] Among the tribes of the Ingaevones this human being, the first to be born in the holy night, was chosen to become, at age thirty, the leader for three years, for only three years.

We all know that Jesus, born on the Holy Night, was the chosen one who was to become the Christ at age thirty for a period of three years. What on Earth could be the connection between this northern tribe, the Ingaevones, and the birth of Jesus some 3,000 years later? Here is the famous Anglo-Saxon rune-song which has these lines:

[page 179] 'Ing was first seen by the men of the East Danes. Later he went eastwards. Across the waves he strode, and his chariot followed after.'

The spiritual impulses of the northern Mysteries went East and entered into scattered Mystery-

communities in the East till only one remained.

[page 180] The one in whom the whole meaning of the earth was to be renewed, the one in whom the Christ was to dwell, was chosen to unite within himself what had once been the content of the northern Mysteries.

Now we can begin to glimpse the truth of why Christianity was greeted in a special way by the northern tribes when it arrived from Rome, from the South. A chord deep in the folk consciousness was struck and resonated with the people of the tribes, of the descendants of the Ingaevones and the various other tribes.

[page 180] Now once something is there, once it has become customary and firmly anchored in the soul, then it remains there, it remains firmly in the soul. So when the people of the North received the tidings of Christianity from what had been ancient Rome in the South, these tidings were linked with old Mystery-customs which lived no longer in full consciousness but in the subconsciousness and were thus only dimly sensed. That is why the feeling for Jesus could be especially strongly developed there. What had lived in the old Nerthus [Ing] Mystery had sunk down into the subconscious where it was still present, where it was sensed and felt.

And, finally, I began to grasp why I found the snowy scenes of Christmas nights with lights shining out of the windows of houses so compelling. Somewhere in my own northern heritage the Ing Mystery from 5,000 years ago was residing in me.

[page 181] In those distant days in the far North, when the earth was still covered in forests in which lived the aurochs and the elk, the families gathered in their snow-covered huts in the lamplight around a newborn child. They spoke of this new life and of how it brought to them the new light which the heavens had announced to them in the days of early spring. This was the ancient Christmas, the consecrated night. When they later received tidings of one who was born in the holiest hour and who was destined for great things it reminded them of another who had been the firstborn after the twelfth hour of the consecrated night. The ancient knowledge was gone, but the ancient feelings lived on when the tidings came of such a one born in distant Asia, one in whom lived the Christ Who had descended to the earth from the starry heavens.

So many today proclaim that the Earth is a fragile rock and humankind is ravaging and destroying it. I reject those claims strenuously. The Earth is a robust planet, a gigantic living creature which lives and develops just as we do. The life of the Earth has from its beginning been infused with robust spiritual beings which have cared for it and its evolution.

[page 183] The earth is not only a great living creature. It is also a lofty spiritual being. Just as a great human genius cannot evolve to full stature without suitable development through childhood and youth, so the Mystery of Golgotha could not have taken place, the divine could not have united with earth evolution if, in the days of earth's beginning, other divine beings had not descended in a different, though equally divine way. The revelation of the divine on high incorporated in the worship of Nerthus [Ing] differed from the way it was later understood; but it existed.

This ancient wisdom which could see into spiritual realities can only be understood in a true light when it is compared to the so-called modern way of looking at the world in which we live using our eyes which can only see the surface of things.

[page 183] The knowledge contained in this ancient wisdom is solely atavistic, yet it is infinitely higher than the materialistic world view which is today making human beings into animals as regards the level of their knowledge.

Steiner speaking a few days before Christmas says that the tidings are twofold: "The revelation of the divine from on high" and "Peace to earthly souls who are of good will", and claims that *without* the second part Christmas is *meaningless*. As I pondered the meaning of "Peace on Earth to men of good will", a phrase I have heard so many times, it occurred to me for the first time that it is saying that those, who by dint of their will power pour out good will into the world, those same ones will be blessed with peace. Peace follows from humans who pour out good will into the world. In the words of Miller and Jackson's song, "Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me." [EAT-O-TWIST!](#)

[page 184] A time must come in which the second part of the Christmas words may be understood: 'Peace to men on earth who are of good will!'

I mentioned earlier how the Church had extirpated, pulled out by the roots, the Gnosis that allowed humans to comprehend the Christ-Being as a cosmic being — the essential meaning of the Christmas mystery. In doing so, one might say that the Church threw out the Baby Jesus with the bath water of Gnosis.

[page 185] Together with Gnosis there disappeared the possibility of comprehending the Christ-Being as a cosmic being. Instead there remains dogma which has perpetuated certain incomprehensible concepts — the Credo and so on — about the Christ-Being. What was important in centuries now gone by was not so much the wisdom about Christ as the fact itself, the fact that Christ turned towards the earth and fulfilled the Mystery of Golgotha. A true understanding of the Christ-Being will first have to be won through the new Gnosis, which is something entirely different from the old Gnosis, for it is anthroposophical Spiritual Science.

The Gnosis of the North, as we saw in the Ingaevone tradition of the holy child born in the depth of winter, dealt with the Baby Jesus or Christmas Mystery. In the South, the Gnosis dealt with the Easter Mystery. And the Church in order to sustain its dogma had to root out the Easter Mystery in the South and the Christmas Mystery in the North.

In these few pages from about 170 to 192 one finds a wealth of material that must be studied directly. Much of the earlier pages dealt with recondite details about politicians and world situations that existed a hundred years ago and this was slow work, like mountain climbing in the dark, but when I reached these pages, it was like reaching a prominence on which one could make camp and sit and rest to meditate on the journey and absorb the meaning of the strenuous climb. Steiner says on page 186 that, "Feelings live longer than ideas." The feelings of the ancient customs of the Ingaevones which resulted with each child being born as a holy child in a snow-covered hut in the darkness of deepest winter — those feelings which arise within me every winter from out of 5,000 years ago — those feelings have outlasted any ideas. Those feelings resonate with the Christmas mystery in me despite every attempt made by the Church to extirpate them and replace them with their dogma of short-lived ideas.

In the next passage Steiner leads us to view the macrocosm in the microcosm of our lives. How when each day as we arise we go from *Vanir* (dream consciousness) to *Aesir* (day consciousness). How in every cycle of the Sun in 24 hours we recapitulate human evolution from the age of dream consciousness to day consciousness.

[page 190] We rightly speak of what happens in going from the fourth to the fifth post-Atlantean period. But even in the transition from the third to the fourth there was a step forward in human consciousness towards increased ego-consciousness, increased waking consciousness. The ancient dream visions of the spiritual world have disappeared. In the North this was expressed by saying that the Vanir, who were connected with what is given in visions, had been replaced by the Aesir, who are indeed gods for a well-developed day consciousness.

One of the most difficult things for traditional Christians to accept when they come onto the ideas of

Rudolf Steiner for the first time is his reference to the "gods". This tends to provoke strong responses to the effect that there is only one God, with a capital "G" and anyone who thinks otherwise is a miscreant. Can this strong reaction be merely a projection — an accusation tossed upon someone else which reveals what the traditional Christian is doing within unconsciously? If so, these reactions are coming from people who are suffering from some illusion or maya.

[page 212, 213] Some time ago I drew your attention to what almost amounts to a religious cultivation of something that is entirely without thought or feeling, namely, the lack of desire to know that modern religions, when they speak of 'God', actually only mean an angel being, an angelos. When human beings today speak of 'God' they mean only their angel, the angel who guides them through life. But they persuade themselves that they are speaking of a being higher than an angel. It is maya that modern monotheism speaks of a single god for, in reality, seen from a spiritual point of view, mankind has the tendency to speak of as many gods as there are human beings on the earth, since each individual means only his own angel. Under the mask of monotheism is hidden the most absolute polytheism. That is why modern religions are in danger of being atomized, since each individual represents only his own idea of God, his own standpoint. Why is this? It is because, today, in the fifth post-Atlantean period, we are isolated from the spiritual world. Our consciousness remains solely in the human sphere.

But Christians are not the only ones in this 5th PAE to fall into maya or deep illusion — the historians of today are also subject to the most severe form of maya. One of the amazing paradoxes of our current 5th PAE is that those who accuse Steiner of being deluded by his own visions are the ones who are deluded by their own self-imposed limitation of sense-perceptible vision. Would you prefer to take the word of what's going on inside a house from someone who can only see the outside of the house or one who can also see the inside of the house?

[page 217] What is the historical criticism cultivated today in historical seminars? It is a neat paring down to the bare sense-perceptible facts, and this can only lead to error. For by striving to pare things down to the sense-perceptible facts we drift over into maya. But maya is illusion. So any science of history which endeavours to exclude every spiritual element and, instead, bring maya to the fore must of necessity lead directly to maya. . . . Take a modern history book for which anything supersensible is an absurdity and in which great care is taken to attach validity only to physical events, and you have in your hand the striving to bring maya to the fore. But maya is illusion. So you have to fall a victim to illusion; and this is exactly what you do. The moment you believe history as it is written today you become a victim of maya, of illusion. . . . It is a terrible aspect of human karma that even in man's view of history the spiritual element is excluded.

The karma of untruthfulness is revealed once we can perceive, with Steiner's help, how the spiritual element has been excluded in our modern view of history, up until now. For a view of how history was written during early periods when the spiritual element was not excluded, one would be advised to read the wonderful story of Otto the Red Beard's encounter with Gerhard the Good which fills the pages from 217 through 224.

What was the overall theme of this book? Steiner lays it out for us while discounting the political details which seem to fill the major part of the book.

[page 251] It has not been my concern to criticize politically one measure or another taken by one side or another. My intention has been to stress the importance of the principle of truth in the world, to stress that the karma which has fulfilled itself in mankind has often come about because the attention paid to facts, the attention paid to historical and other connections of life in our materialistic age, is not permeated with the truth. When truth is not at work, when that extraordinary opposite of truth, namely, the

lack of inclination to seek the truth, is at work, when there is little yearning for truth — all this is connected with the karma of our time.

What we think becomes true over time. What we fear comes upon us eventually. What we plan for becomes reality. Each of these statements demonstrate the truth of Everything Always Turns Out The Way It's Supposed To. [EAT-O-TWIST](#) never breaks. Here is Steiner's explanation of how that process works.

[page 251] When we see what is being said during these years in which mankind is living, through what is today called war, we cannot object that such things are said only by the newspapers. What matters is the effect. These things have powerful effects. When we pay attention to what is said and to how these things are said, we find that it is just in this 'how' that something works which truly does not run concurrently with the truth. Do not believe that thoughts and statements are not objective forces in their own right! They are objective, actual forces! It is inevitable that they are followed by consequences, even if these are not translated into external deeds. What people think is far more important for the future than what they do. Thoughts become deeds in the course of time. We live today on the thoughts of past times; these are fulfilled in the deeds committed today. And our thoughts which flood through the world today will flow into the deeds of the future.

This review began with my discussion of my study of Carl Jung's work and my excitement when I came to understand for myself the reality of the psyche. Steiner, in his own way in the above passage, confirms the reality of the psyche when he says that "thoughts and statements" are "objective, actual forces" and emphasizes it with an exclamation mark! When untrue statements which harbor untrue thoughts are made, so much of which is extant in the karma of our time in this fifth post-Atlantean epoch, they create powerful effects whose consequences we will not relish. When we perceive only the surface of a house and have thoughts and make statements about what is true within the house, we create powerful effects whose consequences we will not relish. Shakespeare said in *Othello*, "There are more things in heaven or earth than are dreamed of in your philosophies." Steiner said above in the passage from pages 65, 66, "Reality is more profound than whatever human beings may often be willing to encompass with their thinking." We live now in the period or epoch of day consciousness and we must remind ourselves in the words of Nietzsche, "The world is deep, deeper than day can comprehend."

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