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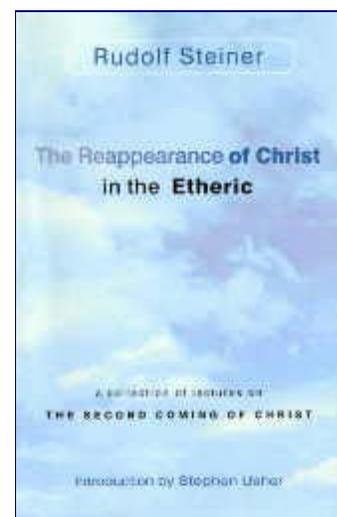


A READER'S JOURNAL

The Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric by **Rudolf Steiner**

A Collection of Lectures about the Second
Coming of Christ
(10 from GA#118, 1 ea from #130, #186, #182)

Introduction by Stephen Usher
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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2010
Chapter: Spiritual Science



The Bible says about the second coming that "Christ will come again in Glory." With our materialistic bias in recent centuries, these words have been interpreted to mean that Christ will return as a man and be given a glorious reception. The same bias results in images of Christ returning on the clouds, as if carried by some magic carpet down from the sky. What is missing from our current understanding of the Second Coming is that the clouds symbology and the word "Glory" both refer to the etheric plane. This new understanding would lead us to expect that Christ's return will not be in a *physical* body and instead will be in an *etheric* body. The etheric body will allow Christ to be seen by people who are able to see into the etheric plane, either because they possessed a lifetime ability (as Steiner) or have acquired a temporary ability under some kind of stress or call for help. For very good reasons, Christ will never be incarnated again into human form; this was a one-off, one-time event in history which Steiner called the Mystery of Golgotha, but he did predict that Christ would return in an etheric form around 1928. This is an event which has already happened, some 80 plus years ago, and yet the majority of the world seems oblivious to it. There are many questions raised by this prediction and Steiner strives to handle them in the course of this collection of lectures given in 1911 and 1917.

[page xii, Introduction by Stephen Usher] The reason people will be able to perceive Christ in the etheric is that Christ endows them with what Steiner calls "the new natural clairvoyance." This new natural clairvoyance will become the possession of more and more people over the next two and half millennia. Through the fact that many people will possess this enhanced consciousness, human civilization will be completely transformed.

In 2008 I watched a movie, "More Than Dreams" (2007) which is a compilation of stories about five individual Muslim men and women who accepted Jesus Christ directly, not through a missionary, but from a personal visit from Jesus, often in their dreams. Some did not even know a Christian before they accepted Christ. One man traveled a long way till he found someone who could tell him about Christ and this person gave him a Bible to read about Christ Jesus. These kind of experiences occurring to people of all faiths and lack of faith shows that Christ has returned in an etheric body and can appear to anyone. If one listens carefully, one will hear people talking about how in times of dire need, they called out to Christ and He appeared to them. This process has been going on for 80 years now, and still is not noticed by the majority of people, but since help is there whether someone knew about this or not, it really doesn't

matter who knows about it. To even discuss whether it happens raises doubts as to whether it happens, and there is no need to prove something which is already happening.

Karma and the natural world do not contradict each other, they simply operate in parallel, and what happens in the natural world can be due to a karmic balancing. Destiny is our way of saying "karmic balancing" and those things which constitute our destiny always play out in the natural world during our time between birth and death. There are no karmic necessities, only options which appear to individuals which they can choose or discard, although, rightly understood, those options we feel strangely attracted to for some unknown reason are often connected with some karmic balancing. A brick falls off a ledge which would kill a woman walking underneath, but she remembers she needs lipstick, and, as she pauses a moment to apply the lipstick, the brick hits the ground just around the corner. She will never be aware of the brick and will forget the natural event of putting on lipstick. (Page 227)

If we go back to the ancient Indian civilization, knowledge of the "I" was present in human beings, but its power and effect only came to full force in recent centuries. With a very weak "I", people in those ancient times possessed a clairvoyance and experienced themselves only as members of their clan. In effect, it was their clan or tribe "I" which was important to each individual member.

[page 6] The individual did not yet perceive an individual I as one does today; it was the tribal I on which one's attention was fixed. People thus lived through the day without a clear understanding that they were individual human beings. When evening came, however, one passed into sleep, but consciousness did not become totally darkened as it does today. Instead, during sleep the soul was able to perceive spiritual realities. Dreams today are mere shadows of what was normal then, when people perceived surrounding spiritual events and facts in their dreams-realities that, as a rule, today's dreams no longer represent. These were the perceptions of people at that time, and thus they had an awareness of the spiritual world. It was a reality to them — not through any sort of logic or proof, but simply because each night they found themselves in the spiritual world, though only with a vague and dreamy awareness.

We have moved past the stage of dreamy awareness into the full light of day-time consciousness and I awareness, but with that advance came our loss of naive clairvoyance and direct perception of the spiritual world. Spiritual scientists understand this crucial aspect of human evolution, and material scientists say that the perception of spiritual realities never existed because it doesn't exist now. One might have rightly said about airplanes in the 19th century, "they never existed because they don't exist now", but one cannot use that same logic about spiritual perception. And, as we know, shortly into the 20th century, airplanes came into existence, as will spiritual perception in the coming centuries. Why did we lose our spiritual perception, our vague clairvoyance?

[page 7] If we had remained at that stage of ancient, dreamy clairvoyance, we could never have acquired the individual I awareness we have today. We could never have realized that we are human individuals. We had to lose that awareness of the spiritual world in exchange for I consciousness. In the future, we shall have both. While maintaining our I consciousness, we will all regain what amounts to full clairvoyance. Today this is possible only for those who have traveled the path of initiation. In the future, everyone will once again be able to look into the spiritual world, and yet we will experience ourselves as human beings — as I beings.

We take our ability to judge for granted. Materialist scientists combine their thoughts and come up with the conclusion that we humans never have had the ability to see into the spiritual world and never will. Curiously, that very ability to come to this conclusion these same scientists owe to an awareness of self that grew out of humankind's ancient clairvoyance as it began to wane. That ancient clairvoyance, rightly understood, was the essential *bootstrap program* which led to our current ability to judge.

Consider it this way: a computer program, already loaded into computer hardware and running, cannot understand the existence or status of its hardware before there were any programs loaded into the hardware, nor can it conceive of how such a bootstrap might take place. Already running computer software can only understand running computer software. Similarly, a materialist scientist can only conceive of how humans existed after the bootstrap into logical thinking and can never conceive of how humans have coped with existence before the bootstrap process into logical thinking had occurred.

This bootstrapping process happened during the waning of the ancient clairvoyance. This dual process was necessary so that humans could continue to live and thrive while one form of coping waned and the other one waxed. What may seem like a quantum leap to some today was in reality a slowly evolving process, evidence for which can be found scattered throughout the ancient myths and legends to those who understand the process. Those who do not understand this switch-over process from clairvoyance to logical thinking tend to belittle the ancient peoples for their beliefs. Beliefs, which naturally seem foolish to those looking backward to them through materialistic blinders, e. g., "How silly for people to make decisions on whether to go to war based on the condition of the entrails of a slain animal!" A Spiritual Scientist might say, "How silly for those materialistic scientists, who won't take off their blinders, to claim that their blinders hide nothing!"

[page 8] Logical thinking emerged gradually in exchange for the old clairvoyance, which diminished with each succeeding incarnation. People lived less and less in those states in which they could look into the spiritual world. Instead, they adjusted to the physical plane, cultivated logical thinking, and experienced themselves as individuals, and clairvoyance gradually receded.

King Frederick the Great wondered what language a man would speak if he grew up without being influenced by hearing those around him speaking. He ordered an experiment to help decide the question, "Would the man speak German, Russian, French or what?" A dozen infants were placed in a nursery in the place and the nurses were commanded to speak nothing to the infants as they fed them and cleaned them. So what language did the youngsters grow up to speak? We never found out because they all died in infancy. This shows that humans need human companionship to live and mature properly. Feral teenagers have been found who lived among wolves, etc., but their thinking and speaking abilities were hardly developed. What would happen if dogs were reared apart from any human beings? They would lose their ability to bark. The existence of such bark-less dogs as the Basenji(1), a native of Africa, indicates that these dogs evolved in a portion of Africa which had no human inhabitants.

[page 8, 9] When you consider these facts, bear in mind that we cannot learn to speak and think today unless we grow up among human beings, because these faculties can be acquired only among other human beings. If a child were cast away on some lonely island to grow up without associating with other human beings, the faculties of thinking and speaking would not develop. So we can see that the development of any being is determined (in part, at least) by the sort of entities that being grows up among. Evolution is affected by this fact. You can see this among animals. It is known that if dogs are unable to meet or associate with human beings, they forget how to bark. As a rule, the descendants of such dogs are unable to bark at all. It is important whether a being grows up and lives among one kind of being or another.

When human beings had their vague clairvoyance, they lived in contact with spiritual beings and felt themselves to be part of the spiritual world. But their decisions always came in consultation with the gods; humans were like sub-teens today depending upon their parents to help them make good decisions. When these children grow up and leave home, they must find resources for making good decisions to replace asking the help of their parents. Similarly humans needed to draw on the inputs they received from the sensory world when the inputs from the spiritual world began to fade away around the time known as the

Silver Age.

[page 11] Following this came the period of the incarnations in which human vision was increasingly cut off from the spirit world. Instead, it adjusted more and more to the immediate outer world of the senses and, accordingly, became more firmly entrenched in the world of the senses. This period, during which human I consciousness emerged, is known as the Bronze Age.

After the Bronze Age came the dark age known as the Iron Age and the youthful joy and connection to the spiritual world which had waned during the Bronze Age became lost completely during the Iron Age and for this reason it is often known as the dark age(2).

[page 11, 12] This was the period when humankind became the least spiritual and, accordingly, the most attached to and rooted in the world of the senses. This was necessary so that self-awareness would gradually reach the peak of its evolution, for only through the sturdy opposition to the outer world could human being begin to distinguish themselves from the world and experience themselves as individual beings. This last period is call Kali Yuga, meaning the dark age. . . . What we can gain from Kali Yuga is the possibility of becoming firmly established in I consciousness. This was impossible previously, because the human being first had to absorb the I.

In other words, during the Iron Age, we have become separated from the spiritual world, but reinforced and talented in our individuality. Only now can we begin to return to perceiving the spiritual from the safety of a strong I consciousness. What age comes after the Iron Age? It is the Bronze Age, but this time it will approach us from the other direction, taking us from the outer world of the senses to inner world of the spirit. This Age we are currently entering will herald our return to spiritual consciousness, but with a strong individuality this time.

Unless one understands the Great Ages of History, one cannot comprehend the changes which are happening all over the world today. As evidence of such changes, one can look at the stories contained in this movie(3) about people living in remote areas of the world with no contact with Christians who have had personal encounters with Christ in the etheric plane. Or one can notice the many stories which have appeared since the first third of the twentieth century of Christ appearing to people in need who have called Him for help.

In the middle of the Iron Age, during the time of Christ Jesus, it was very difficult for humans to experience the spiritual world — the kingdom of heaven — as existing in the external world. A new manner of grasping the kingdom of heaven had come to past, and John the Baptist was its prophet.

[page 14] John the Baptist proclaimed this to humanity by saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" — that is, it approaches the I. Previously, it was to be found outside of the human being, but now it had to be embraced within the very core of one's being — the I, a kingdom of heaven now come near.

If John the Baptist was the harbinger of Christ's appearance on Earth in a physical body, then Rudolf Steiner was the harbinger of Christ's appearance on Earth in an etheric body. When John baptized people, they came near to death which caused their etheric body to loosen from their physical body so that they were able to see the spiritual reality of Christ approaching the Earth. Our human etheric bodies have become loosened enough over the past two thousand years and by our approaching the Bronze Age that we can see the reality of Christ in the etheric plane on Earth without the strenuous procedure required by John. Over time more and more people will experience Christ directly, requiring no faith or belief, because they will have seen His reality directly. This, in a nutshell, is the message of Rudolf Steiner for our time.

If so, why is this message not known more generally? Look at what was known about Christ in the streets

of Rome at the time.

[page 14, 15] The appearance of Christ on earth might have been overlooked by everyone, just as it passed unnoticed, for example, by the inhabitants of Rome. Among these, it was said, "Somewhere, in a dingy side street, there lives a strange sect of horrid people, and among them there is a detestable spirit who calls himself Jesus of Nazareth, and who preaches to the people, inciting them to all kinds of heinous acts." That is how much they knew of Christ in Rome at a certain period.

But there were people who knew that Christ in the person of Jesus of Nazareth was walking the Earth in the flesh and they proclaimed the deep meaning behind this event.

[page 15] Imagine that you are, for a moment, in that time. You could easily say, "Yes, it would be very possible to live then and still know nothing of the appearance of Jesus Christ in the physical world. It would be possible to live on earth without taking this significant event into one's consciousness." Could it, then, also be possible that something of infinite importance is taking place today, and that human beings are not taking it into their own consciousness? Could it be that something tremendously important is taking place in the world, right now, of which our own contemporaries have no idea? This is indeed the case. Something extremely important is happening, but it is perceptible only to spiritual vision.

We have transited from the Iron Age back into the Bronze Age back in 1879, about 130 years ago, and we should now be noticing some shifts into more spiritual realities. For Steiner, he was giving this lecture in 1911, only 31 years after the end of the Iron or Dark Age.

[page 15, 16] There is a great deal of talk about "periods of transition." We are indeed living in one, and it is momentous. The important thing is that we are living right at the end of the Dark Age, and a new epoch is just beginning in which human beings will gradually develop new faculties and human souls will gradually go through a change.

It is hardly a wonder that most people are not the least aware of this, considering that most people also failed to notice the Christ event at the beginning of our era. Kali Yuga(4) came to an end in 1899; now we must adapt to a new age. What is beginning will slowly prepare humankind for new soul faculties.

Here is Rudolf Steiner's message as the harbinger of this new age and it comes with a warning that we should duly note: that many of these visionaries, the human souls who take a step toward the kingdom of heaven, will be deemed to be insane and will be locked away by materialistic doctors who fail to understand these spiritual realities. [See my review of [The Fall of the Spirits of Darkness](#) as to how this might come about.]

[page 17, *italics added*] There might be so much evil and materialism on earth, for example, that most of humanity would not show any understanding and, instead, see clairvoyants as mad and place them into insane asylums with those whose souls have developed in a muddled way. This epoch could pass by unnoticed, as it were. Nevertheless, we are sending out the message today; just as John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and Christ himself once announced: A new age is at hand, and human souls must take a step upward toward the kingdom of heaven.

How will these new soul faculties show themselves in people's lives?

[page 18] People today see only the physical human body; in the future, however, they will also be able to see the etheric body, at least as a shadowy image. People will also be able to experience a relationship to the deeper events in the etheric world. They will

experience images and presentiments of events in the spiritual world and find that such events also happen on the physical plane after three or four days. They will see certain things in etheric images and know that, within the next few days, something specific will occur.

It is easy for skeptics to dispute Steiner's claim that the appearance of Christ in a physical body was a one-time event in the history of the Earth and will never happen again if they only read his statement of that as a fact without studying the whole evolution of the cosmos. Only then can one see how the incarnation of Christ came in the turning point of the evolution of humankind and is not necessary again. Life may seem to travel in circles, but rightly understood it travels in spirals, each time moving and growing. The impulse given to evolution by the physical incarnation of Christ has moved humanity to the next stage of evolution which involves humans being able to perceive etheric realities and Christ's second coming in etheric form presages and accompanies that nascent human ability.

[page 18] These transformations will come about in human soul capacities, resulting in what may be described as etheric vision. And who is connected with this? The being we call the Christ, who appeared in the flesh on earth at the beginning of our era. He will never appear again in a physical body; that was a unique event. Christ will return in an etheric form, however, during the time we have been discussing. People will then learn to perceive the Christ, because through etheric vision they will grow upward toward the one who will enter an etheric body, but never again a physical body. It will be necessary for human beings to grow toward perceiving the Christ, for he truly said, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the earth." He is here; he is in our spiritual world, and those who are blessed can perceive his presence in the etheric realm.

There will also be skeptics who claim that these appearances of Christ in the etheric plane indicate a return in a physical body, and we will see reports of false Christs appearing.

[page 19, 20] Materialistic minds will claim this event as another descent of Christ into the flesh — a physical incarnation. Some, in their colossal conceit, will turn this event to their own advantage by claiming that they are the reincarnated Christ. Consequently, the coming period may bring false Christs. Anthroposophists, however, should be so prepared for spiritual life that they will not confuse the second coming of Christ in a spiritual body — which is perceptible only to a higher vision — with such a physical reappearance. That will be one of the most dangerous temptations to assail humanity. Helping to overcome this temptation will be the task of those who learn to raise themselves to a comprehension of the spirit through spiritual science — those who, instead of dragging spirit down into matter, wish to ascend into the spirit world. Consequently, we must speak of the second coming of Christ in this way — that we must lift ourselves to Christ in the spiritual world by acquiring etheric vision.

We humans are re-acquiring etheric vision as we leave the Iron Age and move into the Bronze Age again. Today we spend our entire day with physical vision except for a few minutes of transition of awakening from our night consciousness into day consciousness, that period in which dreams form and carry over as vivid or vague memories into daytime. These short periods of interface with the spiritual world which occur both at night time as we fall asleep and in the morning as we awake are all that has remained from earlier times when human spent only a few hours viewing the physical world. Back then no one had to believe in the spiritual world because they experienced it for a large portion of every day. We needed to experience the physical world fully in order to develop self-awareness apart from our spiritual world existence; we need to develop our I-beings, our I. (Page 32)

As we enter the Bronze Age, our spiritual sight will return to augment our I and our powers of modern thinking and perception. The so-called Dark Age was necessary for this transition.

[page 33] The portal of the spirit world has been closed to humankind so that we might become more self-aware, inner spiritual beings — so that we could ascend to awareness of self and thus be able to enter the spirit world again as free beings.

In the time of Christ Jesus on Earth, John the Baptist was exhorting everyone to, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Repent has two meanings, one to be sorry for something and the other to seek a change. If we focus on the being sorry only, we miss the deep meaning of change — John was saying, "Change the disposition of your souls." Humans who were in the middle of the Iron Age had lost their ability to connect with the spiritual world (kingdom of heaven), and a change was necessary and the coming of Christ Jesus would provide that change. (Page 38)

[page 39] John the Baptist was saying that the time had come to train self-awareness so that the I could completely penetrate the depths of one's soul to find its inner connection with the kingdoms of heaven. In other words, ordinary human beings could no longer ascend clairvoyantly outside themselves into a spirit world. Instead, the kingdoms of heaven had to descend to the physical world and reveal themselves in such a way that the I could recognize spiritual reality through the sense for truth inherent in ordinary self-awareness. . . . Consequently, the Christ had to descend and appear in a physical human body, because the disposition of the human soul was attuned to comprehending physical phenomena. God had to come to human beings on the physical plane, because the I-being had developed and the portal to the spiritual world had closed; humankind could no longer approach the gods in the old way.

Why study spiritual science? Is it only to satisfy a curiosity? Of what use is this knowledge?

[page 41] Why do we teach spiritual science? Because phenomena will appear in the near future that only spiritual science will be able to understand; it will be misunderstood without spiritual science.

[page 45] We do not "pursue" anthroposophy merely because we are curious about various facts, but because we know that these facts must be used to save and eventually perfect humanity.

Christ has made four sacrifices for humanity, the Mystery of Golgotha being the most recent one and the most well-known one because He made the sacrifice of His life as a physical human being(5). When He says in Matt. 28:20, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the eons of the earth" we are assured that He will be us through all the stages of human development, now and in the future, as we rise and conquer the physical world in preparation for leaving it when "the eons of the earth" are done.

[page 45, 46] The Christ will appear later to humanity in many forms. The form he chose for the events in Palestine was chosen because, at that time, human beings needed to develop their consciousness on the physical plane and, through this, conquer the physical world. Humanity is called on to develop increasingly higher faculties, so that the course of evolution can, again and again make new leaps.

Christ will be there so that human beings can experience him through those higher stages of knowledge. Christianity, in this sense, is not at the end but at the beginning of its influence. Humanity will continue to advance from stage to stage, and Christianity will be there at every stage to satisfy the deepest needs of the human soul through all the future ages of earth.

We must not make the mistake of thinking that somehow the appearance of Christ in an etheric form is not as real or important as an appearance in the physical body would be. He appeared back then in physical form because it was the only form in which humans of the time could experience Him. In a physical body, however, there was only a limited number of humans He could interact with — only those

in the area of Palestine. In an etheric body, that limitation goes away and He can interact with all humans who are ready to meet Him. Those meetings with Christ which might have happened by accident in Palestine back then, however, must happen by conscious volition today.

[page 86, 87] Just as Christ had to be found with purely physical faculties then, human beings will use newly developed faculties to find Christ in a world where only ether bodies are seen; there will be no second physical incarnation of Christ. He appeared only once in the flesh, because only then did human faculties depend on seeing Christ in a physical body. Now, however, with the development of higher faculties, human beings will perceive the far more real ether body of the Christ. . . . One thing will be needed, however; the faculties required for perceiving the Christ event between death and a new birth cannot be acquired there, but must be developed here on the physical plane and taken into one's life between death and a new birth.

During the Iron Age or "Dark Age" humans experienced the Dark Brain, that is, they used mostly their senses for perception and their brain for understanding. This limited way of understanding the world has brought us all of our technology, but led us into the dead, dark end of a solely materialist existence for many. It was this "disposition of soul" that John the Baptist warned everyone to change or they would never notice that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. It is a message which humans need as strongly today as they did back then.

[page 92] You know that one of the most significant pronouncements made as the Christ event approached was, "Change the disposition of your souls, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). These words are deeply meaningful, indicating that something very significant was taking place then for the whole of human soul development. When these words were spoken, it had been more than three thousand years since the beginning of what we call Kali Yuga, the Dark Age. What is the significance of this age? During that era, it was normal for people to depend solely on the outer senses for perception, as well as the kind of understanding that uses the brain as its instrument. This was all that could be experienced, known, and understood in the dark age of Kali Yuga.

When the doors of the spirit world closed, the doors to the Mystery Schools opened — for there were many who could yet recall faintly a time when humans could see directly into the spirit world, and they wanted schooling in spiritual seeing even in the depths of the Dark Age. Some few people were blessed with this ability and they could teach others, help them to find a richness of spirit. But the majority of people were poor in this ability, and, seeking the kingdom of heaven without spiritual sight, they could not find it, no matter how earnestly they begged. Christ's appearance in the flesh changed all that(6).

[page 96] To enter the spirit world in earlier times, the ether body had to be separated slightly from the physical body, which was thus formed in a special way. Christ Jesus therefore said, alluding to the physical body: Blessed are the beggars — the poor in spirit — for if, through the I, they develop their outer bodies correctly, they will find the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:3). He said of the etheric body: Formerly, people could be healed of illnesses in the body and soul by rising into the spirit world in a state of ecstasy. Now, those who suffer and are filled with the spirit of God can be healed and comforted, and they can find the source, the comfort, within themselves (Matt. 5:4). He said of the astral body: In former times those whose astral bodies were beset by wild and tempestuous passions and impulses could be subdued only when equanimity, peace, and purification streamed to them from divine spirit beings. Now, however, human beings should find the strength within their I-being, under the influence of Christ, to purify their astral bodies. The place in which the astral body can be purified is now the earth. Thus the new influence in the astral body had to be presented by saying, Blessed and

filled in their astral bodies with God are those who foster calmness and equanimity within themselves; all comfort and well-being on earth shall be their reward (Matt. 5:5).

We have evolved in 2,000 years to the point where we are now ready to see Christ in the etheric plane with our own soul forces. This will become more common over the coming millennia.

[page 100] For the next 2,500 years, from the mid-twentieth century on, this will become increasingly common. By then, enough people will have had experiences like that of Paul near Damascus that it will be assumed common on the earth.

We are involved with spiritual science so that these new faculties (at first barely perceptible) will not be overlooked and lost by humanity — so that those who are blessed with this new power of vision will not be seen as dreamers and fools, but instead receive support and understanding from a small group of people who, in their common purpose, may prevent these delicate soul seeds and qualities from being roughly trampled to death for lack of understanding. Spiritual science will indeed prepare the way for attaining this ability.

There is a deep spiritual truth that evolutionary stages must be gone through two times, the second in reverse order, as if mirrored around an inflection point or turning point. Steiner had in a previous lecture discussed the millennia in which first Abraham, then Moses, and finally Solomon appeared. Now Steiner gives us the reflected sequence of the millennia of Solomon, Moses, and Abraham after the turning point in Palestine — the Mystery of Golgotha.

[page 101, 102] The qualities that represent a particular age are repeated later in reverse. The turning point is the appearance of Christ Jesus in Palestine. The qualities immediately preceding that time are the first to reappear. Consequently, the first millennium after Christ is a new Solomon epoch; the spirit of Solomon worked in the best human beings of that time so that the Mystery of Golgotha could penetrate. In those early centuries after Christ, Solomon's symbols could be interpreted most readily and inwardly by those who were able to experience most deeply the act on Golgotha.

Steiner identifies Eckhart and Tauler as the reflection of Moses in the second millennium. Tauler received inspiration from the "The Friend of God from the Mountain" after which he became a great preacher.

[page 102] In the second millennium after Christ we recognize a repetition of the age of Moses. What Moses experienced outwardly now appears in the mysticism of those such as Eckhart, Tauler, and so on. Those mystics experienced within what Moses experienced outwardly in the burning bush and in the thunder and lightning. They spoke of how the I-God revealed himself to them when they withdrew into themselves. When they perceived within their souls the spark of I-being, then the I-God, the one God Jehovah, revealed himself. This was true of Tauler, who was a great preacher and could experience powerful revelations. The layman called "The Friend of God from the Mountain" came to him, and people assumed he wanted to become Tauler's pupil. But instead he soon became Tauler's teacher, after which Tauler was able to speak of God from his inner being with such force that some were said to have fallen, lying as though dead, as he preached. This is reminiscent of events when Moses received the laws on Sinai.

In our time in the nascent third millennium, we have reached the reflected age of Abraham as we once more enter the Bronze Age and regain the ability to see into the spiritual world which Abraham possessed. The most common first experience of this newly re-acquired spiritual sight will come as a spiritual vision of Christ in the etheric plane as a man appearing to walk upon the Earth, but who will disappear without a trace after a while.

[page 102, 103] Now, however, we are entering an era that recalls the age of Abraham,

but now in the sense that human beings are led away from the sensory world. The spirit of Abraham will influence our knowledge so that human beings will renounce the old mentality that acknowledged only the sensory realm. However, in contrast to Abraham (for whom the spirit of God could be found only in the sensory world), we will grow beyond the phenomenal world into the spirit world.

Life moves not in circles — always returning to a starting point — but rather life moves in spirals which return to a starting point but with a motion that represents progression in some new direction, which takes life to a new level. Were it not for this moving always to a new level, human and cosmic evolution would not take place at all. The returning of Christ in human form, in the flesh, would represent exactly the kind of circle which cosmic evolution does not follow. No one needed consciously to understand the appearance of Christ in Palestine because He was present in the flesh. That changes with this current appearance of Christ in our time in etheric form. Consciousness is very much essential, and must be acquired by humans in the flesh, in this lifetime. One cannot wait until one transits into the world between death and a new birth to acquire this knowledge.

[page 103] It is thus the same, whether a person lives in the physical world here on earth or has passed through death. If we have gained an understanding for the Christ event here on earth, we will be able to experience it in the spiritual world. This demonstrates the fact that humankind has lived on this earth for a good reason. However, those who fail to acquire an understanding of the Christ event on earth will not, between death and a new birth, experience any trace of the effects of that event on Golgotha. They will have to wait until they return to earth and a new birth to prepare themselves.

Regardless of their faith or religious affiliation, people will experience the Christ being. Christians will have the most trouble of any religions accepting the Christ being, as they have been hitherto so poorly prepared for the reality of an etheric Christ.

[page 104] We are approaching an age when people will feel they are surrounded not only by a physical, sensory world, but also — according to their understanding — by a spiritual kingdom. The leader in this new kingdom of spirit will be the etheric Christ. No matter what religious community or faith people belong to, once they experience these facts within themselves, they will acknowledge and accept the Christ event. Christians who experience the etheric Christ are perhaps in a more difficult situation than adherents to other religions, yet they should try to accept this Christ event with no more bias than they would any other. It will, in fact, be our task to develop, especially through Christianity, an understanding for the possibility of entering the spirit world free of any religious denomination, going simply through the power of good will.

In preparing Christians and others for this Christ event, the spiritual science of Rudolf Steiner fills a vital task. People will experience a radiant light, much as Paul experienced on the way to Damascus, and instead of being fearful, they will be ready to accept the reality of the etheric Christ.

Through the fortune of karma, I spent many years programming computers and learning how the basic hardware of computers work. One of the mysteries of computers is the word "reboot". Most people use the word "boot" or "reboot" without any idea of its origin. The word "boot" comes from the concept of bootstrapping or put colloquially, "raising oneself by one's own bootstraps", which is an inherently impossible concept. What is it that is inherently impossible about a computer? This: one gets a program into a computer by using a program loader to load it. How does the program loader, which is also a program, get into a computer sans an already present program loader? It's a mystery — but it happens anyway. How it happens requires that the initial program loader be loaded differently than all the other programs! This must be done outside the computer *before* it can load or run any other programs. In the early days of minicomputers, in the 1960s and 70s, before home computers arrived on the scene, the initial program loader, called the *bootstrap program*, had to be loaded by hand, bit-by-bit, every time a computer

was powered up! Only then could the program loader be loaded and other programs be run. With home computers, ways were found to store the bootstrap program on the first sector of a hard drive, called the boot sector, and bootstrap programs could mostly be ignored and the computer was ready to run after being powered up. But still, at the factory, this bootstrap program had to be designed, coded, and placed into the computer by a human being and then tested before any computers of that model could be run. Now we have only the words "boot" and "reboot" to remind us of this no longer obvious bootstrapping process.

Does the bootstrap paradox remind you of the old conundrum, "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" One might ask, "Which came first the program or the program loader?" A chicken is like a fully loaded program and the program loader is the egg which makes it possible for the program to be loaded.

This topic is worthy of consideration, because Steiner reveals the answer to the chicken and the egg paradox. Just like the hand of a human being is necessary to load the program loader into the already-formed computer, so also is an outside agency required to load the egg into an already-formed chicken.

[page 197, 198] There is one thing that will come to be understood today that is not yet known. Consider some living being — say, a chicken. When a new embryo arises in this living being, a biologist may examine how an egg grows from the chicken. One examines the forces that supposedly allow the egg to grow out of the chicken, but this is nonsense. The egg does not grow from the hen, which is only the foundation; the forces for that growth work in from the cosmos and produce the egg on the foundation prepared within the hen.

Similarly it would be nonsense to claim that bootstrap program grows out of the computer. The bootstrap program must be worked into the foundation of the computer by the forces of the cosmos, specifically, the hands of a human being. Humans create computers and, as creator, act as the "spiritual forces" or outside agents of the computer. What we call cosmic forces are those outside agents (spiritual beings) which act upon us and the plants and animals on Earth with us. Anyone who would ridicule Steiner's explanation of the solution to the chicken-egg paradox will have to deal with the bootstrap paradox of the computer which is exactly analogous. It is in the intent of Steiner to clarify, not mystify, and this parallel of the computer and the chicken should assist with that clarification.

[page 192] What I want to emphasize is that we must not mystify, but clarify. Complete clarity is needed to work for anthroposophic spiritual science.

What are feelings? I thought I knew the answer to that question for the first four decades of my life, but I discovered that what I thought were feelings simply existed as sensory perceptions and mental concepts. I was well-practiced in creating mental concepts, so I had concepts for these things called feelings, but had no consciousness of the feelings as they were happening. They were just me, just how I felt at the time. What women lived in consciously, I was completely unaware of, and it took a woman writing about a woman to pull me out of my stupor into a waking experience of feelings. I was reading [Emma](#), a novel by Jane Austen, and I suddenly became aware that she was writing about feelings! How Emma felt, how the other characters felt, and I became aware of my own feelings through this novel, not as something apart from me which flowed over me, like a wave on a beach might do, but as something inside of me helping to shape my experience of the world. I became aware how it was possible for me, without any conceptual thinking to understand the world directly via my feelings, and that was a huge shock to me — how could I have lived so long in complete oblivion to my own feelings! The feelings were there, but they were like the rain pelting me, something from without hitting me, surely not something from within welling up inside of me of which I could become conscious. With my training in Gestalt groups and Jungian psychology, I came to understand how it is possible for a feeling person to operate rationally in the world without thought or cognitive processes, with little of the sensory perceptions and thoughts which had previously monopolized my daily consciousness. It was like I had been flying an airplane without a rudder all my life, crashing and burning when I was buffeted by feelings — unable to perceive their presence and

therefore unable to adjust to their sometimes turbulent air currents. It is said that "many people spend their whole life perfecting their faults" and I knew then how close I came to doing exactly that, only to be rescued by my adventitious reading of a Jane Austen novel.

[page 214, 215] It is strange, of course, that the ordinary consciousness of a physical person clearly experiences only sense perceptions and thoughts. Waking consciousness exists only in perception and thinking. Feelings are, in fact, only dreamed; we usually sleep right through it. People do not know what actually takes place when they simply raise a hand — when the will takes hold of the bodily organism — at least, not in the same way that people know what happens during thinking. There is a similar characteristic of feelings: although feelings are somewhat clearer in consciousness, they are still dark — no brighter than the images of our dreams. Passions, emotions, feelings are really only dreamed; they are not experienced in the same light of consciousness that exists in sensory perceptions and mental imagery, and the human will is not experienced consciously at all.

Without a decade of practice in perceiving my feelings, I would not likely have understood how a time wave from the future could be perceived as a feeling(7). I would have questioned via intellectual reasoning every decision based on feelings that I have made over the past three decades, which would have completely changed my life. I would not be writing this today, e.g., had I stopped reading Rudolf Steiner after the first ten books because I was unable to come up with an intellectual reason for doing so. Instead I paid attention to the feeling and went on to discover in his spiritual science exactly what I had been so earnestly seeking.

Our friends and family who have died are living in the spirit world and communicate constantly with us, but, without voice or physical presence, how can they reach us? Only through our feelings, those evanescent indicators of their presence, which most people — especially men — ignore, up until now. It's as if our loved ones are leaving us messages in a mailbox, putting the flag up, but we never open the mailbox. Also their messages are present in our emotions — how many times have you felt so good or so bad that you did something that you would not ordinarily have done? And yet you cannot explain how that mood came over you. How many times have you acted completely without thought and done something very important? The actions of our will have that kind of nature. We rarely think, "I will raise up my arm", but rather the arm raises up without any forethought whatsoever.

[page 215] Those who have died are alive in everything that plays into our waking life as dream or sleep. They live with the souls of those who are incarnated in physical bodies on earth. They live in them just as we live within the plant realm, except that we are not inwardly connected to the plant world as the dead are to our feelings, emotions, and volitional impulses; they live continually in all of this. This is their second realm. While here, our feelings and sensations unfold in human life, and the dead live continually in this life. Indeed, the alternating ebb and flow of the will of the those who have died has a certain relationship to the feelings and will impulses that the so-called living dream and sleep through.

Who are these so-called dead who affect our feelings, emotions, and will impulses which live in our souls? They are those to whom we have a karmic connection.

[page 215, 216] We are not separated from the dead at all in these realms, but it is like this: when we go through the portal of death and experience the increase and decline of the will, we are able to live with the so-called living in their physical bodies, though not with everyone. There a definite law prevails: one can live only with those to whom one has some degree of karmic relationship. One who has died does not even perceive a person on earth who is a complete stranger in terms of karma; the person simply does

not exist. The world that the dead experience is bounded by the karma that limited them in physical life. This world is not limited to souls who are still on earth; it extends to those who have died.

In the Robin Williams' movie, "What Dreams May Come", he experiences a curious world after death in which every will impulse he has changes the world and the people around him — he lives in a flowing, ever-changing world which is immediately changed by impulses which flows through him. This seems to me what Steiner is reaching out to tell us in this next passage: that the will impulses take the place of mental images in the realm of these living spirits.

[page 217, italics added] There is a fundamental law, however, that the karmic circle gradually widens. The whole process of becoming acquainted in this circle takes place exactly as I described it in the Vienna lectures dealing with life between death and rebirth. I described precisely this expanding life of will impulses as an important element in the life of the dead. For those who have died, *will impulses become what mental images are for the living*. Through them, the one who has died knows and has awareness. It is extremely difficult to explain in earthly terms that one who has died knows essentially through the will, whereas an earthly human being knows by forming mental images. Obviously, this also makes it difficult for the living to reach an understanding with those who have died.

But the so-called dead have a widening circle of friends, just as we accumulate around us while living in this physical body.

[page 218] An essential aspect of life between death and rebirth is that, as souls, we increasingly widen our circle of acquaintances (to say it trivially). Here in earthly existence, we widen our experiences between birth and death by becoming acquainted with more and more of the world around us; similarly, there, our experiences increase and make us aware of the existence of other souls, and through some souls one experiences a strengthening of the will, through others a weakening. This is essential to our experience there.

You can understand the real significance of this for all cosmic existence. It means that there is a certain relationship between death and rebirth, forming a spiritual circle of acquaintances among a large portion of humanity around the earth — not just among the flavorless band that pantheists and mystics dream of and emote over. If we look at our experiences between death and rebirth, it is not all that far from earthly humanity. This is not abstract but a truly concrete connection.

The first level of spiritual perception is called Imagination by Steiner and is capitalized to distinguish it from normal imagination. That ability, when it becomes again the property of every human being during the Bronze Age we are currently re-entering, will connect us with all our so-called dead friends and relatives. We will know for certain that they are not gone forever, only not visible to us. They are like plant workers on a 12-hr shift in a factory, the day shift workers and the night shift workers work in the same place, but are not visible to each other because one shift is home sleeping while the other is in the plant working. With the advent of Imagination, both will be visible at the same time. Many movies have been made on this theme, the "The Milagro Bean Field War" (1988) and "Ironweed" (1987) comes to mind as prominent examples.

[page 219] Perception through Imagination can picture, in general, the course of life between death and rebirth. Indeed, it would be an extremely unhappy situation for those who could not create such mental images. Just consider: we are not separated from the dead at all in our feeling life or volition; that world is removed from our view and merely hidden from sensory perception and mental imagery. It will be a giant step forward in the earthly human evolution that we still must live through if one day people

realize that they are united with those who have died through their feeling and will impulses. Death does in fact take away our physical view of those who have died, as well as of our thoughts of them. In everything we feel, however, those who have died are there with us in that realm in which we feel; likewise, in everything that we will, the dead are with us in our realm of volition.

[page 221, 222] The greatest illusion that people in the future could entertain would be to think that earthly society, which people develop themselves through their feelings and will, happens only through earthly arrangements, to the exclusion of those who have died. This is simply impossible, since the dead already participate in our feeling and volition.

To understand all this requires a study of spiritual science and only conscientious work can cause that to happen, it will not happen by accident because "human evolution is proceeding in such a way that people, in their physical bodies and with ordinary consciousness, are increasingly cut off from the spirit world." The Mystery of Golgotha gave us that hope because it was not just an event in time two millennia ago, but "a continuing impulse that is still active." (Page 222) Steiner's spiritual science is designed to help us understand this Mystery.

[page 222] For a long time I have stressed the fact that the purpose of spiritual science is related to the impulse of Golgotha; spiritual science must exist in a certain way so that the impulse of Golgotha can be correctly understood, both in our age and in the immediate future.

What is the alternative? What will happen if natural science rules the day with its materialistic baffle-gab? It will become the new religion and those who blithely accept its tenets will be lost to the spiritual world.

[page 222, 223] Natural science is an earthly science that has also become the religion of the world, and you can be certain that it will become increasingly influential. I am often blamed for being unfriendly to the natural sciences, even in their radical developments, but such reproach belongs to the most dated biases imaginable. Anyone who understands the course of earthly evolution also understands that the natural sciences cannot be proved wrong; on the contrary, they will only spread. A kind of religious belief in natural science is sweeping through the world, and it cannot be stopped; it is inevitable, progressing confidently "for the good of humanity." Soon, perhaps in the next few decades, the religions will all find themselves unable to save even the most simple, backward people from the limited consciousness of a strictly physical existence, as cultivated by natural science. This is a certainty.

We cannot convince natural science of the importance of the Mystery of Golgotha because its essential nature lies in the spiritual not the physical realm. Those who seek to validate Christ Jesus historically are doomed to failure and rebuff at the hands of so-called skeptics. One can only be convinced on a personal basis by spiritual perception.

[page 225] It will be a spiritual experience — a clairvoyant spiritual experience. Consequently, there is an inner relationship between the Mystery of Golgotha and the fact that humanity, beginning now, must ascend to spiritual cognition. From this time forward, people must rise to spirituality and understand that, in this coming time, the Mystery of Golgotha can be fully comprehended only through spiritual activity. Christianity can continue only in an essentially spiritual way; it cannot merely continue in an outer way through outer traditions and historical research.

Steiner gives an example of destiny at work in a man's life. He is walking in the mountains and hears a voice telling him to stop, he does, and seconds later a huge boulder rolls over the spot he would have been walking, undoubtedly crushing him to death. All the people he would have affected for the rest of life

would have their lives altered as well, and all these effects never happen because of the voice which stopped him on the path. You may think that this has never happened to you, but consider that many of the decisions you make on a daily basis are altered by feeling and will impulses whose origin arrive from a similar origin as that voice and affect your life and others' lives just as dramatically. A woman ran off a bridge into Lake Pontchartrain this morning and a man jumped in to save her life. He couldn't explain why he did it, it was a will impulse at work. This is the realm of destiny at work, and it operates on every one of us, all the time, in every moment of our life.

[page 230] People should walk through this realm of destiny as consciously as they walk through the realm of sensory perceptions. People should be able to go through the world while using their eyes, and yet they should also have the sense of being woven right into the realm of destiny. People should be able to feel that, within this realm, the forces of Christ are always united with the forces of those who have died. If this were really the situation today humankind would develop in itself a real, concrete, and sensitive life with those who have died. People would experience something or other while engaged in some activity, and would feel united with loved ones who have passed on. Life would become endlessly enriched.

When we think of a loved one and call them on the phone, we have to wait for them to answer the phone, but if they are someone who has died, they are immediately with us in our thoughts as we think of them, there is no waiting time.

[page 231] Our connections with the dead are by no means severed by death; they continue. Such an enriched life is the prospect for humanity in the future of earth. In this fifth post-Atlantean epoch, humanity is in fact evolving in the direction I am describing, and humankind will certainly be unable to survive the sixth epoch if people do not begin to feel these things in the right way, taking the reality of destiny into their consciousness just as fully as people today absorb the reality of natural phenomena.

The materialist path is the road most commonly traveled today; it is the easiest road, the path of least resistance, and everywhere in our daily lives we find encouragement to follow that easy path.

[page 232, 233] Nevertheless, those who care about the spiritual evolution of humanity must carefully note the needs of today. It must be understood that the Christ will only be lost along the road most commonly traveled today. He will be won as the true king and lord of the earth only when people ascend along a spiritual path. You can be sure of this: Christ cannot be found as the various religions look for him today — faiths that, remarkably, have already given in to every possible compromise for understanding the Christ.

Fortunately, discussions — the hotbeds of compromise — end when knowledge begins, and with the advent of Christ in the etheric plane more and more people will come to direct perception and knowledge of Christ. They will have no need for some discussion about whether He existed or not. This is the road less taken, but one which more and more people will find themselves upon as we progress forward infused with the new spiritual awareness of the Bronze Age. If a meeting with the etheric Christ happens to us individually, let us be kind to those who remain skeptics. But most importantly let us not allow the words of those who have met the Christ fall on deaf ears, and let us prevent the obtuse materialists from locking these people up as lunatics, for these are the rich in spirit who will truly inherit the Earth.

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

Footnote 1. I asked my friend Glenn Martin who owned a Basenji for many years if Benji ever barked, and his answer is revealing. "Actually, Benji did bark once — when he bit the TV power cord. I guess the species was never plugged in!" Apparently being around a human

being for a dog is like getting an occasional electric shock!

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**Footnote 2.** In Walter Cruttenden's book, [The Lost Star](#), we find that the various Ages correspond to our Sun's dance with a binary companion — the Golden Age corresponding to Sol being closest to its companion and the dark or Iron Age to its being farthest away.

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Footnote 3. The movie is "More Than Dreams" (2007) — a compilation of stories about five individual Muslim men and women who accepted Jesus Christ directly, not through a missionary, but from a personal visit from Jesus, often in their dreams. Some did not even know a Christian before they accepted Christ. One man traveled a long way in search of someone who tell him about Christ and received a Bible to read about Him.

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**Footnote 4.** The eastern term Kali Yuga is referred to as the Iron Age which exists between the Bronze Ages, and from the black color of unpolished iron it is also called the Dark Age. The sequence of ages from Golden, Silver, Bronze and Iron indicates a progressive lessening of spirituality which matches the loss of brightness of the medal. See [Lost Star](#) for more information on the various Ages.

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Footnote 5. See [Approaching the Mystery of Golgotha, GA#152](#) for details on the four sacrifices.

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**Footnote 6.** Lecture 6 deals with the Sermon on the Mount, especially the Beatitudes. See the full list of Beatitudes here: [http://www.doyletics.com/\\_arj1/sermono.htm](http://www.doyletics.com/_arj1/sermono.htm)

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

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Footnote 7. See [Matherne's Rule No. 36: Remember the future. It hums in the present.](#) Note how a hum offers no intellectual explanation, but it creates a very real and present feeling.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 7.](#)

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